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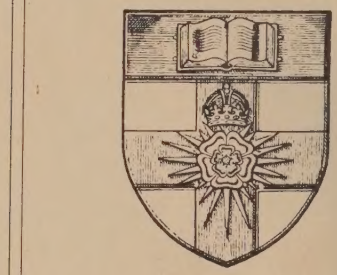

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REPORTS

FROM

COMMISSIONERS, INSPECTORS,

AND OTHERS:

FORTY-SEVEN VOLUMES.

—(*26.*)—PART I.

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS—*continued.*

SESSION 1.—5 *February* 1895——6 *July* 1895.
SESSION 2.—12 *August* 1895——5 *September* 1895.

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HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS—*continued.*

[c. 7668–I.] Minutes of Evidence. Vol. II. p. 1

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TAKEN BEFORE THE

ROYAL COMMISSION

(HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS, 1892).

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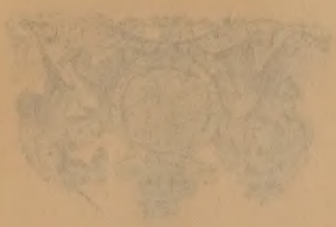

lambing in Keoldale and Balnakill should we get that portion. It is my opinion that they could do well without it.

29,362. Is it not the fact that the crofters in Durness have 10,000 acres of grazings?—No, they cannot have that.

29,363. *The Chairman.*—How often do your cows have calves?—They don't calve till they are about four years, sometimes; very few at the age of three.

29,364. They begin at the age of four, and during the life of the animal, what is its rate of having calves?—Very few of them have calves yearly; two or three years is more like it.

29,365. A calf yearly is uncommon?—Very uncommon.

29,366. And the average is two and three years?—Two and three.

JAMES SUTHERLAND, Crofter, Sangomore (63)—*examined.*

29,367. *The Chairman.*—What is the number of your lot?—Fifty-two.

29,368. I see the area is 3 acres 0 roods 29 poles arable, 1 acre 2 roods 36 poles outrun, and share in the common of 3200 acres. Former rent, £3, 13s. 3d.; fair rent, £3, 6s. Have you a share in Rispond?—Yes.

29,369. What do you pay for that?—16s. 6d.

29,370. Have you a statement?—Yes. The parish of Durness is a very wide one, extending from Moine House on the east to Gualainn House, and Sandwood Bay westwards. There are three large sheep farms, Eriboll, Balnakill, and Keoldale, with part of the sheep farm of Melness, and these, with a strip of crofters at the seaside at Laid and Durness, occupy the whole parish. The number of crofters is 86, and of cottars 6 to 12; some of whom have no land. The land in the possession of crofters is only a fraction of the land available for cultivation, the sheep farms having swallowed up the best portions of arable land, and the people evicted to the seaside to make room for the sheep. I am prepared from local knowledge of the parish to give the names of the townships on these sheep runs from which the people were driven to Durine and Sango and the seaside; the marks of their cultivation may yet be seen, and there is a strong desire on the part of the people of the parish to get back to those lands from which their ancestors were evicted. These evictions began nearly one hundred years ago, in Lord Reay's time, and the system of removing the people to the seaside continued till about the year 1840. We believe there is sufficient land in Durness for the people of Durness, as the Commissioners will see for themselves, when they go to inspect it; and we consider it a great hardship and injustice to be kept from the land, some of which is at our very doors.

29,371. You heard the evidence given by Donald Whyte, with regard to these lands of Balnakill and Keoldale and Eriboll?—Yes.

29,372. And do you concur in that evidence?—I do.

29,373. Is there anything further you would like to say besides his evidence and your own written statement?—No, nothing, unless I was questioned.

29,374. *Mr Sutherland.*—You mentioned that the evictions continued up till the year 1840?—Yes.

29,375. That is a later date than any other of the places in the county?—Well, I remember the time myself.

29,376. Do you remember the Durness riots?—I do, indeed, I was present at the time. I have been a boy at school following them when they were coming on to Durine.

29,377. And do you remember the circumstances that led up to them?—Oh, fine.

29,378. I have no desire to go into that now, nor, I suppose, have you?—No desire.

29,379. But I simply mention it in order to show the circumstances in which these places we saw here came to be in the position they are. You know Laid, Loch Eriboll, do you?—I know Laid fine.

29,380. Do you know where the majority of the people there came from?—They came from several places.

29,381. But the greater part of them?—A good many of them came from the Island and from Ceann-na-Beinne and these places, and some from Durine here, and some from Sango.

29,382. You would not remember, I suppose, the making of Rispond farm, do you?—No, I could not say that I do remember it properly. I remember the people being settled in these townships, but I can scarcely remember anything else.

29,383. Has it been a farm always within your memory, Rispond?—Yes, I may say it was.

29,384. It would have been formed then shortly before you were born?—No, it was not formed for sheep until somewhere about the year 1841, or thereabouts.

29,385. Then referring for a moment to that, was it not the attempt to clear out Sangobeg and Leirin that caused the riot?—Certainly.

29,386. The work was tried to be carried farther and the people objected, was that it?—Yes, that is it.

29,387. And they had to be left therefore?—Yes.

29,388. And was one of the reasons that the people would not consent to it that there were no holdings provided for them anywhere?—I can't say that; I don't remember that.

29,389. You did not hear that anything was offered to them, but Laid?—Some of them were sent to Leirin, and others to Sangobeg. There was some sort of place or other provided for them by the Duke.

29,390. Now what is your own opinion with regard to these places Sangobeg and Laid and these places; would it in your opinion be better to shift them out of there to better ground altogether?—Certainly, it would.

29,391. Do you think people never ought to have been planted there?—I think only a very few, one here and there.

29,392. Have you any means of comparing the old rent of Rispond with what is paid for it now?—No, that did not come under my consideration.

29,393. You don't know then how it stands?—No, I think it is quite as cheap now as it had been while let as a sheep farm.

29,394. That is independent of the great reductions of rent sheep farmers have got since?—Yes.

29,395. What was the old rental of Rispond, do you remember?—I think it was at the highest about £130; I am not exactly sure, but I think I am near the figure.

29,396. Then have you got the whole of Rispond, all the arable land and everything just as it stood before, with the farmer's house?—No.

29,397. But most of the valuable part of the farm: you have not got,—the house in the immediate neighbourhood, is that not so?—The house and lands in Rispond; Mr Jolly has the peninsula.

29,398. Do you know of your own knowledge all these places we have heard about along both sides of Eriboll and up Strathmore?—Yes, I have been two years living there.

29,399. And do you think that the land there is much better than the land down at Durness?—I am sure it is.

29,400. But the best land is in your own immediate neighbourhood, is that so?—Well, I would consider parts of the Balnakill and Keoldale land equally as good land as the Strathmore.

29,401. Can you explain to me why it is that the ordinary process is reversed in this neighbourhood? In other parts of the county, on the north coast, we find the people down on the shore; here we find them put up from the seashore; why is this? Why were they put up from the point instead of down to the point as at Strathy?—I am not prepared to answer that question.

29,402. Do you know Strathy Point?—Yes.

29,403. And do you know Far-out-head?—Yes.

29,404. Which is the better place?—Very near a comparison, very near equal.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

James Sutherland.

29,405. And Balnakill?—Oh, Balnakill is a very good place.

29,406. Do you know why the ordinary rule was not followed here of putting the people down to the low places near the sea at Balnakill? Is it because the land was better in this place do you think?—I cannot say.

29,407. But it is there, isn't it?—The land is there for your inspection.

29,408. And in your opinion it is very good land?—I think it is very good.

29,409. Now with regard to the application that was spoken about here: I understand it is to the Crofters Commission the application was made?—Yes.

29,410. And this is not the Crofters Commission?—No, this is not the Crofters Commission.

29,411. Well, then, with regard to that application, you have no doubt it would be disposed of by the Crofters Commission in due course?—Well, if they would see proper.

29,412. But you don't want to mix the two Commissions, I suppose?—No.

29,413. You are of opinion that if the people got new holdings made, or the present farms of Balnakill and Keoldale added to their holdings, they would have no difficulty in putting stock on them?—What they have applied for at present to the Crofters Commission I am sure they would not be very long in stocking. I think they have overstocked already, and they only want grazing for their stock, so that their stock would be better off; it will soon deteriorate in price; and they have good sheep.

29,414. Have they much difficulty in managing the farm they got?—No, the committee manages it just on the same lines as any other sort of farm, as a club farm at any rate.

29,415. And do the committee do it to the general satisfaction?—Oh, to the general satisfaction, of course; they give fair play to everyone.

29,416. And you have no difficulty in agreeing among yourselves as to the way in which it should be done?—Not the slightest. Of course, there is always somebody who has some growl.

29,417. *Mr Gordon.*—You have a committee just now?—Yes.

29,418. That committee would be quite sufficient to manage the stock suppose it was under a club farm, would it not?—We elect a new committee every three years according to Act of Parliament.

29,419. *The Chairman.*—Do you know what the poor rates here are?—I pay in all £4, 2s. 6d., and I pay something about 8s. 1d. of rates between poor rates, registration, and so forth.

29,420. Do you know how much of that sum is poor rate?—It is not in my mind in the meantime. It is under 2s. in the £ at any rate. I pay 11d. per £.

29,421. How would you compare the number of paupers here with the number of paupers down at Laid?—I am not prepared to answer that question.

29,422. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—I suppose you agree with the last witness as to the ground being somewhat overstocked in the meantime?—Certainly.

29,423. And if extensions of grazings were given, I suppose the tenants would be prepared to meet any matter in the way of rent or anything of that sort?—They have been doing so formerly. Durness has been a place that always paid its rent very well until of late, I don't know why. I think it is because our rent was not taken up exactly at the usual time, when of course the people through the winter and hard spring would need to use the money somehow or other; and that is the way the rent was not paid.

29,424. Then the rent is considerably behind in the meantime?—Only one year's rent; but there may be a few more in arrears, but very few.

29,425. But there will be another year's rent due at Martinmas?—Yes, two year's rents, meeting at Martinmas first.

29,426. Did it not occur to you and other tenants that it would be well to sell off some of this overstocking in order to pay these rents?—Certainly, but what could we do. There were no markets for our stock, and any stock that we could sell we have sold.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

29,427. So that notwithstanding that you have sold considerably you are overstocked yet?—Certainly. We sold our wedder lambs and we sold the cast of the old sheep.

James Sutherland.

29,428. But why could you not sell this overstock?—Because we could not get any price for it. We are not overstocked very much in sheep, but we are overstocked in cattle, because we have no provender for them.

29,429. Is it not the fact that the large sheep farmers here turn off their sale cast whether the prices are up or down?—Certainly, and we have done the same. We sold our cast stock for 15s. 6d., while two or three years back we got 28s. 6d., for them. That is a great reduction.

29,430. *The Chairman.*—But you did sell?—Oh, yes.

29,431. *Mr Macaulay.*—But you did not sell sufficient to bring you down to the carrying power of your ground?—We could not get a market for them: we could get nobody to take them at any price this year.

29,432. *The Chairman.*—You tried to sell, but could not get a market?—We tried to sell, but could not get them sold.

ROBERT MACKAY, Crofter and Blacksmith, Sangomore (60)—*examined.*

Robert Mackay.

29,433. *The Chairman.*—I see your area is 3 acres 0 roods 22 poles arable, no outrun, share in the common of 3200 acres; old rent £3, 14s.; fair rent £3, exclusive of the enlargement?—Yes.

29,434. And with the enlargement it is £3, 16s. 6d.?—Yes.

29,435. You have a written statement I see?—Yes.

29,436. Kindly read it?—Sheriff Brand and gentlemen, I have been appointed delegate by a numerously attended meeting of the people of this parish to give evidence before your honours. Therefore, I have to state briefly that perhaps in all your travels in Sutherland you have not seen such an extent of low-lying land fit for cultivation as you can see in this parish, in the farms of Balnakill and Keoldale. A wide extent of the land now out of cultivation abounds with fine limestone beds covered with rich clay soil, and stretches from Balnakill southward, embracing a part of Keoldale farm up the Kyle side as far as the Big Bridge. On the east side of the Grudy river, and in proximity to the river on the west side you will see two fertile townships called Acharn and Grudy: all these places had at one time been populated. So there is a keen desire on the part of the people to get back to these lands, from which their forebears had been evicted, provided they can get the land on equitable terms.

29,437. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you also agree with the evidence that has been given by Mr Sutherland and Mr Whyte?—Yes.

29,438. You have a local knowledge of the place, you belong to this place, don't you?—Well, I do belong to the place.

29,439. And you have a perfect knowledge of all the places to which they referred in their evidence?—Yes, I know the places well.

29,440. And you yourself gave additional evidence regarding the quality of the land in Keoldale and Balnakill?—Yes.

29,441. And you agree also with the evidence they have given as to the desirability of getting new holdings to relieve the congestion here, do you?—Yes.

29,442. And you think also, with them, that it could be done under circumstances that give a prospect of being successful?—Yes.

29,443. *The Chairman.*—Are the holdings which you and those whom you represent wish, self-sustaining holdings where the crofters could live without having

to go and labour, or are they holdings where you would live partly by the holding and partly by wages?—I don't understand very well.

29,444. I will put it in another form. You have mentioned a desire on the part of the crofters whom you represent to get new holdings?—Yes.

29,445. Are these new holdings which you have in view, holdings where the occupant would live by his holding, or where he would live partly by his holding and partly by wages from labour or fishing? [No answer.]

29,445*a*. Do you mean holdings that would occupy the whole time of the tenant, or holdings where he would partly occupy his time on the holding, and partly earn wages outside?—Occupy part of his time on the holding and partly with wages.

29,446. Is that your idea?—Yes.

29,447. And is that the idea of those whom you represent?—Oh, I think so, unless they would get as much holding as would keep them going always that they could live on.

29,448. My question implies that. Are the new holdings you have in view, holdings large enough to enable them to live by the holdings, or would you rather have holdings small in size, but larger than what you have, and which would be aided by means of outside labour?—Most of them would rather have a holding that they could live on without wages.

29,449. Have you a good number of fishermen along this coast?—Most of them are fishermen, for it is by fishing they live; the crofts don't keep them.

29,450. Now, do some of these men wish new holdings for fishermen? Is there any desire for such holdings, that is to say fishermen's holdings of a very small size suitable for fishing, and where the occupant would live mainly by the sea?—It is my opinion that the whole of the fishermen would leave the fishing if they could get holdings that would keep them going.

29,451. And give up the fishing altogether?—And give up the fishing altogether.

29,452. Is this a dangerous coast for fishing?—It is at some times of the year.

29,453. And is there a want of harbour accommodation, or have you enough of it for fishing boats?—I don't think it the best place in the district for fishermen; there is only one right harbour in it, that is Rispond.

29,454. Is that the only suitable harbour?—Yes, for the fishermen along this side.

29,455. And is it a good harbour?—It is a good harbour if there were a good pier in it.

29,456. But there is no pier?—No pier.

29,457. Does it protect from all winds, or only from some?—It protects very much from the north wind.

29,458. Is that what is called Rispond Bay?—Yes.

29,459. Is there any pier there at present?—Yes.

29,460. But you think it is not a sufficient pier?—No.

29,461. And you would be in favour of something being done to make it a pier better adapted for the purpose in view?—Yes.

29,462. *Mr Gordon.*—If there was a pier erected at Rispond would that be a good place for fishermen's houses in the neighbourhood?—Well, I don't think so.

29,463. Then though you had a pier there the fishermen would have some distance to travel to it?—Yes, the nearest is about two miles I think.

ALEXANDER SUTHERLAND, Crofter's Son, Durine (32)—*examined.*

29,464. *The Chairman.*—Is your father the occupant of a holding?—My mother.

29,465. Is she Widow Barbara Sutherland?—Yes.

29,466. Her rent is £3, 6s. 2d.; is it the old rent?—Yes.

29,467. I see the acreage is 5 acres 1 rood 8 poles arable; and 2 acres 1 rood 1 pole outrun; old rent, £3, 6s. 2d.; fixed rent £3, 10s. Does that include Rispond?—No.

29,468. Then you pay 16s. 6d. for Rispond, making £4, 6s. 6d.?—Yes.

29,469. And you have a share of the 3200 acres?—Yes.

29,470. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

29,471. At a public meeting?—From the township of Durine.

29,472. Do you only represent that township, or do you represent it and some others. (*No answer.*)

29,473. You heard the evidence given by the previous witnesses, especially by Donald Whyte?—Yes.

29,474. And do you concur in that evidence?—Yes.

29,475. Does it set forth your views with sufficient fulness?—Oh, yes.

29,476. And have you any addition to make?—Very little except this. (*Produces a statement.*)

29,477. If you have a statement, read it please.—As a delegate appointed to appear before your Royal Commission, appointed to inquire whether any land is in this parish capable of being cultivated to profit for small tenants, there is enough of land on the neighbouring sheep farms which were formerly occupied by small tenants, and if added to the present crofts would be of profit to the crofters. An addition of our present holdings would enable the crofters to get thatching for their houses as no thatch grows on our present pasture.

29,478. Is there a great want of thatch?—There is; there is no thatch to be got.

29,479. How do you obtain such thatch as you get?—We get permission for rushes on some of the remotest parts of the farm, but there is plenty thatch growing, and we cannot get it.

29,480. On the farm of Keoldale?—Yes. Some get permission.

29,481. Do you get permission?—Yes.

29,482. And do you pay anything for it?—No.

29,483. You have just the cutting and carrying home?—Yes, and that same is enough from the places we have to get it.

29,484. How far have you to carry it?—About two miles on our back before we come to the road in some places.

29,485. And how far on the road?—About eight miles.

29,485A. Between nine and ten miles altogether?—Yes.

29,486. And how often do you require to go in a year to get the thatch?—We have to go every year for places, but if we could get bent we could go every two years.

29,487. Do some get bent?—Very few.

29,488. Is there plenty bent on Balnakill and Keoldale?—Yes.

29,489. A good deal of the land is sandy perhaps?—Yes, there is a portion sandy on the seaside.

29,490. There might be some danger in turning it up for being blown away?—It could not be turned up.

29,491. It is better as it is?—Yes.

29,492. And in the event of your getting land on these farms of that kind, would you leave it very much as it is?—No, there is plenty outside that.

29,493. But that kind of land is best as it is?—Yes.

29,494. For grazing purposes?—Yes, or thatching.

29,495. *Mr Sutherland.*—One question with regard to the thatch. This getting of thatch is a matter of favour?—Yes, it is a matter of favour, and great favour too.

29,496. And it is used in that way?—Yes.

29,497. And you complain of that?—Yes, there is a protest to the shops for going to the rushes.

29,498. Your general statement with regard to that, is that you are compelled to go far away for rushes which you have to carry on your backs, while bent that would be better thatch and quite adjacent to you, is made a matter of favour on the part of the farmer?—Yes.

29,499. Are you of opinion that you have a legal right to thatch?—I don't know.

29,500. You don't know the state of the law?—No.

29,501. As a matter of fact and usage, have you always been permitted to get the nearest thatch for your houses?—We used to get it at one time, but not now.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Alexander Sutherland.

29,502. Would there be any danger to the links from cutting the bent the way it is used for thatch?—Not the least; it would only grow the better.

29,503. You would not interfere with the roots at all?—No.

29,504. And it is the roots that are of use in binding the sand?—Yes.

29,505. And the cutting of it you say would only improve the bent?—Just improve the bent.

29,506. Make it stronger?—Yes.

29,507. Have you brought this matter of thatch before the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

29,508. And did they give any decision regarding it?—Not a thing, they left it as it was.

29,509. Did they make any statement with regard to it?—No.

29,510. Did they tell you they had no power to deal with it?—No, they did not.

29,511. So you don't know whether they have or not?—They kept us all on the quiet till they got out.

29,512. Did they give you any deliverance at all with regard to the thatch?—No.

29,513. *The Chairman.*—Was the application with regard to the thatch made in the fair rent applications?—Yes.

29,514. Was there any application presented to regulate the thatch, to make up a scheme for regulating the supply of thatch?—No.

29,515. *Mr Macaulay.*—In your opinion is that bent upon these links valuable during times of snow for sheep-feeding purposes?—I don't think so.

29,516. You are of opinion that it is not?—That it is not.

Roderick Campbell.

RODERICK CAMPBELL, Crofter's Son, Durine (46) —*examined.*

29,517. *The Chairman.*—Who is the crofter in your case?—Widow Mary Campbell.

29,518. The area is 4 acres 3 roods 1 pole arable, and 0 acres 2 roods 22 poles outrun; the old rent was £4, 11s. 1d., and the fixed rent seems to be the same, £4, 11s. 1d?—Yes.

29,519. You have a share of Rispond?—Yes.

29,520. And that falls to be added, 16s. 6d.?—Yes.

29,521. Making £5, 7s. 7d. altogether?—Yes.

29,522. Have you a written statement?—Yes.

29,523. We will be glad to hear it.—As a delegate from the township of Durine, one of our grievances is that owing to the smallness of our holdings we can give no rest to the land. You can easily see that there is abundance of what was once arable land in our neighbourhood which could easily be divided amongst us. Also we are greatly in need of a cow park; there are two parks adjoining our crofts which formerly belonged to the crofters and ought to be returned to them with as little delay as possible. All the land in the parish worth cultivating, and worth for pasture, is occupied by sheep farmers. It is true enough about the township of Durine that there is scarcity of milk in it for the want of pasture.

29,524. You are appearing here as a delegate?—Yes.

29,525. Along with Whyte and David Mackenzie?—Yes.

29,526. You have heard the evidence of the previous witnesses?—Yes.

29,527. Do you concur in that evidence?—Yes.

29,528. Now, you mentioned particularly the matter of giving no rest to the land?—Yes.

29,529. That, I think you said, was due to the smallness of the holdings?—Yes.

29,530. Have you tried to cultivate by rotation?—Yes, but it was too small to allow of that.

29,531. The area is too small?—Yes.

29,532. We have found in some quarters where the area was very small that rotation was followed out: have you tried rotation?—Yes.

29,533. But you found you could not manage it?—It was too small, I tried it every second year myself.

29,534. And you had to give it up, do you mean?—No, I am continuing it yet. Durness, Sutherlandshire.

29,535. Well, continuing it even on the size of holding you have, have you found it an advantage?—Yes, I find it an advantage; when it is two years out under clover I get a better crop off it. Roderick Campbell.

29,536. Even in your small holding it is more profitable to have rotation than go on cultivating every year?—Yes.

29,537. There is a perceptible difference on the value of the crop?—Yes.

29,538. Is rotation a common thing amongst you, or is it the exception?—The exception; there are two or three among us who work it.

29,539. Speaking for yourself individually, are you desirous of getting a new settlement, or an extension of grazing?—An extension.

29,540. In what form?—Arable and grazing.

25,541. And to remain in your present holding?—Yes.

29,542. Where would that extension in your judgment naturally come from?—From both Balnakill and Keoldale.

29,543. Do they both march with you?—Balnakill marches with us, and part of the pasture of Keoldale marches with us.

29,544. The central farm of Balnakill marches with you and part of the Keoldale pasture?—Yes.

29,545. Have you anything to add to what has already been laid before us, or do you rest content with concurring with the evidence given?—Yes.

29,546. *Mr Sutherland.*—You mentioned about a cow park?—Yes.

29,547. Where was that cow park?—On the Balnakill farm now; it was once the crofters, but it was taken from them.

29,548. About what time?—About forty-eight years ago, or thirty-eight, I am not exactly sure.

29,549. And had they got that cow park for a long time before then?—Yes, they had it until it was forced from them.

29,550. And added to the large farm of Balnakill?—Yes.

29,551. What is the size of the park?—It was a very large park.

29,552. Is it 10 acres?—More than that. I am sure it is over 80 acres.

29,553. And you say that down to forty-eight years ago the crofters had that?—Yes.

29,554. Did you ever hear that their rent was taken down when the park was taken?—Never, we pay for that cow park to this very day: we never received any reduction.

29,555. What use is it put to by the Balnakill farmer, is it being cultivated?—No, grazing.

29,556. It was taken, you say, from the small tenants and given to the big farm of Balnakill?—Yes.

29,557. And would it be of great use to the village of Durine if they got it?—It would be the best thing they could get. The cows have to travel every day through the summer eight miles, four going and four coming, before they can get anything that is worth eating.

29,558. And it is adjoining the holdings of the people?—Yes.

29,559. You could show us that park?—I will show you every inch of it.

29,560. *The Chairman.*—You say your cows travel four miles?—Yes.

29,561. Where do they travel to?—Over the other side of Loch Meadaidh.

29,562. You mean to the south side of Loch Meadaidh?—Yes.

29,563. There is good grazing there?—Pretty fair.

29,564. How many cows go there during the grazing season?—I cannot say how many go.

29,565. A large number?—Oh, yes, the whole of the Durine crofters' cows go there.

29,566. They don't travel that every day?—Every day they go out there.

29,567. And are they going there now?—No, not now.

29,568. Up to what time this year do the cows go there?—During the summer months, three or four months in summer.

29,569. And is that the only cow grazing you have?—That is the only good grazing we have.

29,570. What extent of grazing have you there?—Just the hill side.

29,571. It is at a low level?—Yes.

29,572 Round the fringe of the Loch?—Just so.

29,573. Now you mentioned a park; is that park immediately to the south of Balnakill steading?—Yes, just there.

29,574. Between Loch Crois-a'-phuill and the township of Durine?—Yes.

29,575. There is a road through the middle of it, is there?—Yes.

29,576. That is the direct road from the Balnakill steading to the village of Durness?—Yes.

29,577. And do you say it is 80 acres in extent?—I am certain sure it is all that.

29,578. Does the corner of that park, the south-east corner, march with the township lands of Durine?—Yes.

29,579. *Mr Gordon.*—Does this park lie between Balnakill and the glebe?—No.

29,580. *The Chairman.*—It is to the north of the manse? [*Mr Maciver.*—To the east of the manse.]

29,581. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are there some Highland cows in it just now?—Yes.

29,582. *Mr Gordon.*—It is on the west side of the Laxford road?—Yes.

29,583. What is the park used for just now?—For pasture.

29,584. Is it used for any special purpose, such as a ram park, or just a cattle park?—Just a cattle park.

29,585. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—Do you know who was tenant of Balnakill at the time this park was added to that farm?—Dunlop, I think it was.

29,586. And do you happen to know the circumstances under which that addition was made?—It was taken from them; they were bound to let it go: it was taken from them by force.

29,587. Did the crofters get anything in return for it?—Nothing.

29,588. You are certain of that?—I am certain of that.

Kenneth Sutherland, Cottar, Sangomore (73). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

29,589. *The Chairman*—Do you pay any rent?—I pay rent out of the house, but I gave it up.

29,590. Gave up the house, or gave up the rent-paying?—The rent; I stopped paying rent for the house.

29,591. How long is it since you stopped paying rent for the house?—Two years.

29,592. What was the rent when you paid a rent?—10s. When the Commission was here they asked me if I paid rent, and I told them that I had heretofore, but that I was now going to stop it as I was paying two rents.

29,593. How many cottars are in Sangomore?—In the village of Sangomore I know of none except another and myself.

29,594. Have you any land at all?—I have none except a small bit that I have from my brother. My father was evicted out of Durine to a common pasture, and they reclaimed so much of that common pasture. As soon as I trenched it I got married, and my younger brother got that land that I reclaimed, and I was the oldest in the family.

29,595. Are you anxious to get a new holding?—Yes, indeed, very much, and I need it badly.

29,596. *Mr Sutherland.*—Would you be ready to take a new holding if you got it?—Money makes money, and I should certainly do my duty.

29,597. You would be quite prepared to undertake the labour of making another home?—Yes, to-morrow.

29,598. And where do you think a good holding could be got which you would like to occupy?—Yes, certainly, a very good idea to get a piece of Nubeg on the Keoldale farm where my ancestors were.

29,599. Where is Nubeg?—On the Keoldale farm.

George Campbell, Fisherman, Laid (52). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

29,600. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—The croft is in my mother's name.

29,601. What is her name?—Widow Donald Campbell.

29,602. Did your father die recently?—Yes.

29,603. And now the croft is in your mother's name?—Yes.

29,604. What is her full name?—Widow Margaret Swanson or Campbell.

29,605. The area is 2 acres 0 roods 20 poles arable, and 155 acres 3 roods 22 poles of outrun, the common pasture is 2300 acres; the old rent was £1, and the fixed rent is £1, 5s.?—Yes.

29,606. Did you get additional grazing?—No.

29,607. Have you a written statement?—I would rather speak in Gaelic.

29,608. Did you bring a paper with you?—No.

29,609. Were you appointed at a meeting of the crofters to come here as a delegate?—Yes, as one delegate.

29,610. And was Thomas Mackay another?—Thomas Mackay is the other.

29,611. Are the Laid crofters overcrowded?—Yes, and the place in which they are is not worth.

29,612. Would they be willing, if some of them were removed to better holdings, for the remainder to occupy additions from the crofts vacated?—I suppose so, but very few indeed would remain.

29,613. Would they like all to be shifted together?—Yes, that is what their opinion is.

29,614. Is that because the land they occupy at present is exceedingly poor?—Yes, because it is worth nothing at all, not worth labouring.

29,615. Does it consist almost exclusively of moss?—Moss, and very hard rocky stones, no clay at all in the place.

29,616. I gather from your evidence that the people have no attachment to the place?—No, and never had. Those who came there first were evicted from the Strath as far away as Strathnaver.

29,617. Where, in your opinion, could new settlements be got?—Strathmore is altogether vacant, and the townships on Eriboll farm from which the crofters have been in the past evicted.

29,618. What were the names of these townships?—Badlehamhish, Heilem, Achlochy, Arnaboll, Badmheon. A man has told me to-day, who knew, that there were three times as many people on Strathmore as was told you at Tongue.

29,619. At any rate the land there, in your opinion, is very much more suitable than the land you have got?—Yes, much better.

29,620. Are the soil and the climate both better?—The climate is much the same, but the land is certainly better.

29,621. Suppose there was enough of accommodation in Strathmore for the whole of the crofters of Laid, would they be willing to go bodily to Strathmore?—I am sure they would, on a fair rent; that is their opinion and desire.

29,622. What stock have you yourself?—Six head of cattle and eight sheep, that is all.

29,623. I must ask you this question, how do you make your livelihood?—We are working at the fishing, such as can fish; away at the herring fishing on the east coast.

29,624. Do you depend more upon fishing and labour than upon your small holding?—It is the fishing that has been keeping us alive, and lobster fishing. The children and women work at whelks.

29,625. *Mr Sutherland.*—Would you go over these old townships again?—Badlehamhish, Heilim, Ach-

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

George Campbell.

lochy, Arnabol, Badmheain, Achgharasaid, Achavuillin, Strathbeg, Polla, Eilean-a'-Choirie. That is the land we are seeking.

29,626. Why are you building such a fine fence down there?—There was really no use in us labouring that land at all unless we protect it from the cattle.

29,627. Are you not of opinion that the dyke is much more valuable than the land?—I know that bit that I erected there is worth three times the value of the land.

29,628. Would you yourself be willing to go to a good holding?—Oh, yes, indeed.

29,629. And you are speaking also for your neighbours?—Yes, the people are not lazy who would create such improvements in such a place.

29,630. Were you born in Laid yourself?—Yes.

29,631. Where did your parents come from?—My father was born in Strathnaver and my mother on Nubeg on Keoldale.

29,632. Do you know the name of the township of Strathnaver your father came from?—Skail.

29,633. Do you know Skail yourself?—I never saw it.

29,634. Do you remember about what time Laid was formed as a township?—About forty-eight years ago.

29,635. Were there any houses, do you know, there at all before?—There was a man told me to-day that a man came there from Strathmore, and that the ground was so poor that no objections were taken to his remaining there, and for years he occupied that place without any interference.

29,636. And do you think it was for the improvement of the condition of the people that they were sent to Laid?—It is a very wrong thing to say that the people were removed from the straths to the seashore to better their circumstances; and the best proof of that statement is for people to go and examine the land of Laid, and to compare it with the land of the straths from which they came.

29,637. And you think that, in the face of these facts, there is no use of arguing the question?—Anything that I can say here will be very weak indeed unless you gentlemen will go and see the land that we occupy and compare it with Strathnaver.

29,638. *Mr Gordon.*—You are a fisherman, Mr Campbell?—Yes.

29,639. Do you work at white fishing at all?—No.

29,640. Are there any men in your township who carry on the trade of fishermen throughout the whole year?—No.

29,641. Have you boats that would suit for the white fishing?—No, to enable us to go outside.

29,642. Are there any men in your township who would be inclined to follow the profession of fishermen if they had boats?—I don't think it; they are getting tired of fishing.

29,643. Would that not be in consequence of their not being able to go outside to the best fishing ground?—No, I don't think so; my impression is that there are six times as many engaged in the fishing as ought to be.

29,644. The moving of any members of the township to a proper harbour would not be what the people would like?—No, that is not their desire.

29,645. Suppose that a part of them were moved over to the opposite side of the loch to Heilem, where there is a good harbour, would they be inclined to carry on and prosecute the profession of fishermen there?—No, I don't think so.

29,646. They don't care for fishing as a trade?—No, there is no market here for fishing.

29,647. They would rather have crofts?—Yes.

29,648. *The Chairman.*—Can you tell me how many paupers there are in Laid?—I cannot tell.

29,649. Are there a number?—Yes, and I suppose they will soon be all paupers if left there.

29,650. Is this the state of matters that owing to the poverty of the township, the crofters have very often to help each other: one with a little more food feels obliged to give assistance to another with less?—Yes, at times.

29,651. *Mr Macaulay.*—Would these tenants of Laid, if moved up to Strathmore and given holdings there, be able to put up buildings and fences?—I don't think that many of them would be able to do so.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

George Campbell.

THOMAS MACKAY, Fisherman, Laid (48)—*examined.*

Thomas Mackay.

29,652. *The Chairman.*—Who holds the croft?—My mother-in-law.

29,653. What is her name?—Widow Isabel Sutherland or Mackintosh.

29,654. The area is 2 acres 1 rood 23 poles arable, and 16 acres 3 roods 3 poles of outrun; the old rent was £1, 0s. 6d., and the fixed rent is £1, 5s.?—Yes.

29,655. Have you a written statement?—I have not.

29,656. You heard the evidence given by Campbell?—Yes.

29,657. And do you concur in that evidence?—I do. I was specially appointed by the people of Laid to explain their grievance from the beginning of the township.

29,658. You wish to make a statement?—I wish to say a few words if your honours allow it.

29,659. Yes, certainly.—Previous to the people settling down in Laid it was under sheep. The sheep pined and died, and they were forced to withdraw them at a considerable loss. Afterwards there was a practical forester consulted so that there might be a plantation put there. Well, it was the same agreement, that the ground was too cold and incapable of producing anything of that sort. That was also withdrawn, and the only remedy was to put crofters in it. Not a green patch on it whatever, only heather, and they began toiling a little bit, and they were going to get a recompense from the Duchess of Sutherland in the shape of oatmeal or money. Some of them got a boll of meal, some of them got half a boll, or as low as a stone of meal. Well, according to their work, certainly, they were paid. As they had made the improvements they got the promise of seven years' standing at one shilling of rent. Before this time expired they were raised to 14s., from 14s. to £1, from £1 to £1, 15s., against which they appealed and the 15s. was withdrawn. The only scheme for that was then that if the crofter died, the son coming into possession, the 15s. was clapped upon the son for entering into the rent-roll, and that continued till the Crofters Commission has taken it off some of them. One crofter still on Laid is paying the 15s. upon a house and a lot that cost not a penny to the Duke of Sutherland. The land of Laid is worthless; it goes away before the gales like chaff before the wind. By rain and westerly winds it is wasting away. I am about fifteen years on Laid, and I say the half of Laid has all vanished into Loch Eriboll. As to the statement about the straths and the available lands for crofters to settle in, I agree with the statements given by previous witnesses.

29,660. You are described to us as a fisherman. Do you carry on the occupation of a fisherman now?—I do.

29,661. What fishing do you mainly prosecute?—I go to the east coast, to the herring fishing. I am sometimes successful and other times not.

29,662. You go as a hired hand?—Yes.

29,663. You have no boat of your own?—No.

29,664. Have any of the Laid crofters boats?—Small boats not capable of going out of the Loch.

29,665. Catching fish round the doors?—Catching fish round the doors.

29,666. Have you been fairly successful in recent years as a fisherman?—The last two years pretty fair, but last year was a complete failure.

29,667. And how have you been this year?—This year it was a failure so far as I am concerned.

29,668. Then, do the crofters of Laid mainly depend on the sea for their means of livelihood?—On the sea entirely; there is no other labour convenient.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Thomas Mackay.

29,669. What crops are grown at Laid? Do they grow corn and potatoes?—Corn and potatoes and barley.

29,670. Any turnips?—A few turnips, very little, because the ground is so light, and the sun shines upon it when the turnip is planted into it, a gale of wind overturns the drill and it is all waste.

29,671. Many parts of the soil are sandy?—None whatever.

29,672. What are they?—White flint and moss. The water bursts in between the white flint and the moss; it bursts on the surface and overtakes the crop, taking the potatoes sometimes away down below.

29,673. And do you sometimes lose entire crops?—Parts of it.

29,674. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a native of the county?—I am.

29,675. And have you lived long in Laid?—About fifteen years.

29,676. You know all you are speaking of by personal knowledge and experience?—I do.

29,677. You have given a very interesting historical account of the rise and growth of this interesting settlement. You said that sheep pined and died, trees would not grow, so then it was planted with another crop?—Another crop.

29,678. Transferred from another place?—At no loss to the estate.

29,679. Have you any idea how much rental is extracted out of that miserable place?—£22, 19s. 6d., or something like that, from the eighteen crofters.

29,680. You have mentioned also a progressive rise of rental there?—I have.

29,681. Have you any idea yourself what you are paying £1, 5s. or £1, 15s. for?—I can't see it, only for peats and water.

29,682. Are you not rather inclined to think you ought to be paid for living there rather than anything else?—That is my opinion.

29,683. Did you apply for an extension of holdings from the Crofters Commission?—We have.

29,684. What did you ask for?—Eilean-a'-Choirie.

29,685. The green island near your holdings?—Yes.

29,686. And you did not get it?—Did not get it.

29,687. You mentioned with regard to the soil of your holdings that it was so light that the wind drifted it away?—That is the case.

29,688. And that it is a shallow peat moss resting upon flinty rock?—Yes.

29,689. Is that the reason why trees would not grow there?—No clay to subsist the roots.

29,690. Is that why the sheep would not thrive upon it?—That is the reason, only heather kept for grouse.

29,691. I need not ask you any further questions on the subject, because I suppose the planting of a colony there would be defended or justified by no person?—Oh, it is useless.

29,692. *Mr Gordon.*—You speak about the wind blowing away your turnips when you sowed them. Does the wind blow up and down the valley there?—It comes with blasts off the mountains into the lochs.

29,693. It does not blow either up or down?—Not as it does in low lands, squalls we call it. We are caught pretty often in the loch with them.

29,694. I was going to suggest that if it blew up and down the loch you could drill your turnips alongside the loch?—Not practicable, it would not work.

29,695. The light ground is against it?—Yes, because we may get westerly wind or easterly in a blast; the wind is all round the compass in two seconds.

29,696. A sort of whirlwind?—Whirlwind.

George Campbell.

GEORGE CAMPBELL, Crofter, Durine (61).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

29,697. *The Chairman.*—I see your area is 4 acres 1 rood 9 poles arable, and 1 acre 3 roods 17 poles of outrun, with a share in 3200 acres of hill?—Yes.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

George Campbell

29,698. Your rent was £2, 14s. reduced to £2, 11s.?—Yes.

29,699. Have you a written statement?—No.

29,700. Did you hear the evidence given by Donald Whyte and David Mackenzie?—Yes.

29,701. And do you concur in their evidence?—I agree with them.

29,702. Does the evidence given by them fully set forth your own views on the matter in hand?—Yes, about that.

Evander Maciver.

EVANDER MACIVER, Factor, Scourie, (82)—*examined.*

29,703. *The Chairman.*—You are factor on the Scourie management of the Duke of Sutherland's Estates?—I am.

29,704. How long have you been factor?—I have been here since Whitsunday 1845.

29,705. Would you kindly read your statement.—

	Acres.	Acres.
The *Parish of Durness* by the Ordnance Survey contains in all about		140,000
Of which water foreshore is about	6,000	
And there is in the Tongue Management about	29,000	
		35,500
Leaving in the Scourie Management about		104,500

Which appear to be thus occupied:—

1. Sheep Farms,	75,000	
2. Forest,	18,200	
3. Crofters,	11,800	
		105,000

The rental of them in 1892 was:—

1. Sheep Farm,	£2,075	
2. Forest,	865	
3. Crofters,	287	
		£3,227

The contents may thus be divided:—

	Farm.	Arable.	Outrun.	Moor Pasture.	Total.	
1	Balnakeil,	120	700	24,180	25,000	
2	Keoldale (in Durness),	90	640	21,770	22,500	and in Eddrachillis 6000 acres.
3	Eriboll,	150	70	27,280	27,500	
4	Forest,	...	...	...	18,200	
5	Crofters,	286	374	11,140	11,800	
					105,000	

The rents of the Durness crofters were slightly under the present rent in 1845 when I came to Sutherland; the rents of the sheep farms were more than doubled up to 1872, but since 1882 there has been a large reduction, about 40 per cent. from what they rose to, and the tendency continues downward.

The Duke of Sutherland expended a considerable amount in reclaiming land about twenty years ago on Eriboll farm, 65 acres were reclaimed, but it turned out badly; it was a poor subject, but was beside the old arable on that farm; and although farmed well and richly, the crops produced are inferior.

His Grace also expended in reclamation at Keoldale, and at Lerin, Sangomore, and Durine, but the results in all these cases were disappointing.

The three farms of Balnakeil, Keoldale, and Eriboll afford a considerable amount of employment in Durness.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver.

The rates in Highland parishes are a serious burden to the landlord and tenants. In 1892 there was paid by the Duke of Sutherland no less an amount than £518, 16s. 7d. for poor and education, and county assessment in Durness. The population by last census was under 1000, but were it not for rates from the shootings, fishings, and forest, the rates would be higher on each tenant than they are.

The Crofters Commissioners visited Durness in 1890, and fixed fair rents for all the crofts in the parish. The result of their labours was the reduction of £2, 13s. on the rental. They cancelled £15, 17s. 9d. of arrears and ordered £30, 3s. 9d. to be paid, most of which is still due. Since their visit, I regret to say, the rents have been paid irregularly. There is now an arrear of £234, 14s., and the rent of the current year, for year to Whitsunday 1894, is due next month in addition.

The *Parish of Eddrachillis* by the Ordnance Survey is estimated exclusive of water, foreshore, &c. to contain 135,551 acres.

The parish is thus occupied :—

	Acres.
1. Sheep Farms, &c.,	27,551
2. Forests,	77,800
3. Crofters,	30,200
Total,	135,551

The rental of the above in 1892 was :—

1. Sheep Farms,	£371
2. Forests,	1,380
3. Crofters,	607
Total,	£2,358

The contents may be thus divided :—

	Farm.	Arable.	Outrun.	Moor Pasture.	Total.
		Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1	Duart Beg,	4	20	3,776	3,800
2	Scourie,	35	15	5,090	5,140
3	Sandwood,	8	10	1,922	1,940
4	Shegra,	10	28	1,262	1,300
5	Skercha,	...	...	4,470	4,470
6	Rhimichie,	10	8	1,902	1,920
7	Rhiconich,	2	2	1,517	1,521
8	Handa,	...	20	740	760
9	Keoldale,	...	...	6,760	6,700
					27,551

The population of Eddrachillis exceeds that of Durness. I find the rates for poor, education, and county assessment in 1892 amounted to £548, 19s. 4d., —on an assessable rental of £4600,—paid by the landlord and an equal sum paid by the tenants, a very serious deduction from the landlord's rent and a large addition to the rent of the tenants.

The Crofters Commissioners went over all the crofts in Eddrachillis in 1890, and fixed fair rents. The rents fixed were less in amount than they found them—by about 10 per cent. There are 160 crofters in Eddrachillis, and their yearly rent amounts to £648, 5s. 11d., excluding cottars and others. They cancelled £283, 15s., of the arrears and ordered £333, 6s. 5d. to be paid —a considerable portion of which has been paid, but there is a part of it still due.

The arrears of rent have increased since. I regret to say the amount now due amounts to £477, 7s. 9d., and a year's rent to Whitsunday 1894 falls due next month amounting to £648, 5s. 11d.

Statement as to Reay Forest.

In 1840 the first portion afforested was the beats of Aultaurynie and Gobernuisgach—the former situated in Eddrachillis, the latter in Durness. They had been previously occupied as a sheep farm, with a wedder stock of cheviot sheep, at a yearly rent of £180, by Mr Innes of Sandside.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver.

In 1849 Earl Grosvenor became tenant of 'Lone,' 'Arkle,' and 'Foinabhein.' with the angling of Loch Stack and the river Laxford. This ground was previously occupied as a sheep farm, with a stock of cheviot wedder sheep, by Mr John Paterson, at a rent of £170.

In 1860 the Earl of Dudley became tenant of all the above forest, to which was added 'Ben Hee' and 'Overscaig,' which had previously been occupied as a sheep farm, with cheviot wedder stock, by the Duke of Sutherland, the rent of which is believed to have been £125.

In 1871 there was added Badnabay and Stack, which had previously been occupied as a portion of Glendhu farm by Messrs. W. & J. Gunn, at a rent of £270, when the Duke of Westminster (who had previously held the shooting) became tenant of the whole forest at a rent of £2070.

In 1891 the wedder lands of Eriboll farm was added at a rent of £500 making his total rent £2575, of which £125 is payable to the Dunrobin management for the portion of 'Ben Hee' in the parish of Lairg.

The Duke of Westminister sublets the Gobernuisgach Beat and also the Ben Hee portion.

The area of the whole forest as above described is about 78,890 acres, of which 15,490 acres are in the parish of Lairg and in the Dunrobin Management, and the heights of the hills vary from 2000 to 3000 feet above the sea level. There is very little arable land over the whole of this forest, and, so far as is known, there never were crofters on any portion of it. The tradition is that previous to the introduction of sheep these hills were kept in the hands of the Reay family for their own sport, and that they gave permission to a few of their tenants on the coast to go with their cattle and horses to sheilings for a short time in the summer months.

There were neither roads nor paths leading to or from any portion of this forest till 1842 when a shooting lodge was built at Gobernuisgach, and a road was made to it from the public road leading through Strathmore, by which access to it was got from Aultnaharrow.

The Sutherland family acquired the Reay estates in 1829, and had constructed a road 61 miles in length along the coast from Kylesku by Scourie and Durness to Tongue, which is said to have cost upwards of £30,000. In 1848 the road from Lairg to Laxford was begun, and finished in 1851, which gave access to the forest on its southern and western sides, from Lairg on the east, and Scourie on the west. A shooting lodge was erected at Stack and another at Lochmore. Paths were then made along the Laxford river to several beats from these lodges. The expense of all which was paid for partly by the Duke of Sutherland and Lord Dudley, but principally by the Duke of Westminster. A road was made from Loch Merkland to the lodge of Gobernuisgach, at the joint expense of the Dukes of Sutherland and Westminster—and in 1871 when the Duke of Westminster became tenant of the forest he added largely to the Lochmore lodge and also to Stack; and, in the following years, built largely at Achfary and erected new houses for the foresters, and opened new paths in various portions of the forest at an enormous outlay.

The outlays made since 1840 when the forest was first commenced on all these improvements now amount to no less a sum than £40,000, a great portion of which was paid in wages to the crofters and natives of the country who performed much of the work. The yearly maintenance of these paths and other works now affords regular employment to the people of the district, and the outlay for servants and farm labour in connection is also very considerable.

Including rent, wages, and incidental expenses of every description the annual outlay in this forest is about £4500. There is no doubt that the formation of the Reay forest has been an immense benefit to the crofters in its vicinity, and that the large rental it produces tends much to keep down the assessments and rates now payable in equal proportions by land-

lords and tenants in the several parishes of which these forests form a part—namely, Eddrachillis, Durness, and Lairg.

Statement as to Glendhu Forest.

Glendhu forest is wholly in the parish of Eddrachillis, and is in extent about 35,000 acres. It rises abruptly from the sea at Lochs Glen-Coul and Glendhu, and the hills vary from 1000 to 2600 feet in height. There is very little arable land—barely 30 acres—over the whole extent of it. Being situated in a very hilly district, the rainfall is very heavy. No accurate account of it has been kept, but the annual rainfall cannot be less than 50 to 60 inches on the average. At Scourie where we keep a very correct account of the rainfall, the average for the last fifty years has been about 40 inches.

Before the introduction of sheep in the early part of this century there were some crofters at the sea side at Lochs Glen-Coul, Glendhu, and Kylestrome. It was let as a sheep farm to the Messrs. Gunn from 1832 to 1886. In that year no tenant could be got to take it as a sheep farm. It was occupied for a year by the Duke of Sutherland—to Whitsunday 1887—when the sheep were removed from it and it was afforested and let to the Duke of Westminster at a rent of £800, which was increased in 1892 to £900. Two portions of the sheep farm still remain under sheep, viz., Glen-Coul on the south, and Duartbeg on the north west.

The farm was let to Messrs. Gunn at a rent of £1395, but, when the prices of sheep and wool fell, this was reduced to £1085. And at the close of the lease, the farm was offered to Mr James Gunn, the sitting tenant, at a rent of £800; but he refused to take it, and the proprietor having two large farms in hand, in Assynt, in its vicinity, was compelled to remove the sheep and put it under deer—no tenant coming forward to offer for it.

Considerable outlays on houses, roads, and fences have been made by the Duke of Westminster since he became tenant of Glendhu forest, amounting to no less a sum than £3450, affording employment to the crofters and others in its vicinity, and, in addition to the regular staff of three foresters and farm servants at Kylestrome, a number of gillies and extra hands are employed during the shooting season. The annual outlay on rents, rates, and servants of all descriptions is about £1630. (Signed) E. Maciver.

29,706. You say that the farm rents have come down 40 per cent. and that the tendency is still downwards?—Yes, and there is considerable difficulty in letting a farm.

29,707. Would you infer from that that the large sheep farming system, judged by present circumstances, has been a failure?—It is a failure at present.

29,708. And has been a failure for some years past?—For the last few years.

29,709. And the outlook at present is gloomy?—It is.

29,710. What was the area of the farm of Balnakill when you became factor in 1845?—The very same that it is now, with the exception of one small park at the boundary of the Durine tenants, which was given to the inn. That, as far as I can recollect, is the only difference.

29,711. Was any part of what is now known as Balnakill farm taken from small tenants?—Not in my time.

29,712. Has any change been made in your time on the area of the Keoldale farm?—None.

29,713. It remains as it was in 1845?—Exactly.

29,714. And do you make the same observation with regard to Eriboll?—The same observation. I believe that this place of Laid was a portion of Eriboll, and that a very large rent was paid to Mr Clark for giving it up to the crofters. That took place some sixty years ago, perhaps about the year 1835 or 1836.

29,715. The settlement of crofters at Laid is not a matter that came within your management as factor?—Oh, no, it was long before I came, ten or fifteen years before.

29,716. But does the account we have heard of the settlement of crofters there agree in the main with your knowledge and information?—The report I always heard was that there was a great complaint of congestion in the parish of Durness, and to relieve that the factor of the day thought it would be a good thing to give them places up there, that being the only ground available at the time.

29,717. Some of the occupants of Laid seem to have come further than from Durness; one man tells us he came from Strathnaver. However, do many crofters at present in the parish of Durness obtain work on the estate?—These three large farms give a considerable amount of employment to the people in Durness.

29,718. Are you able to speak of that from personal knowledge, or is it an impression merely?—I hear of a number of them being so employed.

29,719. How many?—I cannot speak as to numbers, but I know that on large farms like these there is a considerable amount of labour and work throughout the year, and they must take it from the population that is near.

29,720. Do you know anything of the poor rates of the township of Laid?—No, but the inspector of the poor is in the room here, and he will be able to tell you; the rate has always been very considerable, that I know.

29,721. Do you know that the rates effeiring to that township or arising from poverty in that township are greater than elsewhere? Is there more pauperism in short in Laid than in any other township in the parish?—I think there is.

29,722. Do you attribute that to the character of the holdings?—It must partly proceed from that.

29,723. Then, would you be in favour of people in their unfortunate position being transferred to better holdings, if such holdings could be properly obtained?—Certainly.

29,724. Passing for a moment to the parish of Eddrachillis, you mentioned a number of the farms there, Duart-beg, Scourie, Sandwood, Shegra, Skercha, Rhimichie, Rhiconich, Handa, and part of Keoldale. Have all these been the same in area from the time you commenced your management, or have there been changes?—There have been considerable changes upon these farms during my time.

29,725. Take the farm of Duart-beg?—That was a portion of Glendhu.

29,726. You mean of Glendhu forest?—Of Glendhu farm before it was converted into a forest.

29,727. There was a Glendhu farm, part of which was made a forest, and the remainder turned into the farm of Duart-beg, is that the way of it?—Yes, but Duart is a farm of some 4000 acres, while Glendhu was a farm of about 40,000 or 50,000 acres.

29,728. Then comes Scourie farm, is that your own farm?—Yes.

29,729. Has it undergone any increase?—Yes, there were two little pieces outside of Loch Laxford added to it since I became occupant. The tenants of them wished to go out to America, and they marched very awkwardly with my farm, so after the tenants left the land was added to my farm.

29,730. Two crofters' holdings?—Yes.

29,731. On what part of the farm were these holdings?—On Loch Laxford.

29,732. Then, as to Sandwood farm, has it been altered in your time?—It has been a farm for a century, I suppose.

29,733. Of the same area?—Of the same area.

29,734. What do you say as to Shegra?—Shegra was occupied by crofters, but when the potato disease came upon us there was a very strong desire expressed by a number of the crofters to emigrate to America, and the Duke of Sutherland expended a very large amount in sending them there. This was about the years 1848 and 1849.

29,735. The potato famine in Scotland occurred, I think, in the year 1848?—Yes.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver.

29,736. Was that emigration a voluntary process?—Wholly, and there were strong petitions sent to the Duke begging him to assist them.

29,737. How many emigrated in that way?—The principal number went from Assynt, and a considerable number went from Eddrachillis.

29,738. And the whole of the farm of Shegra became vacated in that way?—Yes. I am not quite sure that all who were in Shegra went away, but there were a great many vacant lots in the district after the emigration, and those who did not go to America were provided with lots elsewhere.

29,739. All the crofters left what is now the farm of Shegra?—Every one, and it was let as a sheep farm.

29,740. It had been a very poor township?—Yes, with very sandy ground.

29,741. I suppose it had the same name, the township of Shegra?—Yes.

29,742. What do you say as to the next farm, Skercha?—It was a portion of that farm which Mr. Paterson held and which was converted into a forest. It was the low end of it, and not being required for the forest it was let as a sheep farm. There is not an acre of arable land in it.

29,743. When was it formed into a separate farm?—I think my statement mentions that.

29,744. A great many years ago at any rate?—A good many years ago.

29,745. Then you mentioned another farm, Rhimichie?—Yes. There were crofters there; some went to America, and others were disposed of in other ways.

29,746. Was it a farm formed out of crofters' land?—Out of crofters' land.

29,747. Entirely?—Entirely.

29,748. Do you remember the date of that?—1848 or 1849.

29,749. And that was a voluntary case, was it?—Entirely.

29,750. Rhiconich comes next with 1517 acres?—That has been for a long time occupied in connection with the hotel.

29,751. You mentioned the island of Handa?—I was tenant of it for a very great number of years, but when the Crofters Commission came to Scourie, Handa was given to the hotel-keeper, in return for which he gave up all his rights in the mainland of Scourie to the crofters.

29,752. And is it now held by the hotel-keeper?—Yes.

29,753. Then, lastly, I think you said that 6700 acres of Keoldale are in the parish of Eddrachillis?—Yes, along the coast to the west of Cape Wrath.

29,754. And has that land always formed part of that farm in your time?—Always, since I came to Sutherland.

29,755. You mentioned particularly that in 1891 the wedderlands of Eriboll farm were turned into forest?—Yes.

29,756. What part of the farm is that; is it on the loch?—No, it is up in the interior, far up in the interior. *(Refers to Map).* Wedder farming is a very unprofitable mode of occupying sheep land at present; Mr Clark was very willing to be quit of his wedderlands and there was no other way of occupying it than by converting it into a forest.

29,757. You mean that it was turned into a forest, because you could not continue it as wedderland?—Just so.

29,758. And was the rent £500?—The rent is £500.

29,759. Then, it is well suited for deer?—Yes, it is in the interior, without a morsel of arable land upon it, and it is very high. It is between Loch More on the one side and Gobanuisgeach on the other, immediately to the north-west of Loch More and right up to Gobanuisgeach. The south-west side of it was in the forest before, and that part which lay down to the north and east was Eriboll.

29,760. What reduction of rent did Mr Clark obtain for giving up that?—He took the rest of his farm form £500 of rent.

29,761. And what rent had he paid formerly?—£800.

29,762. The estate rather profited by the transaction then?—Yes, I think so.

29,763. In your judgment could these lands—I am referring particularly to the lands formerly occupied by crofters—be profitably occupied by crofters again?—I don't think that any land is profitably occupied by crofters.

29,764. But I mean suppose holdings of a considerably larger size than we are accustomed to see on this coast were to be made?—They might be let to one or two or three tenants; three or four tenants might be comfortable upon them, but if you put a large number such as were there before, they would just be miserable, their possessions would be too small.

29,765. What size of holdings do you have in view when you speak of three or four or five?—The rent of Shegra is about £50.

26,766. Such a rent as that?—Divided amongst three or four people.

29,767. Mr Gordon directs my attention to the following farms; can you give me the rents of them?—Duart-beg, £45; Sandwood, £35; Shegra, £45; Skercha, £60, but it was once let for £120; Rhimichie, £41; Rhiconich Inn, £45; Rhiconich Farm, £47; Handa, £35.

29,768. Are the rents of these farms regularly paid?—They are in arrear a little, but I can say with truth that they have very great difficulty in meeting their engagements, some of them.

29,769. But over all, are the arrears trifling?—They are not large.

29,770. And you look to the arrears being paid up, I suppose?—I think we may look upon them as sure.

29,771. Now you said that on the deer forests there was a sum of something like £4800 spent annually, and I gather that according to your information the expenditure is materially beneficial to neighbouring crofters?—A great deal of it is paid in the country as wages, to residents in the parish.

29,772. Does much of it go into the pockets of crofters?—Well, yes, they are employed in keeping the paths and roads in order, and they are employed as gillies; there is a good deal of employment, and there is a great deal of expenditure on farm management both at Loch More and Kylestrome.

29,773. Is it your opinion that that expenditure to a considerable extent finds its way directly to the pockets of crofters?—A good deal of it.

29,774. You cannot say what percentage?—No, but a great deal.

29,775. Are you in favour of the maintenance of these forests among other reasons on that account?—Certainly, I think they are a very great benefit to us. I think the making of the Reay forest was an immense blessing to the parish of Eddrachillis.

29,776. Just explain in your own way how.—In that there was no road through it, and the making of a road has benefited the people; there was very little expenditure on its account before, and now there is a large amount; and the landlord pockets a very great deal more than he did before: thus it benefits all parties.

29,777. Are the rates less?—Very much less in consequence of the rent which is paid from shootings and forests.

29,778. Then, in your opinion, is the rent got from this land as forest much higher than could be got by having it let for any other purpose?—Oh, yes, more than double.

29,779. Is any part of that forest suitable for occupation by crofters?—I don't think so.

29,780. Is that because of its being very high?—Just because there is no arable land upon it.

29,781. Is there no land capable of being made arable. None; Messrs. Gunn who had the farm of Glendhu were most anxious to have a little arable land for the purpose of growing clover and turnips, and Mr William Gunn and I went over the whole farm in the most minute manner, but we could see no land that could be made arable.

29,782. When was that?—Twenty or thirty years ago.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver.

29,783. You and Mr Gunn went in search of land?—In search of land, and the Duke of Sutherland was willing to give them money to improve it, if the tenant could find land and thought it desirable.

29,784. And did you and Mr Gunn both agree that no such land could be got?—In the most decided manner. It is such a rocky country, and there is so little land that could be improved.

29,785. *Mr Sutherland.*—Is there then within your management no land that in your opinion is fit for the purposes of our inquiry, such as could be profitably occupied by crofters or small tenants, or otherwise advantageously occupied?—Such spots could be got here and there, near the coast, but it is an invariable fixed rule in the management of hills that you must have high ground and low ground together; and if you take away the low ground from the high ground you render the high ground valueless.

29,786. But if they were both taken in proportion, do you think it could be made profitable for occupation to small tenants?—I don't think so.

29,787. Is a large farm not an aggregation of such small farms as I have referred to?—Yes, it is, some of them.

29,788. Where would the disadvantage come in, do you think, in the sub-division?—Just that there is so little land; you should not place men down anywhere where they cannot have arable land.

29,789. A very good rule, and one that I would have liked very much to have seen observed?—Since I have had anything to do with the management of the country I have always looked to that; I could not answer for what may have been done before my time.

29,790. Don't you think now, taking a large farm as at present—an entity in itself—and sub-dividing it proportionally, hill and low lying land, do you not think that it would be suitable and advantageous for all parties that it should be sub-divided?—Where are tenants to be got for it?

29,791. In this room, plenty of them, as you have heard to-day?—I am sorry to say that my experience leads me to an opposite conclusion.

29,792. That the tenants are unwilling to accept land?—Not unwilling, but unable.

29,793. Have you found any difficulty in filling up any vacancies that fell in crofts?—Often, and often have I offered a croft vacant to the neighbouring man, and he would not have it.

29,794. But to a man who had no land before?—We have been for some time going upon the system of consolidation, to benefit those we have.

29,795. But don't you see that it is a very good feeling on the part of the people that the man would not like to add to his own croft at the expense of a man who had no land? That feeling would come in, don't you think?—Sometimes.

29,796. And it is not a feeling to be condemned?—It is a natural feeling, no doubt.

29,797. Would that then not be an element in the conduct of people not wishing to consolidate? Don't you think it must be an element present in their minds?—I cannot say.

29,798. It is possible it might have been so?—I should think it is very doubtful whether it were so.

29,799. But supposing a policy were adopted of giving new holdings out of these tremendous holdings of 70,000 acres, do you think there would be the same disinclination on the part of the people to accept them?—I have no doubt the people would accept them, but would it be prudent on the part of a landlord to give an extent of land to people who could not stock it?

29,800. If you ask me with regard to that, my opinion is that it would be very advantageous to them in the end, judging from what they have done in the past.—If they had capital.

29,801. But I am sure you will admit that it was never inquired whether the people had capital when they were settled down here?—Look at the state of the rents in this same parish and in Edrachillis now; what does that exhibit?

29,802. Well, I wish to ask you a question with regard to the rents. There was some element of confusion in the rent paying during the last year?—Yes, the rent due at Martinmas last was not collected then for estate reasons.

29,803. Then that might perhaps have tended to cause the arrears?—I have no doubt that the arrears are larger on that account.

29,804. But, as a matter of fact, are not the rents on the Sutherland estate forehand rents to the extent of a half-year?—Yes, and I wish to state here publicly that there was no parish in my district in which the crofters paid their rents so well as in the parish of Durness. But since the Crofters Commission came the arrears have increased largely.

29,805. It is since the fixing of the Fair Rents by the Crofters Commission that the rents have not been so well paid?—Yes.

29,806. You are not, of course, saying who is responsible for that?—This is a very bad year and the prices of stock are very low; that may account for it to a certain extent.

29,807. The remarkable fact that you state as to the rents being well paid here is surely an argument in favour of giving the people an opportunity of cultivating more land?—Yes, but I know their circumstances. I have too often occasion to know their circumstances, and they have not the means of taking additional land.

29,808. But, as a matter of fact, has that ever been put to the test of experience?—Well, I never put it to the test of experience.

29,808*a*. I think you did in the case of Rispond?—Oh, we added that, because really and truly the grazings of the Durness people were not so extensive as they ought to have been.

29,809. But the result of that has been, as I understand, that the people are very well pleased with having got Rispond?—They have cause to be.

29,810. And they have stocked it?—I don't know about that.

29,811. They have even overstocked it; that is the complaint here to-day?—I suspect that they had that overstock before.

29,812. Is that not an indication that they would have very little difficulty in stocking a new holding?—It is an indication that they could stock that much, but it is not an indication that they could stock on a large scale. Take the low land farms of Balnakill and Keoldale. If they got them what would become of the moorland attached to these farms, you could not destroy these farms. You must have a graduated system of occupation on every estate; every prudent proprietor has that: he has large farms and small farms. As far as I understand the request of these people, they would go away with the whole of these farms.

29,813. But if the people took over these farms *in toto*, would that not meet the objection?—How could they take them *in toto*?

29,814. Arguing from what they have to what they might have?—It is impossible.

29,815. That is a contradictory method of reasoning. It does not apply to the crofter when he wants more land?—No.

29,816. But it applies to the large farmer when his holding is increased?—The large farmer is a man of capital and skill, and he is able to take what the poor man cannot out of the land.

29,817. Were the large farmers all men of capital when they got the large holdings in Sutherland, to your knowledge?—I was not in Sutherland then, and don't know what they were, but this I know that these large farmers for a great number of years had very prosperous times and made large fortunes.

29,818. And what added to that fortune? Was it not the superior nature of the Sutherland grazings?—I don't boast of the superior nature of the grazings in my district.

29,819. But, as a matter of fact, you have had tenants who made fortunes there; it is a matter of public knowledge?—Yes, some of them.

29,820. Now, you spoke about a Mr Paterson; was that Mr Paterson who was at Bighouse?—No.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver.

29,821. Was he a man of capital when he came to this county?—I believe he came a very poor man.

29,822. A shepherd?—So I am told.

29,823. And he made a fortune?—I believe he did; he left a lot of money when he died.

29,824. His sheep paid very well, and value was added to his land by the cultivation of the former tenants?—He was a skilful sheep farmer.

29,825. But there are plenty skilful farmers you will admit in Durness?—I don't admit that.

29,826. Have you not got shepherds on these farms?—Oh yes, but in the nature of things a crofter cannot be such a skilful farmer as a shepherd, because he attempts more than one profession; he is a fisherman as well. I have people living near me who have both lands and fishing, and actually when they go in spring to labour with the pick and the spade they just speak of it as if they were going to slavery.

29,827. But that may depend very much on the subject they have to work upon?—A man who is fishing loses the love and the power of working with pick and spade.

29,828. I don't suppose that the science of sheep farming is such an abstruse science that it requires more than the ordinary amount of intellect?—It requires a person to begin it young if he would learn it thoroughly. Many people think every man would make a farmer, but I assure you that it requires a great deal of industry, a great deal of acuteness, and a great deal of attention to make a farm pay.

29,829. Are all these characteristics you have mentioned the characteristics of the sheep tenant in Sutherland? Are they men of such superior ability and industry?—A good many of those that succeeded are.

29,830. But the modern ones?—We have very few of them.

29,831. You have a good many of non-resident ones; it is actually not even necessary for a sheep farmer to reside on his farm?—We have farms that were occupied before in our hands in Assynt.

29,832. Perhaps it does not happen to the same extent in your management, but we found it in the neighbouring management?—That is possible; I would not say it is the case in this district.

29,833. But, as a matter of fact, have not plenty of crofters got all the experience and skill necessary to take a grazing farm?—If they devoted themselves entirely to it they might acquire it.

29,834. But the shepherds have done so, have they not? Are not the farm managers principally natives?—No, the farm managers generally come from a distance.

29,835. They did at one time, but now, are they not native to a large extent?—I don't know that. We have one in Assynt who came from the east coast of Sutherland; that is the only manager I know who is in any sense a native.

29,836. Then you stated, with regard to these farms, that the rents had still a tendency downward, even although they have been reduced 40 per cent.?—Yes.

29,837. You also made a statement here showing that the tendency of the crofters' rents was not downward?—They did not require to go down for they had never been up.

29,838. But they came up from nothing to what they are now?—I have been forty-eight years here, and there is very little difference on them from the time I came here to this date.

29,839. Did you hear a statement made by a witness that he settled down in a certain place at 1s. of rental and that he now pays £1, 15s.?—I heard that statement. There might have been one case of that kind, I am not quite sure; but I did not believe the statement, although I did not think it worth while to contradict it.

29,840. Do you deny that he was speaking in *bonâ fide*?—Yes, I do, if he stated that the whole of the rents were in the same position.

29,841. No, he gave his own case?—Well, as I say, there might have been one such case.

29,842. But I think he went farther and said that all Laid was in the same way?—Exactly, but it is not so.

29,843. Might it have been materially different from the 1s. he stated?—It was considerably less, I think; generally, I think, very few of them were over £1.

29,844. But he spoke, I understand, of the time when he was sent there first of all?—I don't know what happened when they went there first, but what I always heard was that they were there for seven or eight or nine years without paying a farthing at all.

29,845. And now they are paying £1, 15s.?—There is a case of a man paying £1, 15s.

29,846. I find from the official document that is the average all over, or thereabouts?—I think, sir, that cannot be the case, but the facts speak for themselves.

29,847. The point I wish to ask you is this: in your opinion is the crofter not a far more profitable tenant to the landlord than the large grazier?—I don't think he is.

29,848. It is not the fact that on your own admission the tendency of the rents of the large farms is downward, while you stated to us, as a matter of pride (and I have no doubt justly so) that the Crofters Commission only reduced the whole crofter rental in your district by £2, 13s.?—Yes.

29,849. In other words, the only parties who maintain their rents are the crofters?—Because the crofters' rents had never been increased. You are forgetting that sheep farm rents rose to a very large extent. For instance, when I came to Scourie, the farm of Keoldale was rented at just £500; it afterwards reached £1200 a year, and now it is down to £775.

29,850. But take the cases. Here you have got a man planted down on a barren moor without any provision made for him: that land now pays so much rental. On the other hand you have a sheep farmer who entered into possession of land that the people formerly made valuable for him: his landlord built all the houses, made all the preparations, and yet his rent is going downwards. You surely do not compare the two classes?—Yes, I do.

29,851. Do you consider the comparison a fair one all round?—I think you are forgetting that the crofters' rents were never increased.

29,852. But if they are increased at all it is on their own labour and expenditure, whereas the sheep farmer improves nothing?—I beg your pardon, they do.

29,853. What does he do?—There is no sheep farmer but is continually at work making drains and other improvements for the benefit of his land.

29,854. But what are his improvements in proportion to his rental compared with the crofters?—He has a large subject that he cannot improve: he holds an immense extent of moorland.

29,855. But, as a matter of fact, he does not improve it to the same extent that the crofter does, and yet his rent comes down?—I don't think the crofter improves so much as that.

29,856. But have they not made the land what it is, such as it is?—I don't know what it was originally when they got it: it has been in their possession, a great deal of it, from time immemorial.

29,857. Sangobeg?—Yes.

29,858. And Leirin?—Sangobeg was a farm that Mr James Anderson, Lord Reay's factor, possessed, and these people at Sangobeg and Leirin were his subtenants. That eviction that was talked of to-day was carried out by Mr James Anderson without the knowledge, consent, or approval of the Duke of Sutherland.

29,859. Did he venture to do that?—Yes, he did.

29,860. What was done to him? Was he visited with the Duke's displeasure?—The Duke of Sutherland expressed to him his strong disapproval of the eviction and the whole thing, and it was stopped. [*The Chairman.*—I have heard of the same thing being done by a factor elsewhere.]

29,861. You made an interesting statement with regard to the expenditure on reclamation on the farm of Eriboll, and I think you stated that these reclamations turned out very disappointing?—Very disappointing. It was not done by me; the farm of Eriboll was

in the Tongue management when the improvement was carried out, and I only saw the improvement after its completion.

29,862. Is it your general opinion that the disappointment arose more from the expenditure than from the result?—The disappointment arose from the inferiority of the subject.

29,863. That is the Eriboll farm which we see in passing along the road?—Yes, there were 50 or 60 acres of old arable land there that had been taken in by the Clarks and dyked; and this other piece was outside but close to it. Mr Crawford was the factor at Tongue at the time and he took the thing in hand and did it himself. Mr Clark had nothing to do with it, and it turned out a very unfortunate speculation, so much so that the Duke of Sutherland never got a farthing of rent for the whole thing.

29,864. I want, then, to contrast with that the expenditure that the crofters make on improving land themselves, which has yet been the means of increasing their rents?—I don't know how it has been the means of increasing their rents.

29,865. It is only that that would justify an increase of the rent at all; some expenditure of some kind?—That system was, that if a man had a farm for nineteen years and laid out money in improving it, at the end of the nineteen years he was recouped for what he did; the landlord was then entitled to the benefit of any improvement.

29,866. I can perfectly see how that would apply to a leaseholder: but the crofter was a tenant at will and could be turned out at any time: he had not security of tenure?—As a rule, the great majority of crofters had security of tenure far more than the big farmers.

29,867. *De facto* but not as a matter of stipulation?—The great majority of them were continued from father to son without ever being moved out at all, and if there was any expenditure in the way of improving land on the part of the forefathers it was their own children and successors who got the benefit of it.

29,868. Seeing that that is the case, how do you account for their not being where they were at first?—Where?

29,869. In Strathmore, and these other places we have heard of to-day?—That I cannot speak of, for you are going back to matters that took place before I was born.

29,870. But is that bitter lesson likely to have been forgotten by the people?—Perhaps not.

29,871. Would it not also have been an element in giving them the security of tenure they now possess?—They have got security of tenure.

29,872. Thanks to themselves. Well, then, what I wish to get from you, if you please, is whether the feeling of disappointment with regard to the result of the reclamation at Eriboll farm was due to the large expenditure or to the crops not being satisfactory?—It was due to a large expenditure upon an inferior subject.

29,873. That is quite a sufficient answer. But you would not be prepared to deny that the land was very much improved from what it was in a state of nature: it would be better fitted for grazing?—It would have been better if it had never been touched.

29,874. But for pasture?—Yes, it would have been far better for the farm if it had been left out, and not a farthing had been spent on it.

29,875. But we saw corn stacks on Eriboll?—Yes, there were 60 acres of arable there before.

29,876. But do you assert as your deliberate opinion that crops are failing upon the farm of Eriboll?—I do. From the information Mr Clark has always given me I have come to that opinion, and I consider Mr Clark a most respectable man, and one who would not say so if it were not the case.

29,877. But keeping in view that Mr Clark is the tenant and you are the factor, it would not perhaps be an unnatural thing for him to depreciate the value of his holding when making a bargain?—Every tenant, and every person—high and low, rich and poor, is the same in that respect.

29,878. Mr Clark not excepted. With regard to the rates that raises a very important question. You stated that the poor rate was high, and that the landlord paid one half and the tenant the other half?—Yes.

29,879. And is it, in your opinion, a fact that the poor rates are increasing?—They have been very stationary for a while.

29,880. But were they low when you came here first?—There were no poor laws when I came here.

29,881. I am about to ask you a question which is practically the same as one asked you by the Chairman. Do you think there is any connection between this system of huge holdings on the one hand and very small holdings on the other, and the increase in the poor rate? Do you think there is any necessary connection between them?—I said before that I think the bulk of the paupers upon the roll come from the crofting class.

29,882. And I have no doubt that is caused in the first place because there are more of them, and in the second place they are put in a position where it is impossible for them to support their relatives?—The children of the better class go away from the country and fight their battle in the world, but the crofters too often remain at home: the consequence is that there is a congestion on the crofts, and a tendency to an increase of pauperism.

29,883. You say it is not because their bounds are too restricted, but because they are less industrious than the large farmer; is this so?—I don't say that.

29,884. There must be some reason for it?—I think it is just for the reason that their holdings are so small, and acting as fishermen and landsmen too, they often go away to the east coast. A number of them came back from the east coast with little or no money.

29,885. Was that a matter of choice, or of necessity?—I suppose it was of necessity.

29,886. And is there any such necessity in the nature of things? Is there not plenty of land to enable them to support their relatives themselves?—There is land, no doubt, if they were able to take it and stock it.

29,887. But has it not been proved by the experiment in the case of Rispond that they are able?—I don't know any case except that.

29,888. And it has proved successful?—So far, it has.

29,889. Then with regard to the children of the crofters remaining here, do they do so more than the large farmer's children: do you assert that that is the case?—It is general now among the crofting people since the Education Act passed, and they have become better educated, that there is a desire to go away which did not exist before; that is the effect of the Education Act. When I came to the country there were in the parish of Assynt far more people that could speak Gaelic than English. Now, everybody speaks English. When the former went from home without being able to speak English they found themselves unable to speak to anybody, and that really prevented them from going. But they go now very much more readily.

29,890. They are indebted for that benefit to the public school?—I think so, to education.

29,891. But is it not a fact also, that if you really want to promote emigration, the greater knowledge the people have of the world, and the better circumstances they are in at home, the better is their preparation for it?—Certainly, the more they are prepared before they go out the better.

29,892. And even if you have no higher object than to send the people away, would it not be better to put them first in affluent circumstances before they go?—If it were possible.

29,893. But is it not possible?—I think in a great many cases it is not.

29,894. You stated that the land was given to the people of Laid, off the farm of Eriboll, and I think you treated the tenant of Eriboll very liberally in the transfer?—Yes, I think so; he would not give it up unless he got so much for it; it was thought desirable to lessen the congestion in the parish, and this was the only place available: that is what I hear.

29,895. But were you not struck with the liberality with which Mr Clark was treated as contrasted with

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver.

the way the crofters were treated?—It was done for the benefit of the people by the Duke.

29,896. In Laid?—It was a good intention to take them away from amongst the other congested population.

29,897. These people who came from these places to Laid,—I find in the year 1841 no fewer than nine families removed from these townships to Laid, Loch-Eriboll, in order to form a sheep farm,—I presume after the others had been settled there?—I don't know anything about that.

29,898. With regard to the forest of Reay, I think you said it was a blessing to the parish of Eddrachillis?—I certainly think so. The people of this parish had no way of going south unless they went to Tongue or to Lochinver. There was no direct road.

29,899. You stated that the Reay forest was formed in 1840?—It was begun then.

29,900. That is the modern afforestment, was it not? It has been called, as you know, the Reay forest from time immemorial?—Yes.

29,901. But in the olden times I presume it would not have been a forest in the sense of modern times?—I suppose not; the deer had the hills to themselves then.

29,902. The deer went along with the tenants' sheep and cattle, and there was a common right of shooting,—no one prevented it?—Well, I daresay there was a good deal of shooting.

29,903. So that that is the reason why it came to be called the Reay forest?—It was hunting ground of the Reay family.

29,904. And the Reay people?—Well, I daresay the people took as much as they could unknown to the owner.

29,905. But did he claim any right to a monopoly of it?—He was entitled to a monopoly, he was the proprietor.

29,906. He was the proprietor of the deer, was he?—He was the proprietor of the hills.

29,907. You surely would not go in the face of contemporary history. Allow me to read to you a passage from a Memoir of Rob Donn, the poet of Reay, by Dr Mackintosh Mackay, prefixed to the 1829 edition of his poems, p. xviii.

"After his marriage, Rob Donn first resided at the 'place of *Bad-na-h-achlais*, then probably forming 'a part of his late employer's tenure. He was known 'by this time as one of the most expert deer-hunters 'in the country, a pastime and source of profit to the 'tenantry of that period, and then scarce begun in any 'way to be interdicted. Known for this attainment 'and as a person the family of Reay desired to en-'courage, he was provided with a tenure of lands at 'a place called *Alt-coire-freisgill*, on the eastern shore 'of Loch Erribol, and employed to shoot such number 'of deer as Lord Reay's family might wish to have 'supplied."—Oh, he was a forester.

29,908. "This was an employment that well suited 'our bard's predilections." You see that the deer are here referred to as common both to Lord Reay and the tenantry and as a source of profit and amusement to both?—Amongst all the other qualifications of Rob Donn the tradition is that he was a great poacher.

29,909. That was a great shooter of deer?—Yes.

29,910. It points incontrovertibly to the conclusion that shooting the deer was not prohibited by any person at that time?—I daresay it would be very difficult to prevent poaching in those days.

29,911. But what I wish to make clear is that though it was called the Reay forest in the olden times it was by no means a deer forest, such as we understand now?—They are very different things.

29,912. Then you stated that you went along with Mr Gunn over the whole of the farm of Glendhu with the desire to get arable land, and did not find it?—Yes.

29,913. Did you go over the other farms within your factorate in the same way?—I was never asked by the tenants to do so. There is very little land I may tell you that is improveable in this district.

29,914. I am quite prepared to admit it with regard to Glendhu farm, but do you know Kylestrome?—Yes.

Durness, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver

29,915. Is there any arable land there?—There are a few patches between rocks: go and see it for yourselves.

29,916. I know it well. But don't you see tenants elsewhere cultivating lands between rocks now where it was not green when they went there?—Oh, yes, with the *cas-chrom* and the spade; but there is no ploughable land in Glendhu.

29,917. So you cannot give us any assistance beyond what you have stated, as to finding such land as we are in search of: do you say anything as to Balnakill and Keoldale?—These farms have arable land, but they require it for their own purposes; and if you go and destroy the big farms on an estate, you injure the proprietor very seriously.

29,918. That is a matter of opinion: you hold one opinion, I hold another?—It is an opinion that will be felt by the landlord if his farms are spoilt.

29,919. But if his rental is increased and made secure without the chance of going down, by substituting new tenants whose rents would remain fixed, would not that be an improvement?—I don't think the rents are fixed permanently.

29,920. *The Chairman.*—You are by far the oldest factor on the Sutherland estates?—Yes.

29,921. And in the evidence you have given to-day you have spoken to the very best of your knowledge and great experience?—I have.

29,922. I have nothing more to ask you.

29,923. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—Would you tell us the circumstances under which this 'black 'park' came to be added to the farm of Balnakill,—the cows' park I mean?—The farm of Balnakill was occupied by a Mr Dunlop, who was a very litigious man and very quarrelsome. He gave a great deal of trouble to his neighbours in the parish, and it so happened that the farm of Balnakill had a right of pasturage along with the crofters on their common pasture, which gave rise to constant quarrels and constant complaints to the proprietor. So troublesome did the matter become that at last the estate managers got the tenant of Balnakill and the crofters to agree to make an excambion, that they would be separate from each other, and would have no cause of quarrel. A regular reference was made to parties who went over the whole ground, and they decided that the crofters should give up the 'black park' to the tenant of Balnakill, and the tenant of Balnakill should give up his rights upon their common pasture. I have all the papers connected with the transaction in my office at Scourie, so that it is not a matter of hearsay or of doubt. Moreover, it is a very important park for the farm of Balnakill, for it is through it that the sheep come down from the hill, and go back to the hill, giving them access to the road without interfering with the crofters' grounds. If that park were taken from Balnakill, the sheep would have to go down by the road to the Inn, and along the road and through the crofters' ground: they would thus be jumping and trespassing on the crofters' ground, and this would doubtless cause a very great deal of annoyance.

29,924. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated that it was an excambion?—Yes, a regular excambion.

29,925. And the result of the excambion was that the crofters were left with nothing?—They got the rights upon the pasture that the tenant of Balnakill had, which was valued and considered a *quid pro quo*.

29,926. Was it an equation?—An equation. A most business-like arrangement it was.

29,927. I would like to ask you one or two questions in regard to the matter as it has cropped up. What extent of pasture had the crofters of Durness at that time?—They had what they have now.

29,928. *Minus* Rispond?—*Minus* Rispond.

29,929. How much was that, then, 3200 acres?—Yes.

29,930. Among 69 crofters; or as much as would allow the grazings of 5 sheep to each man; and as against that they lost the grazing of a cow. Was that looked upon as a right *quid pro quo*?—Do you think

the crofters did not lose a good deal by the transaction?—No, I think not: I think it was a transaction tending to peace and quietness, and putting an end to a good deal of annoyance.

29,931. *Mr Gordon.*—Can you put in the relative papers?—Yes, I think I can.

[ADJOURNED.]

THIRTIETH SITTING.

RHICONICH, SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

October 19, 1893.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

DONALD MORRISON, Crofter, Balchrieck (63)—*examined.*

29,932. *The Chairman.*—Was your croft dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

29,933. What was the former rent?—The old rent was £3, and the present rent is £2, 16s.

29,934. Have you a written statement?—Yes.

29,935. Kindly read it to us.—The parish of Eddrachillis is about 30 miles in length, from Keisgach Bay on the north to Glencoul on the south, and has a coast line of about 105 miles. Probably no other parish in the Highlands approaches it in ruggedness, for not only are the sea arms or lochs with which it abounds surrounded by barren rocky heights, but the interior is a chaos of bare-headed rocks, innumerable lakes, and brown valleys. On viewing it from Glasbhein, Foinabhein, Arkle, Stack or Ben Leod, one would be inclined to think that Eddrachillis was not fitted for the abode of mankind. And, indeed, excepting a few small places, the parish is not habitable except along the sea coast, on which the inhabitants combine agriculture with fishing.

Kinlochbervie *quoad sacra* parish is bounded on the north by a line drawn from Keisgeach burn in the vicinity of Cape Wrath to Meall Dearg and Gualin burn, thence to Strath Dionard, Ben Hee, and Loch Merkland, and on the south by Loch Merkland, Kinloch burn, Loch More, Achfary burn, Loch Stack, the river Laxford, and Laxford bay.

The population of the whole parish is approximately 1400, of which Kinlochbervie contains 900, and Scourie 500.

The valuation of the two districts is £4507, 17s. 2d., of which the Duke of Westminster alone is tenant of an area valued at £2380, and including shooting tenants in both districts, the valuation is Kinlochbervie £2221, and Scourie £2287, but excluding these the Kinlochbervie valuation is £1115, and that of Scourie £732, inclusive of inns, manses, &c., farms and teachers' dwellings.

As the arable land available is a mere fringe along the sea coast, much of it sandy, and the greater part steep and difficult of profitable cultivation, it is needless to add that the population could exist for four months of the year on the produce of the lands, independent of the fishing industries.

It is authoritatively stated that the average arable land in actual cultivation by each crofter is under two acres, and when it is borne in mind that there are nearly half as many cottars as there are crofters, irrespective of many crofters' sons and their families living on these holdings, is it a matter of surprise that the townships, notwithstanding the advantages of the Crofters Act, complain of congestion and poverty? In order to fully realize this state of overcrowding, it is necessary to state that Kinlochbervie parish contains 101 crofters (including 6 joint crofters) and 43 cottars, enumerated according to townships thus:—

Townships.	Crofters.	Cottars.
Droman,	5	5
Blairmore,	8	2
Polin,	3	3
Kinlochbervie,	14	5
Rhuvolt,	4	..
Achriesgill,	15	5
Ardmore,	6	2
Balchrick,	8	4
Drumnaguie,	6	4
Oldshoremore,	17	8
Badcall,	6	2
Inshegra,	1	1
Achlyness,	6	2
Portvalvorchie,	2	...
Total,	101	43

That there is sufficient land suitable for cultivation within the parish and on the sea coast may be understood from the fact that formerly and up to 1815 there were seven farms on the northern shore of Loch Sandwood and seven on the southern shore of the same loch, but owing to the inhospitable nature of the sea coast, the people, if settled there, would have to depend entirely on the land produce: hence three families on each side of the loch would utilize all the available land. It is, however, understood that Sandwood farm is not available during the life of the present tenant,—rent £35.

Shegra farm up to 1848 contained 18 farmers or 16 crofters, each of whom possessed three or four milk cows, three followers, and two dozen sheep. In that year it was given to Hugh Mackay, Kinlochbervie, tacksman of Sandwood, and it is now owned by Messrs. M'Callum and Munro at a yearly rental of £50. It would support six crofters in a comfortable condition. On the northern shore of *Loch Inchard*, between Achriesgill bridge and Rhiconich, four farmers formerly lived most comfortably. The land is attached to Rhiconich Inn. Formerly there lived in *Rhimichie* seven families; it would now be suitable for three families, and on the same farm Meal Bhan one, and Kin Saile four, now suitable for one and two respectively. Present rental paid by one tenant £41, 1s. 5d. *Sgeir-a'-Chatha* proper, now part of a sheep farm, owned by Mr. Scott, Balnakill, affords splendid wintering, as does the whole of Ceathramh-Garbh, and is well fitted for the abode of two farmers. *Ardbeg*, *Clash-Inchairich*, and *Dalchrackin* each contained a family, and each would now support a single family.

There is thus suitable land within the bounds of the *quoad sacra* parish of Kinlochbervie, for 27 farmers at least, the removal of whom would be a great relief, but in order to enable the crofters to improve their condition and to afford elbow scope, the migration of as many more is indispensable. However, it would not be advisable to break up the *Reay Forest* as the burden of taxation and rates would more than counterbalance profits without State aid in stocking the holdings.

To sum up, the crofters of Kinlochbervie complain that the lands assigned to them by the Crofters Act are unduly burdened by cottars who, as the signatures attached attest, are willing to migrate to the respective localities indicated above, or to any other suitable land outside this parish in the same county. The same statement applies to many of the crofters who would willingly remove to a more congenial soil under improved circumstances.

It is, therefore, the earnest prayer of the people of Kinlochbervie that the Royal Commissioners, now

Rhiconich, Sutherlandshire.

Donald Morrison.

inquiring into the social condition of the Highland population, will be graciously pleased to embody the record of Kinlochbervie people in their report, and to recommend the adoption of the suggestions contained in the foregoing statement with as little delay as is consistent with the time for carrying out the necessary arrangements.

In name and by appointment of the people, appointed delegates 16th October 1893.

(Signed) Donald Morrison, Baile-chruic.
Lachlan Ross, Achriesgill.

At a meeting held in the public school, Oldshoremore, on 18th October 1893, Mr. Angus Morrison, Droman, presiding, it was unanimously resolved to approach the Royal Commission with the view of expressing the desire of cottars and others residing in Oldshores to occupy land other than that now in possession of crofters, and in the event of suitable land not being available in the parish of Eddrachillis, the undersigned hope to procure land outside this parish, in the county of Sutherland.

(Signed) John Macleod, crofter's son, Droman.
John Mackay, cottar, „
Angus Morrison, crofter, „
Roderick Maciver, cottar's son, „
Alexander Macleod, cottar, „
Malcolm Morrison, cottar, „
Malcolm Maciver, cottar, „
Robert Mackay, crofter, „
John Morrison, cottar, Blairmore.
Angus Macleod, cottar, „
Robert Mackay, crofter's son, „
Robert Macleod, cottar, Drumguie.
Donald Morrison, cottar, „
William Macdonald, cottar, Polin.
William Gunn, cottar, Oldshore.
Robert Mackay, cottar, „
Thomas Mackenzie, cottar, „
John Mackenzie, cottar, „
Angus Morrison, cottar, Balchrick.
Donald Morrison, crofter, „

29,936. Who wrote out this statement for you?—Our teacher, Mr Mackay.

29,937. Both Donald Morrison and Lachlan Ross appear as delegates?—Yes.

29,938. You were both appointed at a public meeting?—Yes.

29,939. And this paper sets forth the views and considerations you desire to submit to us on the matter?—Yes.

29,940. *Mr Forsyth.*—Your people live mostly by the fishing, do they not?—Partly by the fishing.

29,941. And your general wish is to get more holdings handy for the fishing; is that so?—We want to get more holdings of arable land that we can make a living by.

29,942. But if there is not arable land for you all, if there is not enough to be had, you would be content with smaller holdings close to the sea?—Certainly we would.

29,943. But do you wish that some of you should remove to larger holdings away from the sea, if these were to be had?—Yes.

29,944. Then, if room were found for the cottars, would that relieve the congestion much?—A great deal; and a great relief it would be to the poor crofters if there should be a place provided for the cottars, because the crofters are overcrowded with cottars. Each cottar, with a family, requires ground for peat; he requires grazing for perhaps a few sheep and a cow, and that is reducing the crofters to naught. Down here as you saw yourself yesterday, sir, the people are very much crowded on a rugged place; and were it not that the men brought up here are so smart and well up in sea-faring work as well as land work, the people from the interior of this country would never come to live here. Though they got it for the taking of it, they could not use the plough or the harrow, so we have to delve it with spades. Then, there is the inconvenience we have to undergo in spring to get manure for the patches of land we have. We are obliged to go from the place I let you see yesterday on the inside of Loch Laxford, a distance of I don't know how many miles, take the seaware into our small boats, and at the risk of our lives, carry it home through a dangerous sound where the wind and tide are sometimes like to swamp us. We have then to wade out up to the middle and take it out in creels. That is one inconvenience of living in that place. Besides that, the place is so overcrowded with crofters and cottars that there is hardly a crofter north of this but would willingly remove to a better soil if it were possible to get it.

Rhiconich, Sutherlandshire.

Donald Morrison.

29,945. Then, you have plenty of hill grazing, have you not?—The hill grazing is very scrimp now; some of the crofters have more than they ought to have, according to the estate regulations per £. Some of the cottars too are putting up stock.

29,946. Altogether, although the grazings are large you consider that they are now overstocked?—So they are. I do not often go through the hill, but those who have gone through it lately tell me that the hill pasture is quite bare, and that they are afraid how the few sheep some of them have can live in it through the coming winter.

29,947. Where do you live?—At Balchrick.

29,948. Where is that?—Below Achreisgill.

29,949. Have you a croft?—Yes.

29,950. What size is it?—Two and a half acres arable land.

29,951. And how many cattle have you?—I have two milk cows and two followers.

29,952. And a horse?—No.

29,953. Are there no horses down beside you?—Yes, a few with some of them.

29,954. The Achreisgill folks have horses?—Very few horses.

29,955. We saw some up on the valley as we came down, on the water side?—There are about six horses.

29,956. Where is the arable land that you could get?—Well, there is no arable land now, but Shegra is there, in which there were some tenants before.

29,957. Is that down near the sea?—Yes.

29,958. There are two Shegras apparently?—Only one Shegra; the other is Innis-Shegra.

29,959. Who is tenant of Shegra just now?—Messrs Maccallum and Munro.

29,960. Do they reside upon the place?—They do, at least, one of them does, and the other left. Maccallum and his son reside on it, but Munro is a shepherd on Melness farm, at the other side of Hope.

29,961. It is not a very big place, Shegra; I think there are about 20 acres of arable land on it?—As to the extent of arable land I cannot say.

29,962. How many families do you think could be put on Shegra?—I would put six families into that township to-day who would be far more comfortable than any in the parish. There were 16 crofters there in my young days. It is not so much the amount of arable land there is at present, but what could be taken in above the houses where they were.

29,963. Where else have you any arable land that could be available? Tell us about this place of Rhimichie.—It is down at the loch side here.

29,964. Are there two families there just now?—Only one.

29,965. And how many do you think it could take?—Three.

29,966. Now, where else are you thinking of?—At Milban one, and at Kinsale two.

29,967. Who lives at these places just now?—They are attached to Rhimichie.

29,968. What other place?—Going to Laxfordside there is Skercha.

29,969. Who is tenant of that?—That is owned by Mr. Scott, Balnakill, at present, as part of his sheep farm.

29,970. How many would you put in there?—I would put one there willingly.

29,971. Yes, but there is one there already; is not there a shepherd there?—None.

29,972. How does Mr Scott use the farm?—He has a shepherd in this township of Achlighness here.

29,973. Would you put one family in Skercha?—Yes.

29,974. Where next?—Laxford again, but there is one family there already.

29,975. There is no use putting out one man and putting in another?—There is a poor widow there; but the place is not now under cultivation, the Laxford river comes on it.

29,976. Is there any other place?—Down here again by this Loch Inchard side there is land that is attached to the hotel.

29,977. How many could be put on the hotel farm?—There were three families there before.

29,978. You said there were in all 101 crofters and 43 cottars: and without counting the widow's place at Laxford you have given us places for only 13; am I right there?—There is also Ardbeg.

29,979. Who is tenant of Rhimichie just now?—One Robert Ross. He belonged to the other end of the country though he came here and got this place. He was for sometime ground officer to the Duke of Sutherland at Lochinver, and he has now got some paths at Glendhuside and in the forest to repair.

29,980. That is all you can tell us, 13 places exclusive of the hotel?—Yes.

29,981. Is there anything in the forest or its neighbourhood?—There is plenty in the Reay forest.

29,982. *Mr Sutherland.*—Will you kindly tell us the names of the places in the Reay forest that you consider suitable for holdings?—Duartmore, Kylestrome, Maldie, Glendhu, Glencoul, these are all on that side, round by the Duke of Westminster's place. At Maldie there were a few tenants before my day.

29,983. Do you know the country down the way towards Lairg?—Yes.

29,984. Are there no places there where you could put people?—Yes, at Loch Merkland side there is a park that the forester has. The park was brought under cultivation since he went there.

29,985. Any other place?—What is it but one strath all along the way from Loch Shin.

29,986. How many people could be accommodated there?—It is more than I can estimate.

29,987. A hundred families?—A hundred would be pinched for arable land, but there is a good deal of land, and there is what was reclaimed by the Duke at Shinness.

29,988. Do you see land reclaimed at Lochmore lodge?—Yes.

29,989. What sort of crop is that bearing?—A very good crop: there is not much of it, though—

29,990. That is because much of it was not reclaimed?—No, much of it was not reclaimed.

29,991. You have told us of these places you have named; are there any other suitable places in the Reay forest?—There is Strathmore; where is there a more suitable place in the north for tenants

29,992. Any other place?—I am not so well acquainted with that country as here.

29,993. I wish to ask you now about the fishing. Do you think the greater number of the people of Kinlochbervie would take to fishing at all if they were not compelled by their circumstances to do so?—A good many would not.

29,994. Have they become fishers principally from the fact that they were driven down to land they could not live upon?—I could not say that; I don't think that.*

29,995. How long have they been fishing there?—Since my memory carries me back.

29,996. And how many families were there at the time they began fishing?—Not so many as there are now, because the population is increasing.

29,997. Is it the natural increase of the population, or did people come from outside?—It is partly owing to both; but mainly the natural increase of the natives.

* The delegate has since written answering this question in the affirmative.

29,998. You never heard that people were sent here from Durness, did you?—I don't know that. Rhiconich, Sutherlandshire.

29,999. There is no general desire, is there, on the part of the people to remain fishing if they could get as much land as would maintain their families in comfort?—No, of course not. Donald Morrison.

30,000. How do you dispose of your fish, as a rule?—We have no convenience here at all, on this coast, for getting it to market. A railway to Laxford would benefit the North Highlands and Lewis.

30,001. But take the case at present: there is fishing going on here just now; do you get 7s. a cran for your herring?—Sometimes.

30,002. How is the fish taken away when you do get a market for it?—The Stornoway curers send steamboats here; and in a few cases the big boats from Stornoway take the herring from some of our local boats. They were going over to Stornoway lately, and unluckily met with a bad passage, and had to cast overboard most of what they had, so the herring brought nothing. The first steamboat that came from Stornoway gave us as low as 3s. a cran.

30,003. And were the prices then lower than they are now; were they below 7s. a cran?—Oh, yes.

30,004. When the herring does come to Loch Inchard, how long does it remain, as a rule?—Perhaps to the new year.

30,005. And does it come every year regularly?—No, it does not.

30,006. It only comes in certain years. Was there herring in the loch last year?—No.

30,007. Was there the year before?—It is three or four years since they visited the loch.

30,008. And during those three or four years you could not carry on herring fishing at all?—Sometimes,—we were in Glendhu last year, and herring come to one or other of our lochs regularly.

30,009. Do you go away from here to the fishing in other places?—Yes.

30,010. You follow the fish right round?—Yes.

30,011. Where do you generally go?—To Fraserburgh.

30,012. If there were fish here you would not require to go to Fraserburgh?—No, if there was a curing station here we would not.

30,013. You would have to go out to the open sea, would you?—Of course.

30,014. The fish in the inner part of the loch here, in Loch Inchard, could not be relied upon continuously?—No.

30,015. And you only get a catch of fish, such as you have now, at very long intervals?—Yes, in Loch Inchard, but regularly in Loch Laxford or Glendhu.

30,016. After your fish get to Stornoway, what do the curers there do with it?—They cure it and send it away to the continent.

30,017. You stated that you had two cows and followers, but no horse?—No horse. I have one in my possession, an old mare that was left by a man who went to America; he was too careless to shoot it. But it will not live with me.

30,018. I find from the map that you share in a grazing of 18,130 acres, and you stated that there are 101 crofters and 43 cottars, and that some of the cottars have stock?—Yes.

30,019. And graze them on the crofters' land, I suppose?—Yes.

30,020. That makes 144 people, who thus have a grazing of 124 acres each; according to the usual rule that gives each of you grazing for ten or twelve sheep; I am taking the rule that applies to the large farms. Now, have they all got some sheep stock?—Most of them, less or more.

30,021. Then you stated about Achlyness over here, that Mr Scott, the tenant of Balnakill, has got the farm of Balnakill, which is over 25,000 acres, that he has also the farm of Skercha, which is 5470 acres, and yet he is a crofter in Achlyness?—Yes.

30,022. How many crofters are there in Achlyness?—Five.

Rhiconich, Sutherland-shire.

Donald Morrison.

30,023. When did Mr Scott come to have Skercha farm?—I could not say.

30,024. Was it a small tenant who had it before him?—It was the late Mr Swanson, Rispond.

30,025. And do you know if there was any attempt made to get a tenant for it in this neighbourhood, in Kinlochbervie itself?—Mr Mackay, Kinlochbervie, had it for a short time.

30,026. Mr Mackay of the mill?—No, the tacksman of Sandwood.

30,027. And after he had it, was there an attempt made to let it to a crofter, do you know?—I could not say; I do not remember.

30,028. You did not hear of any?—No. They got tired of speaking about it by that time, and did not apply again.

30,029. But you did not hear that it was advertised, or that the people knew it was to let; because it seems to me to be a farm that a successful crofter could easily take. Do you think there were crofters about Kinlochbervie who would be in a position to take Skercha as a sheep farm if it were offered?—I don't know.

30,030. But you did not hear that the offer was given to any one?—No, I did not.

30,031. When you were giving us evidence about available land, I saw that you confined your attention to the parish of Eddrachillis?—Oh, not at all.

30,032. The places you named were all in the parish of Eddrachillis?—Yes.

30,033. But you see no reason why the people of Eddrachillis, if they got good holdings, would not take them wherever they would be found?—Certainly, they would go to Strathnaver, or Strathmore, or Strathbrora, or any place they could get.

30,034. Now, would an extension of your present grazings help you?—An extension of more arable land would suit us better.

30,035. It would enable you to have more comfortable houses, and to winter your stock?—Yes.

30,036. But you were not at all expressing the opinion that the people of Eddrachillis wanted to stay in Kinlochbervie?—No, of course, that could not be; they told us, at the last meeting, that they would willingly go miles away from it if they got suitable holdings.

30,037. Do you know the position of the people in Ceathramh-Garbh?—There are not many people there.

30,038. There is Ardmore?—Well, I can hardly tell you their condition: I know that they have rugged crofts down below their houses, which are not of much extent: and were it not that they are at Loch Laxford, where they can take to seafaring, they would be poorly off.

30,039. And yet the farms of Skercha and Rhimichie are near?—Yes.

30,040. How long has Rhimichie been of its present size?—For forty-five years.

30,041. *The Chairman.*—The Duke of Sutherland is not represented at this meeting, as we had not an opportunity of giving him notice; and, therefore, I want to ask you this: are the Kinlochbervie crofters in arrear with their fair rents, speaking generally, or are they well paid up?—Well, I suppose the Kinlochbervie tenants, as far as I know, have been about as clear with their rents as any on the estate.

30,042. On the whole they are pretty clear, are they?—Well, I cannot say they are very clear, the whole of them; but there are two rents now coming due. A good many of the crofters at the last rent time were provided with that year's rent, but owing to the dispute between the present Duke and the Duchess Dowager the rents were not collected. I had my rent at that time.

30,043. Ready to pay?—Ready to pay, but after that I was not sorry it was not paid, because I had to expend it for meal. I have not a large family, having been left a widower with four children, but I was obliged to buy 14 bolls of meal, as the croft was not sufficient.

30,044. Does it come to this, that if the rent collection had been fixed at the usual time a great number of the rents then due would have been paid?—Certainly, they would, then.

Rhiconich, Sutherland-shire.

Donald Morrison.

30,045. And yours among the rest?—Yes, but I was glad afterwards that it was not paid then.

30,046. You had to expend it for the necessary purposes of your family?—Yes.

30,047. Now, you mentioned land on the banks of Loch Merkland, and also on Loch Glendhu?—Yes.

30,048. May I take it that there is land for our consideration along the shores of Loch More, Loch Merkland, and Loch Shin?—So there is at Loch Merkland, on that side where this forester has a park. I have been in the habit of passing the place every year, for nearly thirty years back, in going down to Brora, to Gordonbush farm, and I see as good a crop off that park as I see in the country. A poor man going there could not get on without being assisted.

30,049. Is there no road there?—Of course, there is a principal road.

30,050. But to undertake a holding there, you would require assistance?—Yes, a poor crofter would not be fit to take it otherwise.

30,051. Then, do you ask our attention to any land on the banks of Loch Shin, or do you not know about that?—I am not acquainted there.

30,052. You make this statement 'However, it 'would not be advisable to break up the Reay forest, 'as the burden of taxation and rates would more than 'counterbalance profits without state aid in stocking 'the holdings.' Was that the reason why in your statement you did not make any reference to land in the Reay forest?—Well, of course, we include the Reay forest, the Glendhu side. It was other two men appointed at our meeting who gave the writer this statement. But there is Duartbeg where the sheep farmer is at present,—he is a stranger to this country,—that is a place that would be suitable for one. The tenant sits there as a shepherd and a farmer; he herds for himself.

30,053. Are you, as representing the meeting that appointed you a delegate, against any land being considered by us which is within the Reay forest? You are against the Reay forest being broken up, I understand?—Yes, if we would think that it would overburden us with rates.

30,054. The rental derived from the Reay forest is, in your opinion, valuable in keeping down the rates?—Yes, of course, it is. But on the other hand I know perfectly well Duartmore is down at the shore side, and a place where there were a few crofters before could be inhabited by a few again. The same is the case with Kylestrome where there is a forester now: there were families there before, though I don't know how many; and Maldie again.

30,055. I have noted that. Is this your view then, that you would be in favour of our considering land inside the forest if we thought it could be dealt with without breaking up the forest?—Yes, of course, without breaking up the forest.

30,056. But you are against our doing anything that would have the effect of breaking up the forest?—Certainly, because it would overburden us with taxation.

30,057. *Mr. Sutherland.*—How would it tax you? First of all, who are the men you say that are against the breaking up of the deer forest?—There are none against breaking up the deer forest if we could get land in the deer forest at a reasonable rent, and valued by the Commissioners. These places to the Glendhu side would be very suitable for a few crofters.

30,058. You know the way that taxation is levied, don't you; it is not on the subject but on the rent of the subject that it is levied?—Yes.

30,059. And would it matter to you, as a ratepayer, whether the rent is paid by yourselves or by the Duke of Westminster? Would not the taxation be the same?—No, if it would not put more taxation on it.

30,060. I want to know in what way you thought it would increase your taxation?—The heavy rental paid for this deer forest.

30,061. How much is it?—Well, I do not know. I think it is £2380.

30,062. Do you think they pay as much per acre as you do?—No, I don't think so.

30,063. Then, it would only take down your taxation if you only pay the same rent, you see? If you got the same land as the present tenant of the deer forest, and if you were to pay the same rent per acre as you pay now for your own holdings, you would pay just as much as the present tenant of the deer forest: so where would the increase of taxation be then?—No, I daresay not.

30,064. But you have already stated in answer to his lordship that if that were the case you would see no objection to breaking up the forest?—No, I would not on that ground.

Lachlan Ross. Lachlan Ross, Crofter, Achreisgill (60)—*examined.*

30,065. *The Chairman.*—You are a crofter at Achreisgill?—Yes.

30,066. Was your case dealt with by the Commission?—Yes.

30,067. What rent are you paying now?—£3, 10s.

30,068. Do you remember what your old rent was?—£2; my father was paying £2.

30,069. Was your father the tenant at the date when the Crofters Commission were here?—No; he died twenty years ago.

30,070. What rent were you paying when the Commission were here?—£3. My rent was raised by them 10s.

30,071. Do you agree with the evidence given by Mr Morrison?—I cannot say.

30,072. Tell us what you would like to say.—In reference to the Reay forest, Mr Morrison stated the whole between Glencoul and Foinaven as the Reay forest. The Glendhu farm, however, was never the Reay forest till a few years ago. The Reay forest does not cross the road that leads from Laxford to Lairg; it is on the north side of it altogether, between Foinaven and Ben Hee. Now, there is enough land at Kylestrome farm that could be made available between Scourie and Kylesen which is not the Reay forest, although it is under deer just now.

30,073. Not the old Reay forest?—Not the old Reay forest. That is how it comes to be put down in our statement. There is very little in the Reay forest that would be of use to the people here; only a bit about Loch More, that is the whole. But there is plenty between Kylestrome and Scourie, near the sea, where people could live comfortably here and there, and could prosecute the fishing at any time of the year.

30,074. And would you be in favour of new holdings being formed on land between Scourie and Kylestrome?—I would.

30,075. For fishermen?—Yes.

30,076. Now, what size of holding would you propose for fishermen situated between Scourie and Kylestrome?—It would be impossible to give them large holdings there: any person who would like to get a holding of an acre or two to help him, taking his liberty to fish anywhere he liked, could be settled there. When there is not so much land as would do for every one a man would be pleased with two or three acres, or three or four acres, or so, with the help of his fishing.

30,077. And would he depend more upon the fishing than upon the land, for his livelihood?—Well, sometimes.

30,078. Or both?—Sometimes.

30,079. But you are in favour, as I understand, of settlements between Scourie and Kylestrome, where occupants would depend partly on their crofts and partly on the fishing?—Decidedly.

30,080. And there is land between these two points suitable for such settlements?—Yes.

30,081. Can you tell us precisely what lands recently within your recollection have been added to the Reay forest in this district?—The whole of Glendhu farm. (*Mr Watson, Surveyor*—From Loch More to Kylesku.)

30,082. Then besides Glendhu farm there is this land you say between Scourie and Kylestrome?—Yes. Rhiconich, Sutherlandshire.

30,083. That land is at present occupied as forest. How was it occupied before it was afforested?—There were tenants. Lachlan Ross.

30,084. Small tenants?—Yes, small tenants, but I cannot tell how many were in each place.

30,085. Do the crofters whom you represent depend mainly on the fishing for their livelihood?—Oh, no; partly on the fishing and partly on the land.

30,086. And are those whom you represent in favour of that system?—Decidedly. If a man could get as much land in another place as would do, if he would get ten acres of land in any other place, I think he could live somewhat comfortably; but there is not that amount of land in our parish here for that purpose. But there is any amount of land in the parish of Durness. I was last year up in the forest there working at Strathmore. I went several times down Strathmore purposely to look at it, and I think any man would live better there if he had ten acres of land than he would do here by fishing, on the small lots they have.

30,087. Then, you are in favour, as I understand, of the establishment of holdings, both for fishermen who live partly by the sea and partly by their crofts, and also of holdings where the man would live entirely by his holding?—Yes.

30,088. Both these systems?—Yes.

30,089. And if it could be done you could relieve the whole of the Kinlochbervie crofters by taking away the cottars and migrating them elsewhere?—Well, it would be a great burden removed.

30,090. It would be a great advantage to the crofters and a great improvement to the cottars?—Yes, indeed.

30,091. Are the cottars at present living very much upon the crofters?—So they are.

30,092. And do these cottars pay rents just now?—No, they don't pay rents to us, but they pay 10s. for the site of their houses.

30,093. And have some of them stock upon the crofters' lands?—Yes.

30,094. Do they pay anything for that?—No.

30,095. They just get that by permission from the crofters?—Yes.

30,096. Have they a good deal of stock?—Some of them have. Some of them have as good stock as the crofters, and others nothing at all.

30,097. I don't want to ask names, but give us the case of a cottar with a good deal of stock?—There is not a cottar that has a great deal of stock, but there are crofters who have no stock at all.

30,098. But some cottars are better off than the crofters?—Than some of the crofters.

30,099. Have some of the cottars as many as two or three cows?—Oh, no, none of the cottars have that.

30,100. What sort of stock have they?—Some of them have a cow, others perhaps six or seven sheep.

30,101. Have any of them a horse?—No.

30,102. But they feed their stock, such as it is, on the crofters' lands?—Yes.

30,103. *Mr Gordon.*—How do you account for some of the cottars being better off than the crofters? Are they workmen?—They work at the fishing, and any other work they get to do: there are cottars here as poor as any crofter in the parish.

30,104. But the cottars who work at the fishing or at any other work they can get are on the whole well off, are they?—No: they might do well at the fishing one year and make nothing next year.

30,105. But I thought you said they followed the fish?—They do follow it, but perhaps they will not catch it. There is plenty fishing in Loch Inchard just now, but none since six years ago.

30,106. You say you were over in Strathmore last year working, and you looked down the strath and saw a lot of land. Now, how many people do you suppose you could place in Strathmore with ten acres of land each?—I daresay there is more than 200 acres of land there that could be taken in; there is a great deal of it that was arable land before.

30,107. Whereabouts is that? I would like you to

Rhiconich, Sutherlandshire.

Lachlan Ross.

be a little more specific. Where is the land in Strathmore that you saw which would extend to 200 acres that either was arable or could be reclaimed?—I think from Gobernuis-geach to the end of the loch.

30,108. To Mussal?—Down a bit farther than that, to the end of Loch Hope.

30,109. We came down that way the other day, and I must say I did not see anything like that extent of land, nor anything approaching the half of it.—There is one bit at the upper end of Loch Hope that was never taken in.

30,110. Was that upon the farm of Eriboll?—Yes, and I am sure there are 100 acres in that one place.

30,111. Well, I am sure there are not 30 acres, but you and I might not be very good judges. I think there are just about 30; the upper haugh is all heather?—I might have miscalculated it, indeed, but I thought it was bigger than Achreisgill where I live.

30,112. There may be about 30 acres there; but taking the whole of that strath I don't suppose that you could locate more than six or eight people upon land that either was formerly arable or is of a nature that is reclaimable. Now, have you any other place to mention except what Morrison told us?—On this side of Kylestrome again, there is the isle of Handa, where there were eight families.

30,113. Where else?—The south side of Loch Laxford; there is one township there with only one tenant, Inver Clashfearn, at the sea.

30,114. Is there land there that could be reclaimed?—Yes, a very good bit of land.

30,115. It is not old arable land?—It could be made, a good bit.

30,116. How many families do you think could be placed there?—Only one family; it is in the factor's farm just now.

30,117. All the land that you and Mr Morrison have told us of, the land that is presently or has ever been arable, would only afford relief to about 20 families out of 144—I am going carefully by what you and he stated. Now, is there any number of the inhabitants of this district who would be willing to take small lots of an acre or half an acre at the seaside, and devote their whole time to fishing?—If they would get an acre or two no doubt they would be very willing to go there: I am sure it would be better for them to be there with two acres or even one acre than to be where they are without an acre at all.

30,118. And that they would take to fishing as a profession?—Well, if they were forced to do that.

30,119. But the difficulty here you see is that there is not land enough?—We must admit that the majority here depend more upon the land than upon the fishing, although the fishing does a great deal of good sometimes.

30,120. The difficulty that stares us in the face is that after all that you have been able to do traversing the whole county here, you have only been able to point out a very few places that are suitable for cultivation, and that would only be sufficient for a very few families?—Certainly, but many of us are quite willing to go elsewhere altogether, if holdings could be got. This Reay forest comes down to the sea.

30,121. But is there any arable land in the Reay forest?—No doubt there are bits. There is Badnabea first of all. But I think there is more arable land in Glendhu than in the Reay forest.

30,122. Either you or Mr Morrison mentioned the land at Loch More. Now that has been afforested for forty years?—Yes, but we mentioned Loch Merkland.

30,123. Is that not in the centre of the old forest?—So it is, but it does not belong to the old forest.

30,124. *Mr Sutherland.*—I asked Mr Morrison a question about how the people came to be there, and he said that perhaps you might know more about it. What do you know of Achreisgill for instance?—My grandfather was, shall I say, evicted to it because he was only a servant to Forbes. He was sent down from Tongue to Achreisgill.

30,125. What sort of place did he come to in Achreisgill?—He lived in Achreisgill after I was born.

30,126. Did he get a house ready to go into, and arable land to cultivate?—No, he did not get a house, and he did not get a bit of land either; only it was 'go there and live if you can in it.'

30,127. How did that holding get on? Is that the same place you are in now?—I told you that he did not get a bit of land at all.

30,128. I beg your pardon, I did not catch that?—My grandfather, on my father's side, Robert Ross, was living at Scourie, and—

30,129. I will make it short for you. My point is this, when your people were sent there, did they get a holding ready made for them?—No, they just made it themselves.

30,130. Out of what sort of land?—Out of the worst you ever saw.

30,131. Now, I want you to fix that sort of land in your mind for a moment, the land your grandfather got when he went there, and to tell me how much of that quality of land is in the Reay forest?—There is a good deal.

30,132. Are there 100,000 acres, or almost the whole of it?—Well, the most of the forest except what is opposite the road leading from Laxford to Lairg; you knew there are some bits of good soil there.

30,133. But is it of as good soil as your grandfather got when he went to Achreisgill?—It is moss altogether in the forest, except Loch More.

30,134. What sort of land was this you got at Achreisgill?—Stony land, and good soil in it when you made it. There could be very good land made at Loch More, at Achfary.

30,135. Keeping that in your mind, do you think there is the slightest difficulty of getting hundreds of acres of that sort of land for the people of Kinlochbervie?—There is no difficulty there.

30,136. You talked about land between Scourie and Kylesku?—Yes.

30,137. Is the land that you pointed out there as good land or worse than the land at Achreisgill was?—Some of it is better.

30,138. You also said that you were in favour of forming holdings for settlers who would be both crofters and fishermen?—Yes.

30,139. Is that of choice? Do you believe from your own experience at Kinlochbervie that that is a form of holding that ought to be encouraged?—Some of them would not like to give over the practice of fishing.

30,140. Why?—Because sometimes it pays very well. They would not like to be driven from that without getting 20 or 30 acres of land to live on.

30,141. But you are shutting out of your mind the possibility of getting that?—We could not get it here.

30,142. If an offer were made of 20 or 30 acres of arable land with suitable pasture attached, would the majority of the people of Kinlochbervie take such holdings and leave the fishing?—How could they take it?

30,143. Would they, if they got the chance, take it and leave the fishing?—Yes, if they could work such a holding; but their poverty would not allow them to work it.

30,144. But if they got the chance of taking a holding of 20 or 30 acres of arable land with the pasture attached, would they take it, or would they stick to the fishing?—I am sure if they were able to take it they would do so and drop the fishing; I would do it myself.

30,145. Have you had much experience of the fishing?—I have been prosecuting the fishing ever since I remember.

30,146. And have you upon the whole been successful? Has it helped you much?—Sometimes it would help me, and sometimes not. Sometimes it would be better than anything, and at other times it would be better for me not to touch it at all.

30,147. Balancing the one against the other, do you think you had wages for your labour out of it?—Well, sometimes.

30,148. But putting the good and bad together?—Taking it on the average, it would not pay my labour. But there are some here who live almost entirely by it; a good many cottars live by the fishing altogether.

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30,149. Because they have no land?—They have no land, and they must try their best there; but if I could get land I would never run after the fish.

30,150. With regard to land at Strathmore, you were asked a question as to the amount of arable land there, and you said 200 acres?—I meant what could be taken in.

30,151. I thought there was some difference about that. But it would depend very much, would it not, upon the standard of arable land you had in your mind: if you were to include such land as you had at Achreisgill, you think a great deal more would be capable of being made arable?—I am sure of it.

30,152. *The Chairman.*—Are you, yourself, very much attached to the occupation of a fisherman as a business?—My days are gone now, and I think I might not care, although I would not make much more out of the sea in my life, for I am an old man now, and my family are all away in different parts of the world, but I would like to try the fishing sometimes yet.

30,153. When the chance occurs?—When I had the chance.

30,154. Are a great number of the Kinlochbervie crofters attached to the fishing?—Oh, yes, no doubt: they must do the best they can.

30,155. But if they got holdings where they could live without going to sea?—A good many would prefer it.

30,156. And what about the rest?—Some would be inclined for fishing, and others partly for fishing, and partly for land.

30,157. In your opinion, is there a large portion of the old Reay forest unsuitable for crofter occupation?—There is a great deal of the Reay forest unsuitable for cultivation,—most of it, except what is round Loch More up there. Beyond what is in that strip there is nothing fit for cultivation in the Reay forest.

30,158. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did you know a James Campbell?—Yes, I did.

30,159. He is dead now, I presume?—He is dead long ago.

30,160. Do you know that that man was sent to Kinlochbervie when Rispond was cleared?—About that time, I think, he came from Loch Eribol, and he had come from Strathnaver to Loch Eribol. They sent him from Grumbeg or Grummore in Strathnaver.

30,161. Then, do you know a John Mackay?—Where was he from?

30,162. From a place called Port-Chamail on Loch Eriboll?—Yes, he was in Kinlochbervie.

30,163. And did you know a Murdo Morrison?—I know one Murdo Morrison, Badcall.

30,164. Do you know where he came from?—His ancestors were removed from Strathnaver.

30,165. But that was not the natural increase of the population when all these men were sent here from other places?—It increased them at the time.

30,166. But that is not a natural process,—the process of eviction?—Oh, no.

30,167. It was stated that the township was congested from the natural increase of the population. Is it not the fact that it was congested also to a large extent by the people being put in from outside?—To be sure: they were shoved from the straths up there and from the parish of Tongue into it.

30,168. And you are of opinion that these people's descendants who are there could go back to the places their forefathers came from?—Some of them would be very glad to do it.

[ADJOURNED.]

THIRTY-FIRST SITTING.

Scourie, Sutherland-shire.

SCOURIE, SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

October 20, 1893.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

ALEXANDER MACLEOD, Crofter, Scourie Village (43) —*examined.*

Alexander Macleod.

30,169. *The Chairman.*—Were you appointed as a delegate to appear before us?—No.

30,170. You come just as an individual?—Yes.

30,171. Are you a crofter?—Yes.

30,172. Was your case considered by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

30,173. Is your holding No. 50?—Yes.

30,174. I see the area is 2 acres 2 roods 5 poles, arable; 1 acre 3 roods 38 poles outrun; and a share in a common of 6500 acres, and an enlargement was granted to the applicants in Badcall, Scouriemore, and Scourie village. The old rent was £4, 4s. 9d., and the fair rent for the enlarged holding is £4, 12s.?—Yes.

30,175. Have you a written statement?—No.

30,176. Just tell us in your own words what you wish to say.—Yes, I will do that. I want a larger holding, the present holding is not sufficient to support myself and my family.

30,177. What family have you?—Five.

30,178. And your wife?—Yes.

30,179. How do you earn your livelihood at present?—Just by anything I can get to do.

30,180. Labouring?—Yes.

30,181. Do you do fishing at all?—No.

30,182. And do you get labour pretty constantly?—No, there is no labour at all.

30,183. Where do you mostly get work then?—I was getting labouring in the forest now for some years back.

30,184. You mean in the Reay forest?—Yes.

30,185. What sort of labour had you there?—Common labour, working with horses, or anything I could do.

30,186. And do you get that now?—I had it for the last two years, but for seven years before that I was not allowed to work.

30,187. Does such labour continue during the year, or is it only at certain times?—During the summer season.

30,188. You say you wish a larger holding. Can you point us to where the larger holding could be obtained in the district?—Yes.

30,189. Where is that?—Oh, the forest is wide.

30,190. What part of the forest in particular?—Badnabay, I want Badnabay and a share of the hills.

30,191. Is it at the head of Loch Laxford?—Yes. [*Mr Maciver.*—On this side next to Scourie.]

30,192. What kind of land is there; is there old arable land there?—Yes, there is old arable.

30,193. Can you tell us what extent of old arable there is?—No, I cannot.

30,194. But are there a number of acres at all events?—There are a few acres whatever; there are two parks, and there could be more added.

30,195. By bringing in land?—Yes.

30,196. How many holdings could be put there, do you think?—They could be scattered through; there could not be many holdings put on the one place, but all over

Scourie, Sutherlandshire.

Alexander Macleod.

30,197. Is there an area of ground there and in that neighbourhood, which would allow of the settlement of a number of crofters?—Yes, along the road up through the forest.

30,198. That is the road leading to Loch Stack and Lochinver?—Yes, leading to Lairg.

30,199. Is all that past Laxford Bridge?—Yes.

30,200. And it is all at present under forest, is it?—Yes.

30,201. What size of holding have you in view?—What would keep a horse, or two horses, and four cows, and so many sheep, but I would get assistance from Government to stock it. Government was offering money to people to go to America, and I don't see why we should not get money to stock land here.

30,202. Since you have raised that matter I had better ask you. Have you in view to undertake a new holding only with assistance?—Just with assistance.

30,203. Assistance for stocking?—Yes.

30,204. And assistance for anything else?—Anything else that would be necessary.

30,205. Have you estimated what amount of assistance you would require?—No, I have not.

30,206. But I understand you to mean you would not be prepared to leave where you are and go to Badnabay without assistance?—No, I cannot leave the place I have now till I get another.

30,207. Now, is there any other suitable land in this district?—Yes.

30,208. Where is it?—I will commence with the island of Handa.

30,209. Is that good grazing land?—Yes, and good arable land too.

30,210. And has there been arable land there cultivated?—Yes.

30,211. Was there a township there at one time?—Yes, eight or nine families and two cottars.

30,212. Well, besides Badnabay and Handa, is there any other land?—Weaver's Bay, on this side of Badnabay: there was a crofter there before.

30,213. It is not far from Badnabay?—No, on Loch Laxford side.

30,214. How is that land occupied at present?—By Mr Maciver.

30,215. Is it part of the Scourie farm?—Yes.

30,216. Is it under rotation at present, or under grass?—It is under grass. It has been under grass since I was born I daresay.

30,217. It was always under grass in your recollection?—I don't remember any time when it was not.

30,218. Is there any other place you wish to mention?—There is another place called Findlebeg beyond that.

30,219. On what side of the loch?—This side of the loch.

30,220. The left hand side looking down?—Yes.

30,221. Is it also a part of Scourie farm?—Yes.

30,222. And is it under grass at present?—Yes.

30,223. Is there any other place?—You can go up the forest all the way one may say.

30,224. You mean up by Loch Stack, and Loch More, and Loch Merkland, and Loch Shin?—Well, I don't want to go past Loch More.

30,225. Is there suitable land, in your opinion, on the shores of Loch More?—Yes.

30,226. On both sides?—On one side, the south side.

30,227. On the right hand side of the road as you go up to Loch Merkland?—Yes.

30,228. Can you give us the names of any places there, or old places?—There is Loch More and Achfarry, there could be crofters in these places.

30,229. Besides Achfarry and Loch More, are there any other small places there?—No.

30,230. But you ask our attention to the lands on the right hand side of the road running by the margin of Lochmore?—Yes.

30,231. From the one end of it to the other?—Yes.

30,232. Now, is there anywhere else?—We will go now to Glencoul; there were crofters there at one time.

30,233. What is the name of any place or places there?—Just Glencoul itself.

30,234. How is that land used at present?—It is part of the forest.

30,235. Were there crofters in Glencoul at one time?—Yes, I understand there were four or five crofters there; I heard so, but I am not sure.

30,236. You have that from information, not of your own knowledge?—No.

30,237. Anywhere else?—There is a place between Glencoul and Glendhu called Aird-da-Loch.

30,238. On the tongue of land between the two lochs?—Yes.

30,239. Are these all the places you wish to mention, or are there more?—There are plenty more. Coming now to Glendhu, there were crofters there.

30,240. Were there crofters at Maldie?—Yes.

30,241. And crofters at Glendhu itself?—Yes.

30,242. Anywhere else?—Kylestrome.

30,243. Is that land under forest at present?—Yes, there were 16 crofters there at one time.

30,244. And is the land lying between Kylestrome and Scourie, so far as not in the hands of the crofters, suitable for our consideration?—Yes.

30,245. Is it under forest, or in farms?—Part under forest and part farm.

30,246. The forest is the Reay forest?—Yes.

30,247. And what farm is it you refer to?—Duartbeg. [*Mr Maciver.*—The forest is Glendhu forest, separate from the Reay forest.]

30,248. Is there any other land?—Not that I am aware of.

30,249. As I understand, you do not live by your holding at present, but mainly by labour?—Mainly by labour. My corn this year would hardly cut; it would not take binding.

30,250. You mean it is so short?—So short. As to the park that I have my hay on, a boat could swim on it, and for the last six weeks I have had to go knee deep in water to reach the hay.

30,251. What stock have you got?—A horse, mare, and foal.

30,252. And how many cows?—A cow and a stot.

30,253. Have you any sheep?—Twenty sheep.

30,254. Ewes?—But I cannot call them mine.

30,255. Are they pledged, or why are they not yours?—They belong to Mr Macdonald, in the village; he gave them to me to be paid for as I could.

30,256. You mean that they are yours, but you are owing part of the price?—Yes.

30,257. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to these lands you have mentioned, are they, in your opinion, suitable for cultivation?—I think they are: they were under cultivation before, and I do not see why they should not be so now; only there would be a great deal of labour in taking any in, because they are all out under rushes and ferns.

30,258. Do you ever hear it mentioned that these lands were now not so good for pasture as they were before?—I think they are as good for pasture, only the principal parts that were under cultivation before are now under rushes and ferns.

30,259. You mean that the grass is overborne by the ferns and the rushes?—The ferns and the rushes killed the grass.

30,260. So then it is not so good grazing as it was before, now that it has been let out of cultivation for some time?—Oh, no, that is sure enough.

30,261. And is that, in your opinion, one reason why the pasture is deteriorated now on these sheep farms and deer forest?—The people were put out of it.

30,262. But is that one of the reasons, do you think?—Certainly.

30,263. Have you ever seen land cultivated on grazings for the purpose of improving the pasture? Do you ever see that in this part of the country?—No, I don't think so.

30,264. Did you ever hear it said that land was being improved for the purpose of improving the pasture?—No.

30,265. But, in your opinion, would the grazing be better and be able to carry more stock if it had some arable land upon it?—Oh, certainly it would.

30,266. And do you know the state of the pasture in a deer forest: is it improving, or getting worse?—It is getting worse.

30,267. In what way?—The grass is getting wilder, and it is allowed to lie from year to year rotting.

30,268. And the tendency is in the case of a deer forest for land to go back to a state of nature, is it?—Certainly. It is a shame to see the grass in the Reay forest going rotting as it is, and poor people's cattle starving for want of grass.

30,269. And have you both these things side by side,—ground as bare as a table, and grass rotting in the forest?—You can see it here, the grass about the door here is as bare as my hand, and grass in the forest that you could take a scythe and cut.

30,270. And that is allowed to rot?—Who is to eat it? the deer won't eat it.

30,271. And is the tendency for the land to go back into a state of nature when the grass is allowed to go that way,—is the grass getting wilder?—It is getting wilder, certainly.

30,272. And there are plenty places of that kind in the Reay forest?—Plenty. There are many places where there used to be a crofter, but which you would not know now, the place is so wild.

30,273. You have a holding yourself here?—Yes.

30,274. Would you like a larger holding?—Yes, to support myself and my family.

30,275. Does not this holding support your family?—No, it will not keep me in potatoes scarcely.

30,276. It does not pay you for your labour?—No, you have to sit at it, or it would go to pot.

30,277. You could attend as well to a holding three times the size of your present one?—Yes, if it was not for the bad weather; if I had a holding that I could stock all over from the one end of the year to the other, I could make a living by it.

30,278. But your holding is not profitable, because it is too small?—It is not profitable at all. One half of the land that I have won't take a crop at all.

30,279. Do you not take the rent of the land out of the holding?—I can hardly get my own labour out of it, you hardly get the return of the corn sown. This same year for instance the half of my corn would not take binding.

30,280. But this is an exceptional year?—Well, last year and every year is always the same. I have been working at it from winter to winter since I was able to work, and my forefathers before me.

30,281. And you think their labour is largely thrown away, because the subject is unprofitable to begin with?—Yes, because it is every year turned over and over again.

30,282. And become exhausted?—Yes, the ground is run out to nothing.

30,283. And I suppose this other land that you mentioned to the Chairman is exhausted, through not being laboured?—Exactly.

30,284. You stated that you would require assistance to stock a holding?—Yes.

30,285. That, of course, naturally would depend on the size of holding you think desirable?—Yes.

30,286. Could you give us any idea of the size?—Well, I would like a holding where I could keep a horse, perhaps two.

30,287. Could you give us an idea of the approximate acreage that would be required for that purpose?—No, I cannot.

30,288. But it is a considerably larger holding than that you have now?—Yes, if I get the hill along with it.

30,289. Do you know how many families there are in Scourie?—How many that have crofts do you mean?

30,290. No, altogether. Well, give me the number of crofters to begin with?—There are 11 crofters in the village, and 22 in Scouriemore; I think that is all.

30,291. And are there people without land then?—Yes.

30,292. How many?—There will be 4 or 5 I daresay.

30,293. Do you know what acreage all these people hold among them?—No, I do not know.

30,294. Is the whole of their land as big as the Scourie farm?—The arable land do you mean?

30,295. No, the whole area they occupy?—Oh, I think it is bigger; but the tenants have bad land.

30,296. And the Scourie farm is in the occupation of one man?—Yes.

30,297. And the other 36 have only got perhaps twice as much?—I cannot say as to that.

30,298. And the Scourie farm is by no means the biggest in this neighbourhood?—It is the biggest here.

30,299. The biggest farm, but it is nothing as compared with the forest, not a fleabite?—Not a patch upon it.

30,300. And that is all in the occupation of one man for non-productive purposes?—It is.

30,301. And you think that it is a state of matters that could easily be remedied?—I think so. I went the other night through the forest at dead of night, and I was actually afraid for my life, lest the deer should put their horns through me. It was the first time in my life I was afraid of them; they were on every side of me.

30,302. You would have some difficulty in stocking a holding?—Yes.

30,303. Is your ground here overstocked, the common grazing of the people of Scourie?—I think it is pretty well overstocked now: those who had not stock before are getting it up now, and that will make the ground overstocked in a very short time.

30,304. But with the natural increase of stock would you be afraid to undertake a larger holding than you have now?—I don't think I would, if I could stock it.

30,305. If you got easy terms for a while?—Yes.

30,306. It would all depend on that, would it not?—Yes, it would all depend on that.

30,307. No doubt, you were speaking for yourself, but you will have some knowledge of the opinions of the people hereabouts through living here always,—you are a native of this place?—Well, I know that they want land, for some of them applied for land before and did not get it.

30,308. To whom did they apply?—Five applied to the Crofters Commission.

30,309. For what?—For this part of Duartmore; that is a place I did not mention to his lordship.

30,310. They applied for that?—They applied for that and they did not get it. Others applied for Handa.

30,311. Stop one moment. They applied for Duartmore, which is in the deer forest?—Yes.

30,312. Do you know the reason assigned for their not getting it?—I cannot say, but some of them are here.

30,313. Was it, do you know, for fear of doing material injury to the forest?—Quite likely it was. [*The Chairman.*—Have you seen the Order? It is a pity to talk of the thing if you have not seen the Order.—No.]

30,314. But they did not get it,—it was not taken out of the forest and given to them?—No. [*The Chairman.*—You were not a party to the application, were you?—No.]

30,315. Then, that is an indication of the desire of the people to get land?—Yes. Others applied for Handa; the Tarbat people applied for Handa but did not get it.

30,316. But there was another arrangement made regarding Handa, was there not?—Yes.

30,317. What other indication have you of the desire of the people to get more land?—I suppose most of them want more land.

30,318. Have they ever made any application to the estate management for land to your knowledge?—I cannot tell as to that myself.

30,319. You did not hear of any?—Likely enough, some of them did. I, myself, applied for more land,

Scourie, Sutherlandshire.

Alexander Macleod.

some years ago, when there was a lot vacant down in the village. I applied for a part of it, but got no answer.

30,320. But you think there is a sufficient indication of the desire of the people for such holdings?—I think there is, if they had the pluck to shift.

30,321. Would they, do you think?—I think they would; of course, I cannot tell. But I know that I would shift to-morrow if I got the chance.

30,322. Then, these lands that you have mentioned to his lordship here were mentioned because you thought they were fit for cultivation, and one of the reasons was that they were in occupation before?—Yes, I thought when there were crofters on it before they would be able to make a living now.

30,323. Did you ever hear that the people themselves wanted to be put out of their holdings?—No, I did not hear that.

30,324. Did you know that Mr Maciver stated at Durness that the Duke of Sutherland was petitioned by the people themselves to get them put away?—I did not hear that. [*Mr Maciver.*—To emigrate to America.]

30,325. Did you ever hear that?—I never heard that. All that I heard was the late Duke of Sutherland saying to the ground officer to evict any crofter that was two years in arrear.

30,326. Then, you did not hear anything of the people themselves petitioning to be emigrated?—No, I did not.

30,327. That, in your opinion, was not the reason why the people were removed from the places they were in before, that they wished to go themselves?—Well, I know that I wished to go myself.

30,328. Where to?—To America; but when I heard of this Royal Commission which is sitting here at present coming round I thought I would wait till I saw what they would do for me.

30,329. But was that your desire, because you thought there was no land in Sutherland fitted for you to make a home?—No.

30,330. Was it rather because you just despaired of getting such land though you knew it was there?—Because I despaired of getting it.

30,331. All these lands, you think, are perfectly fitted for the purpose we are sent here for?—I thought when there were crofters here before there might be crofters now.

30,332. But quite apart from that you have been living here yourself and had an opportunity of knowing the circumstances, and being a practical farmer yourself, would you think there is a prospect of success if such holdings were given?—I am quite prepared to take one of them myself to-morrow.

30,333. *The Chairman.*—I see the ground on which Mr Macintyre disposed of the application you referred to was this:—'Finds that the applicants have applied for 'enlargement of holdings by taking land from the farm 'of Scouriebeg, presently let to and occupied and poss-'essed by Mr Evander Maciver: Finds that the part 'of the said farm specially asked is locally known as 'Handa Island and Eilean an Aigich: Finds that at 'the date of the hearing all the applicants, with one 'exception, were considerably in arrear of rent: Finds 'it proved on the evidence that the applicants are not 'able properly to stock the land for which application 'is made under and in terms of sec. 12 (2) of the Act: 'Therefore sustains the objection taken at the hearing 'on that ground by the respondent: Refuses the appli-'cation and dismisses the same.'

30,334. *Mr Gordon.*—Is the demand for land in this township more for arable land than for pasture?—I think pasture is what we need most. There is not much arable land hereabout; of course, there is some.

30,334*a*. How many sheep would there be on this hill?—Perhaps about 1000 sheep now.

30,335. Have you any idea of the extent of the ground?—No, I have not.

30,336. And how many cattle have the 36 crofters, do you think?—I really cannot tell; some have less and some more.

30,337. Would you have an average of four?—Oh, no.

30,338. Would you have an average of three?—I think that would take it all.

30,339. About 100 cattle and 1000 sheep?—Yes.

30,340. How many horses?—Twenty-eight horses.

30,341. That would be equal to a stock in all of 1600 to 1800 sheep on the ground. Now, looking at the ground as we see it, it seems to me to be overstocked, that is to say, you are more in want of pasture than of arable land?—Well, the way the thing is managed has a great deal to do with it. The sheep and cattle are not kept on the hill.

30,342. They come close down upon the green ground?—They come to the corner, which I think is a sin.

30,343. Have you any system of management; have you a souming at all?—Yes.

30,344. And is the souming list adhered to by the crofters?—They went through the form; that is all.

30,345. Have you a committee of management?—Yes.

30,346. And do the crofters, as a rule, obey their orders?—I am one of the committee myself.

30,347. Well, do the public, as a rule, obey you?—No, they don't. I want to get the yeld sheep and the cattle and horses on to the hill.

30,348. It would improve your position here if you could separate the cattle from the sheep and put the sheep at some distance from the crofts?—Yes, it would, at certain times of the year; but this ground is so bad.

30,349. It is not bad ground, you cannot say that; it may be overstocked, but what is in sight is not bad land?—The upper part is bad.

30,350. That may be; is it floe ground?—It is floe ground.

30,351. The lower part is very good ground; it is very bare simply because it is too hard eaten?—Yes, that is quite right.

30,352. Assuming that you were yourself to shift, what size of croft would you like?—A croft that would keep a horse, with four or five cows and followers.

30,353. You would require ten acres of arable land at least?—If the pasture was good, less than that would do, where they could winter out a good part of the day during the winter.

30,354. Could you give me a general idea of the number of stock that you would like, how many sheep?—A few hundreds of sheep.

30,355. You would soon take up a corner of the forest at that rate?—That is what I want.

30,356. But suppose that you had less than a few hundred; suppose you had 100?—So far, I would be satisfied with 100.

30,357. How many people in the village of Scourie have the same views as yourself in regard to stocking?—Not one.

30,358. Do you know any one else who would be willing to flit?—I don't think so; there may be some, but if there are they are very dumb about it.

30,359. They are pretty well satisfied, as a rule, then, the others?—It looks very like it.

30,360. Now, there is one statement you made which I think I would like to give you an opportunity of either restating or correcting. You said that the last time the Duke of Sutherland came to Scourie, he instructed the ground officer to evict any man who was two years in arrear?—He said in my hearing to the ground officer, 'Any man that is two years in arrear, 'evict him.' There was another man present at the time, a man from Tarbat.

30,361. That is a very strong statement to make, unless well supported by evidence?—It is as true as that I am standing here.

30,362. *The Chairman.*—What is the name of the other man who was present?—Donald Mackenzie, Tarbat.

30,363. Is he alive?—Yes.

30,364. Is he a crofter?—I think he is rather a cottar; he has a sublet.

30,365. What was the occasion of that statement

being made?—I cannot tell indeed; it was at the inn, where I was at the time.

30,366. Was it in front of the inn?—Yes.

30,367. Can you give me the date of it?—It was the last time he was round here; I am not sure as to the date.

30,368. What time of the year was it?—It was in harvest time, I think, or in summer.

30,369. Of what year?—Two or three years ago.

30,370. What was the occasion of the Duke being here?—He just came on his round.

30,371. Who was with him?—The Duchess.

30,372. The late Duchess?—Yes, the Duchess Dowager.

30,373. And who else?—There were no others.

30,374. Was Mr Maciver there?—Not at the time.

30,375. Was anybody else there that you remember?—No, there were just the four of us altogether, his Grace, and the ground officer, and I, and this man from Tarbat.

30,376. What was the name of the ground officer?—He is at present ground officer here—James Mackay.

30,377. Then, what was the occasion of the conversation?—I heard no conversation at all.

30,378. How did you happen to be there, may I venture to ask?—I went to see his Grace about getting iron for the roof of my house, as the water was coming in.

30,379. Did you speak to him personally?—Yes, I did.

30,380. And what did he say?—He said it was a pity I did not come when Mr Maciver was there. I showed him the house and he wanted me to write to him to Dunrobin, which I did, and after doing so there came back word that it was not granted.

30,381. Word from whom?—From his Grace.

30,382. But who wrote you? Who gave you the word; or was it a verbal message?—From the secretary.

30,383. Mr. Wright?—Yes.

30,384. And was the Duke apparently quite willing at the time to consider your application for iron?—He looked like it when I showed him the house.

30,385. He was perfectly cordial and courteous in his manner?—Yes, quite; oh, yes.

30,386. What led to this conversation about evicting?—I cannot tell; I just heard the words of him talking to the ground officer.

30,387. This man from Tarbat was along with you?—Yes.

30,388. Had he an application to make to the Duke?—He was seeing about something or other, I don't know what it was.

30,389. He had some claim of his own that he wanted to submit to the Duke?—Yes.

30,390. Do you know what the Duke said to him?—I cannot tell.

30,391. Was the interview between the Duke and the man from Tarbat a perfectly agreeable interview?—Oh, yes, quite.

30,392. There were no words of an unpleasant kind?—No.

30,393. All was quite agreeable?—Quite agreeable.

30,394. Then, in these circumstances, what led to this observation about evicting?—I cannot tell; just that I heard the words.

30,395. Do you know to whom he referred as being in arrear?—I cannot tell; yon were just the words he said to the ground officer.

30,396. And what did the ground officer say in reply?—He as much as put with him.

30,397. What did he say?—Oh, I cannot tell what he said.

30,398. Do you remember if he said anything?—I cannot go through it, and there is no use for me to say it. [*Mr Gordon.*—If you were near enough to hear the Duke make that statement, you must have been near enough to hear the answer?—I was that much vexed to hear such words coming out of the Duke's month that I could not pick it up.]

30,399. Did you make any observation yourself, when you heard this statement by the Duke?—No.

30,400. Were you in arrear at the time?—No

30,401. Then, it did not apply to you?—No, no.

30,402. Was the man from Tarbat in arrear? He is a cottar?—He is a cottar, but he had his house rent to pay, and I think he was seeing his Grace about that.

30,403. Was he in arrear?—Yes, of his house rent.

30,404. It did not apply to you?—No, it did not apply to me. [*Mr Gordon.*—The statement was so extraordinary, and different from what I have ever understood of the Duke, that I could not help giving the witness an opportunity of explaining it.—Well, sir, yon was what I heard, and I was very sorry to hear it out of his mouth.]

30,405. Was anybody evicted after that?—No, my Lord, none.

30,406. Not a human being?—Oh, no, there was none.

30,407. Did you hear of any steps being taken in that direction by the ground officer?—No, none.

30,408. *Mr Forsyth.*—Can you give me any idea or the prices of stock that have been current for crofters' stock in the district lately?—The prices were very bad this year, worse than ever was.

30,409. What have you been getting for your stirks, let us say: do you sell your cattle as stirks?—Perhaps £2 for a three-year-old.

30,410. Then, you keep your cattle till they are three-year-olds?—Some do and others do not; some send them as year-olds, just as they can get them sold.

30,411. You think £2 is the usual price for a three year old here?—Oh, no, it is not; I have seen £6 given for a three-year-old. Prices are very much down.

30,412. But I want to know the prices during the last two or three years. Can you tell me the average price say for an ordinary crofter's three-year-old?—No, I cannot, because the prices were not the same all the year through.

30,413. Of course, they are not the same, but you can give me no idea of what they are worth on an average?—That depends on the class of beasts.

30,414. Would you take £6 then as an average or somewhere near it?—Oh, no, they would not average that.

30,415. Would they average £4?—I hardly think so.

30,416. Then, as to sheep, do the people sell their lambs off the hill here?—Yes, when they can get them off.

30,417. Have they been sold lately?—Not this year.

30,418. Have they sold cattle this year?—Yes.

30,419. Do you think there are more sheep than usual on the hill owing to the holding of stock?—Well, I have seen more sheep on the hill than are there now, but I think there were too many on at that time; the bulk of them died. But I think the hill will soon be pretty well stocked.

30,420. Yes, of course, if you do not sell, but it is not likely to be overstocked?—Well, the most of them that had not a share before are getting up stock for themselves now.

30,421. Have you any method of regulating the stock?—Yes.

30,422. But then it appears to vary very much. Is it that some of the people have not had the stock they might have had and now are putting them upon it; or is it that the people are just holding their stock and increasing them without reference to regulations?—Those that had not stock are buying new stock for themselves, and those that had too much stock before will have to reduce it.

30,423. But they have the overstock on now?—Yes.

30,424. Won't that account a good deal for the bareness of the hill, and also the fact that the stock are lying too much down on the green ground?—Yes, that is so.

30,425. Have you proposed among yourselves to make any regulations by which your stock could be better kept over the hill ground?—I thought that would be done when the committee was appointed.

30,426. But the committee has not worked well, so far?—They don't keep the beasts to the hill.

30,427. Have you any shepherd to look after the stock?—We have two.

Scourie, Sutherlandshire.

Alexander Macleod.

30,428. And do they not take pains to keep the stock in the proper place?—No, they don't.

30,429. But is not that within your power to alter; could not the committee deal with your shepherds?—Yes, if the committee would do it, but none of them will do it but myself, and I am making my tongue thin with speaking to them.

30,430. What remedy do you propose if the shepherds don't do their duty?—What can you do to them when they will not do their duty and the committee won't force them to do it?

30,431. Don't you think it would be advisable to get the committee to force them to do it?—Well, I have tried it, and cannot get them to do that.

30,432. You appear to have done all that you possibly can do; but in the event of your having extended grazings, don't you think this will act very prejudicially in the future? Supposing your grazings and holdings were much enlarged and increased; suppose a considerable portion of the forest or the farm land were to be added to holdings here, don't you think it would be necessary to look a great deal more sharply after your shepherds and keep your stock better over the land?—Certainly.

30,433. Do you think that would be done in the future?—When it was not done in the past, how will it be done in the future unless they take an interest in it? At clipping time there were five of my own sheep that I took home, as they were bad with pining.

30,434. This does not point to a very satisfactory working of the existing land?—It does not.

30,435. Do you think it would not be possible to get your neighbours to join with you in a more energetic working of the pasture lands you have?—When they will not do it, you cannot force them to do it. I tried all in my power to get them to do it. They ate part of my own hay after eating my neighbour's hay. There was one of the Popes there who was day and night keeping the sheep out of the corn, and we are paying for two shepherds, which I think is a perfect disgrace. We could not get any good from our cows, and the top part of our ground is lying waste, part of it being grazed by Mr Maciver's sheep; they eat the north-east side of the ground.

30,436. Have you a head dyke here between the crofts and the hill?—There is a sort of dyke on part of it.

30,437. How are the shepherds paid?—They get £30 a year between them, father and son.

30,438. Who pays them?—The crofters.

30,439. And the committee has the power of dealing with them?—Yes.

30,440. But the committee will not interest themselves in the matter?—It seems not when they will not see the sheep out of the other man's corn.

30,441. Then, finally, how do you propose to deal with such a question as this in the future, supposing you had larger grazings and holdings?—Get new shepherds.

30,442. But suppose it rested with the committee and not with yourself alone; if your committee won't act, what can you do?—That is the point; I don't know what to do, I am tired speaking to them myself.

30,443. I am pressing you upon this point—I quite see that you have apparently done all that you personally can possibly do, but don't you understand that this may be a great difficulty in the future, in the event of larger holdings, if your committee won't act, what can you do?—I want to shift from them altogether and have a holding by myself.

30,444. Because you find the system of grazing here is not carried out satisfactorily?—Not to my satisfaction.

30,445. *The Chairman.*—How many are in the committee?—Seven.

30,446. And you are one of the seven?—Yes, and there were eight at first but one drew back.

30,447. Who is the chairman or head of the committee?—Mr Macdonald, merchant.

30,448. Have you again and again advised the committee as to the way in which the hill should be looked after, and have they refused to take your advice?—Often have I told them it was a disgrace to see their sheep lying at their doors instead of grazing on the hill.

30,449. What did they say?—They would say nothing at all.

30,450. They would not listen to you?—They would say it should be done, but they would not do it.

30,451. Have you a quarrel with the committee?—No.

30,452. Do you not get on with them?—I cannot get on with them when they won't do what is right.

30,453. They do what is wrong and you do what is right?—I try to do what is right.

30,454. But the majority are against you?—Yes.

30,455. Are we to understand that the rest are all wrong and you are right?—I don't know indeed; you can see the place and judge for yourselves.

30,456. But you want to get away from them?—Yes, I want a holding for myself.

30,457. *Mr Sutherland.*—When was this committee formed?—When the Crofters Commission was round here.

30,458. You had no committee before that?—No.

30,459. And is the area of the pasture land you have at present the same as it was before the Crofters Commission came, or has it been enlarged?—It was enlarged.

30,460. And it was in view of the enlargement that the committee was formed?—Yes.

30,461. To what extent was it enlarged?—I am not certain; they got the hill that was following the doctor's park, and they got the hill that was following the inn, and the hill land that was following Achlochan.

30,462. The boundary was not changed?—No, but they got the grazing that followed these three places.

30,463. But the boundaries are the same as they were before the Crofters Commission came?—Yes.

30,464. How did the people get on with their sheep before?—Just the same as they do now.

30,465. So that it is not worse than it was before?—It is worse, because there is more stock, and the sheep are allowed to go low down.

30,466. But they put on more stock than was taken off?—Yes, most of them put stock on for themselves now.

30,467. And before they had not stock?—No.

30,468. And was it souming that they were paying, do you know?—Yes.

30,469. Do you know what a souming is,—it is not very familiar in this part of the country I suppose?—Oh, there is a souming here since this committee was appointed.

30,470. Was there a souming before?—No.

30,471. Had the people any experience at all in the management of sheep before?—No.

30,472. Every man was doing as he saw proper himself?—Yes, he put as many on as he liked.

30,473. And it was only since the visit of the Crofters Commission quite recently that they took to managing their stock at all?—Yes.

30,474. They had no experience before that of managing their stock?—None. At the time the Crofters Commission was here, Mr Macintyre spoke to me that we should have a club farm. There were some more of us who had not stock at the time, and he said he was in communication with the Secretary for Scotland, Lord Lothian, and that we would get money for the club stock.

30,475. Did Mr Macintyre say that you would get money for your club stock?—He said he was in communication with Lord Lothian, and that he would do all in his power for the club stock.

30,476. *The Chairman.*—I must take leave to say that I do not believe that statement. Mr Macintyre is not here and is not able to speak for himself; but I must take leave to say that so far as I am individually concerned, I cannot accept that statement from you. It *may* be correct, but I cannot accept it on your authority alone?—Yon is all I heard him say.

30,477. Are you sure you have not misunderstood what he said? He was not likely to make any such

promise as that he would do all that lay in his power to get Lord Lothian to give help towards the formation of a club stock?—We got up a petition.

30,478. That is another matter entirely.

30,479. *Mr Sutherland.*—Perhaps all Mr Macintyre said was that he would do all in his power to support the prayer of the petition?—Yes, that is what he said. [*The Chairman.*—You must be more careful in what you say. You are now favouring us with a statement as to what you represent Mr Macintyre as saying; however, I shall see Mr Macintyre on the matter.]

30,480. Have you adopted the Grazings Act? Has your committee been appointed under the provisions of that Act?—I think so.

30,481. You know the Act, I suppose, that was passed some three or four years ago, which enables crofters or an estate management to form a committee and to frame rules for the regulation of common grazings?—The committee was formed before that.

30,482. So it is not a statutory committee? It is not one under the Act?—I am not sure as to that.

30,483. But you are aware that if you are a committee appointed under the Act of Parliament you have the power of enforcing your regulations?—I think so, but the regulations were never enforced.

30,484. I suppose because the majority did not agree with you: the finding of the committee is the finding of the majority, you understand that?—Yes.

30,485. And I presume then it is because the majority have a different opinion from you, that there will be no means of enforcing your views: your own shepherds for instance must take their orders from the majority of the committee?—Certainly, I think that should be.

30,486. You have the power of dealing with your own shepherds; they are your servants, are they not?—I think so, seeing that we pay them: they will not work for me at all events,—say just now if I were to ask them to go to Badcall, would they be bound to do it?

30,487. That is if you, as an individual, order them,—but I presume you have a recognised official to communicate with the shepherds, a chairman, or secretary, or official of some kind? You cannot expect the shepherds to take the orders of individual members, or of any individual member of the committee, unless in an official way?—Well, say they were told to go to Badcall, three miles down. Was it right that they should refuse to go with me to Badcall with some sheep?

30,488. Of course, I am not a member of the committee, but I should think that every case would have to be considered on its merits. It resolves itself into this, then, that a majority did not agree with you as to the way in which the pasture should be managed?—My aim is to keep the sheep to the hill in summer and harvest.

30,489. But the others may have reasons for not being of that opinion, is that not possible?—Not that I know of. Of course, the sheep would be better on the green, but what are you going to do with the hill?

30,490. Would there be any difficulty, in your opinion, if new holdings were formed with this Act of Parliament in existence for the appointment of such committees, with power to carry out the will of the majority of the committee,—would there be any serious difficulty in the way of making these new holdings because committees might not agree?—I don't think so: there is just the one point between the committee and myself on which we do not agree.

30,491. There are a number of other points on which you do agree?—On every other point.

30,492. And you do not think it would be any serious obstacle or barrier in the way of forming new holdings and carrying them on successfully?—I don't think so.

30,493. *Mr Maciver, factor, Scourie.*—Mr Sutherland informed you that I had stated at Durness that a number of people had presented petitions to the Duke of Sutherland asking for assistance to enable them to emigrate to America. Do you know when these emigrations took place?—No.

30,494. Were you born when they took place?—I am not sure.

30,495. I may tell you that they took place in the years 1847 and 1848.—I was not born then. Scourie, Sutherlandshire.

30,496. How then could you know whether they presented petitions or not?—I was not born at the time. Alexander Macleod.

30,497. Then, you know nothing about it except what you heard here?—No, I am only 43 years old.

30,498. I will put another question to you. When you heard this conversation between the Duke of Sutherland and the ground officer, did you consider it likely that if the Duke wished to evict a tenant who was two years behind with his rent, he would give instructions to the ground officer on the subject? Was the ground officer the man he would instruct?—Well, I would think not, only that I heard the words and I was very sorry to hear them said.

30,499. Are you quite sure now as to what was said? You may have heard part of a conversation and not the whole?—I took yon part to be true enough: I may be wrong, and if I am I withdraw it.

30,500. *The Chairman.*—You say you may be wrong?—I say if I took it up wrong I withdraw it.

30,501. Do you think now upon reflection that it is quite possible you may be wrong?—Oh, well, I might pick it up wrong.

30,502. You think it is quite likely you did pick it up wrong?—I believe I might have picked it up wrong.

30,503. And if that is so you withdraw it?—I withdraw it.

30,504. *Mr Sutherland.*—You heard the words which you repeated?—Oh, well, if I were to give my oath on the Bible I could give my oath that I did hear the words, but I may be wrong myself.

HECTOR MORRISON, Crofter, Badcall, Scourie (42)—*examined.* Hector Morrison.

30,505. *The Chairman.*—You are a crofter at Badcall?—Yes.

30,506. Was your case disposed of by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

30,507. I see lot 5 contains 1 acre 2 roods arable; 1 acre 2 roods 36 poles outrun; and a share in 6500 acres; as in the case of the previous witness. The old rent was £4, 8s. and the fair rent for the enlarged holding is £3, 9s.?—Yes.

30,508. Have you a written statement?—A few words.

30,509. We shall be glad to hear them.—On this portion of the Reay forest, known as the Glendhu farm, there are five townships very suitable for crofter fishermen, viz., (1) Maldie; (2) Kylestrome; (3) Duartmore; (4) Duartbeg; (5) Gisgill; from which there have been upwards of thirty farmers cleared off to make room for one man, viz., Charles Clark. He only paid rent for two years when he failed. Some of them had to go to America, and some got patches taken up in the surrounding district. It is thus that the township of Badcall was occupied about 1815: no fewer than nine crofters on something like 13 acres of patches they managed to make arable, of which my share is only one acre, or according to the estimate of the estate 2½ acres between arable and pasture, special as it is called.

30,510. Do you go to the fishing?—Yes.

30,511. The herring fishing?—Yes: there are two years I have been at the salmon fishing.

30,512. Do you get work from the lessees of the salmon fishing?—Yes, from Messrs Speedy, Perth.

30,513. And have you continuous employment at the salmon fishings for about three months?—For four months.

30,514. How long have you been in the habit of going to the herring fishing?—For twenty-one years.

30,515. And you still go?—Yes, I have always maintained myself by fishing.

30,516. You maintain yourself more by fishing than by your holding?—In fact, I maintain myself entirely by the fishing, because my holding is only 1½ acre arable.

30,517. Now, are you anxious to give up fishing, or do you wish a larger holding combined with the fish-

Scourie, Sutherlandshire.

Hector Morrison.

ing?—I would rather have a larger holding contiguous to the fishing ground.

30,518. And you would combine the occupation of the holding with the fishing?—Yes.

30,519. That is your idea?—The best of my day as a fisherman is over now, but I would sooner help myself out of the fishing than go far up the country.

30,520. Is there land in any of the localities you have mentioned that would enable you to get a larger croft and carry on fishing at the same time?—There is, and very suitable.

30,521. Where is the suitable land?—Kylestrome and Maldie: both places are very suitable.

30,522. You have easy access to the fishing from Maldie?—Yes.

30,523. And, of course, also from Kylestrome. Are you appearing here as a delegate, or as an individual?—More as an individual; I was advised by two or three to appear, but time would not admit of my preparing a full statement, so I just made these notes. I only heard word a few days ago that your Lordship was to arrive, and I am very seldom at home.

30,524. You heard the previous evidence given by Macleod, with regard to available land?—Yes.

30,525. Do you agree with that evidence?—Yes, for the most as to land.

30,526. The other matters, I suppose, you don't know anything about?—Not some of them.

30,527. *Mr Forsyth.*—What size of holding would be suitable for crofting and fishing together, supposing it were near a harbour?—I should say that a man should have five or six acres, or up to ten: he could make something of a living on that, with a stretch of outrun.

30,528. What stock would you keep?—I would like to keep, providing I had the land for it, four or five cows and a horse, and I could get then from 60 to 80 sheep.

30,529. Does not that look much more like a self-sustaining holding than a fisherman's holding?—Well, it would hardly be self-sustaining: it must be understood that this land is not equal to the land in other places.

30,530. It is not the acreage of the land I am speaking of, but the number of stock. Is not that a large amount of stock for a fisherman to handle?—Not at all; it could be as easily handled as one acre, provided it was land that could be wrought.

30,531. Don't you think your crofter-fisherman would be better with one or two cows, really well done to, than all that stock?—I know that would do as a place to make a living by, in a more comfortable way than I can do at present.

30,532. We hear it so constantly mentioned here, 'four or five cows': don't you know that a cow properly kept takes a great deal of keep, and I don't suppose this is a very good country for making large quantities of wintering keep?—But our cows are not so good as others,—two of them are not equal to one cow of the kind you are acquainted with.

30,533. But don't you think one or two cows, thoroughly well fed, would be more profitable than four or five half fed?—I am sure they would.

30,534. Then, don't you think it would be better if men who desire to fish as well would lay out their mind to have quite sufficient ground to keep one cow, or at the most two cows, thoroughly well?—But the fishing is not a thing to rely on in these places.

30,535. It is uncertain, you mean?—It is quite uncertain, and there is no proper communication with the market, and very often we are reduced to low prices, or no prices, when the fishing is there.

30,536. But still you want a holding by which you would mainly live, and fishing would be a sort of second thing that would come in to assist you?—Yes.

30,537. That is to say, a croft first, and fishing afterwards?—A croft mostly, and fishing for a little, because it is impossible for a man to give attention to a croft, or work it properly, who has to take his living from the fishing.

30,538. That is one of the reasons why I was asking you about the four or five cows. I think if a man had land for such a stock as that, and if the stock was at all properly done to, he would have so much land that he would not be able to devote any time worth speaking of to the sea?—Not the one man, but where there is a family.

Scourie, Sutherlandshire.

Hector Morrison.

30,539. Then, you put the croft first, and make the fishing a secondary thing?—Certainly, and that is the way that ever they were before the people were put off these places that I have mentioned.

30,540. They were small holdings in old times, were they?—Certainly.

30,541. You would not wish to go back to the same size of holding, though, would you?—No, I would not.

30,542. You think the holdings should be larger?—Yes, I know they should be larger, because when the holding is so very small it has to be cropped and re-cropped always, and thus the ground is brought to no use.

30,543. How many acres of the arable land do you calculate it would take to make wintering for a cow properly done to?—I would consider that also; but at the same time I would think five or six acres would be little enough for any man, so that I could have an acre under grass always.

30,544. And that to keep a cow?—Yes, it would be giving justice to the ground.

30,545. Then, your holding for four or five cows would have to be a good sized one, don't you think?—Certainly, it would require to be fairly large.

30,546. *Mr Sutherland.*—You said you are a salmon fisher?—Yes, for the last three years.

30,547. Was it such employment as the salmon fishing you had in your mind when you were speaking of a croft where you could carry on other work at the same time?—No, it was the herring fishing.

30,548. Had you been to the herring fishing before you became a salmon fisher?—All my days, since fourteen years of age.

30,549. And you know all about it?—Yes, I know all about it.

30,550. How many families are in Badcall?—There are nine crofts, with ten families, and there is another, only he pays rent to the Established Church minister.

30,551. He is on the glebe?—Yes.

30,552. And are all these fishermen?—They have to be.

30,553. Do you know if any of these people are fishermen by choice?—No, I don't think so.

30,554. Do you think that if they got reasonably sized holdings that would be self-supporting, any of them would fish?—I don't think any of them would fish for a living: any that fish are just forced to become fishermen.

30,555. And when they talk of carrying on as fishermen and crofters at the same time, it is because they are limited in the size of their holdings, so that they must fish?—Certainly.

30,556. Do they pay their rent out of the land, or out of the sea?—As far as I can calculate, it is over twenty-three years since I have had a croft, and it is only one rent that ever I paid out of the croft.

30,557. During the whole of that time?—During the whole of that time; and as near as I can mark, I think one boll of meal is worth about all that ever I ground or sold, but year after year I had to buy seed.

30,558. And do those who prosecute the fishing get regular fishing?—Not at all.

30,559. Are there some years when they don't get any?—Some years hardly any at all.

30,560. Now, in your opinion, which is the better man, speaking generally, the man who makes a livelihood for himself out of a self-sustaining croft, or the man who is a fisherman and a crofter both?—The man who has a self-sustaining croft is more comfortable, because he has a surer way of living.

30,561. You think he is in every way?—I know it.

30,562. In answer to a question by Mr Forsyth, you stated that you would not hope or desire that a holding, if you got new holdings, would be so small as the old ones were?—No.

30,563. Do you refer to the arable, or to the pasture? The arable, I refer to, in the acreage.

30,564. Then, how does that old acreage, in your opinion that the people had, compare with what they have now; had they more land then than they have now?—Yes, by a long way.

30,565. That would refer to the pasture?—To arable, both. There was one man who came out of Geisgill told me that when he left it, he carried a stock 12 cows and 60 sheep.

30,566. And what sort of holding was he placed on afterwards?—One of the poorest in creation, something less than two acres of the worst species.

30,567. And do you think now it is reasonable that that man would himself ask to be put off the bigger holding on to the small one?—No; he told me the contrary. He would never ask that.

30,568. You think it would not be reasonable that he should ask it?—No, it is not reasonable to ask to be put to a worse place, and there are not many who would ask for that.

30,569. You mentioned places that are now in deer forest?—Yes.

30,570. Do you know the extent of that deer forest? Did you ever hear it?—Yes, I read it, but I do not recollect it.

30,571. Do you know that the deer forest that is in the occupation of one man has over 100,000 acres?—Yes.

30,572. That is a pretty big holding, is it not?—Yes.

30,573. There were not such big holdings as that in the olden times?—Not that I know of.

30,574. You mentioned places in that holding that you think might be very well utilised for giving people a chance to live?—Yes, for any man that forces a living out of the present holding at all is sure, provided he once gets started, to make a good living out of that.

30,575. How many families did you say were in Badcall before 1815?—I don't think there were any; it was occupied at that time, as I was told by the old people, by a minister, one Mr Mackenzie. It was only kept for just a special place for putting cattle.

30,576. And was there any arable land in it, any land in cultivation when the people were put there?—No.; they had to make it arable, the kind of patches there are.

30,577. How many families did you say?—Nine families, or about eleven families altogether.

30,578. Have you got a road yet?—Not yet.

30,579. How far is the road from you?—About three quarters of a mile, or between that and half a mile.

30,580. How do you carry your effects to your houses from the road?—Just a most cruel way of working, carrying it up a steep brae on our backs.

30,581. And do you pay road money?—Certainly, we were never exempted.

30,582. How long have the eleven families been paying road money?—It is before my time, but they have been paying it all along since the crofts were formed.

30,583. And they never saw fit even to make a road for you?—No; there was one road that was said to have been made to the pier for the crofters of Badcall, but it has nothing to do with the crofting township of Badcall. I never knew the road referred to the crofting township of Badcall till I saw it stated in this statement.

30,584. What statement is that?—A statement showing how things were put out.

30,585. Is it from the County Council?—No, I got it at the time of the Crofters Commission.

30,586. What do you desire to show from it?—I never knew till then that this road that leads to the Badcall pier was pointed out as benefiting the crofters. It is not touching us nor doing us any good that I can see. The brae is steep, and even if we took the stuff to the shore from the pier where that road leads we would have to carry it all along.

30,587. *The Chairman.*—This seems to be an estate document. It says:—Road leading to pier in 1846, "£77, 12s. 2d. of outlay: branch road through township in 1847, £28, 1s. 7d." The only road mentioned here is the road leading to the pier at Badcall?—There is a bit of a branch road leading up there that never came near hand us, nor does it touch upon the ground belonging to the crofters at all: it is on the glebe. Scourie, Sutherlandshire.

30,588. *Mr Sutherland.*—Have you made any representations direct to the County Council since they were appointed?—Yes, I have had notice lately that it was to be granted. Hector Morrison.

30,589. That it was to be made now?—Yes.

30,590. After all this delay?—Yes. I have got word from the County Council that his Grace the Duke has consented latterly.

30,591. To make the road, and the County Council will maintain it, is that the way?—I suppose so.

30,592. Do you think the people of Badcall, if they got opportunities of getting such holdings as you have indicated, would take them?—Well, I am not sure, because the place is run out; the people who were able to make a living had to leave it, and most of the people are failing. The able-bodied men had to leave.

30,593. Are all the young people away?—Very few left; there is only one other man and myself rearing a family in Badcall.

30,594. It is education, I suppose, that does that. Are there no young people at all? Is there no rising generation in Badcall?—Just very few: there are two or three who have to stop there to support their parents; these are all that I know.

30,595. Then, it will be an arithmetical question, how soon the population will get extinct altogether?—It will not take long at the present rate.

30,596. That is a serious state of matters, is it not?—Certainly.

20,597. *The Chairman.*—What family have you?—Six.

30,598. How many sons?—Two.

30,599. Are they both grown up?—No, the eldest is about 13.

JAMES MACKAY, Ground Officer, Scourie—*examined.* James Mackay.

30,600. *The Chairman.*—You are ground officer in the Scourie district?—Yes.

30,601. How long have you had that employment?—For three years.

30,602. Who was ground officer before you?—My father.

30,603. And was he here for a long time?—Yes, about forty years.

30,604. Did you hear the statement made by Macleod, with regard to something the late Duke of Sutherland is alleged to have said?—Yes.

30,605. Were you present at the inn at the time referred to?—Yes.

30,606. The Duke was there and the now Duchess Dowager?—Yes.

30,607. And do you remember Macleod being there?—Yes.

30,608. And the cottar from Tarbat?—Yes, there was a cottar from Tarbat.

30,609. What was his name?—Donald Mackenzie.

30,610. Were Macleod and Mackenzie there asking some aid from his Grace?—Yes, just as I went up.

30,611. Now, did you hear any statement made by the late Duke of Sutherland, or any instructions given by His Grace to you with reference to the eviction of persons two years in arrear?—Oh, he gave me no instructions whatever.

30,612. Did anything pass with reference to that matter?—Well, he said now that the Act is when a crofter has been two years in arrear he can be evicted. These are the words that passed.

30,613. Did he give you any instructions on the matter?—No, he did not.

30,614. Did you understand from anything that was said by the Duke that in the event of a crofter falling behind in his rent for two years you would have it in your power to take proceedings against him?—Well, that was the way I took it. I understood the Duke to say that the landlord, by the Act, would have that power.

30,615. Just what you have said?—Yes.

Scourie, Sutherland-shire.

James Mackay.

30,616. Have you any authority to take procee lings against a crofter?—No.

30,617. With whom does that matter lie?—With Mr Maciver.

30,618. And the Duke?—And the Duke.

30,619. Then, was the remark made by the Duke with reference to the state of the law under the Act; or was it made with reference to intended proceedings of his own?—To the state of the law under the Act; that is the way it was said.

30,620. *Mr Gordon.*—The explanation is quite satisfactory.

Evander Maciver.

EVANDER MACIVER, Factor, Scourie (82) recalled—*examined.*

30,621. *The Chairman.*—Do you remember the visit which the Duke paid to Scourie two or three years ago?—Perfectly.

30,622. He was accompanied by the Duchess?—He was accompanied by the Duchess Dowager.

30,623. The lady who is now Duchess Dowager?—Yes.

30,624. Did you, on that occasion, receive any instructions from the Duke, with reference to the eviction of crofters whose rents were two years in arrear?—None whatever on that occasion.

30,625. I should explain to you that while passing through Rhiconich yesterday we were waited upon by two crofters—Donald Morrison, Balchrick, and Lachlan Ross, Achreisgill—who represented to us the extreme difficulty they would have in coming here to give their evidence; they said they had a written statement to submit, but as they could not attend here to-day without serious inconvenience, we resolved to hold an informal sitting, at which they might submit their statement to us. Possibly, you have not yet had an opportunity of reading that statement?—I have not the least desire to hear it.

30,626. What I wish to tell you is that we shall give you an opportunity of reading the statement for yourself, and we shall also, if you so desire, read over to you the shorthand writer's notes of the examination, or hand you the transcript for perusal; and if you wish to make any statement or to adduce any evidence relative thereto, we shall be glad to hear you at Lochinver.—I am much obliged to you.

30,627. It is only right to explain that because the sitting was held in your absence, and owing to the circumstances I have mentioned there was no time to communicate with you or anyone representing the estate; but, of course, if you wish to lead any evidence with regard to it, you shall have an opportunity of doing so at Lochinver?—I shall take the opportunity of reading what was said.

30,628. I may mention that the evidence was very much on the lines of what we have heard elsewhere.—Just so.

30,629. Do you wish to make any statement to us here?—I have nothing to say except to submit the paper which you wished me to produce with regard to the 'black park' at Durness.

30,630. Just let me look at it, please?—That is the paper [hands in document], and I may say that it is the only document I found in the office at Scourie. I produce also a statement of my own with regard to it.

30,631. 'Memorandum of agreement between Alexander Stewart, Esq., and Anthony Dunlop, Esq., Balnakeil, 1839; confirmed by James Loch, Esq., M.P., 2nd January 1840; intimated to Mr Dunlop, by letter addressed to him to Tain Post Office, 8th January 1840.'—And initialled by Mr Alexander Stewart, who was at that time factor for the Duke of Sutherland here.

30,632. The agreement is between Mr Stewart, as factor for the Duke, and Anthony Dunlop, tacksman of the farm of Balnakeil, and it narrates that:—'In respect that the existing lease of Balnakeil comprehends the grazings of Knock-Damph, which is situated in the common of Durness, and that Mr Dunlop claims also in virtue of his lease a share and division of the said commonty, effeiring to that portion of the Balnakeil farm called Crosspoll and Balvollich; and in respect that the present indefinate mode of possessing those subjects forms a continual source of annoyance not only to Mr Dunlop, but to all the neighbouring tenants, and in order to have all amicably arranged and finally settled, it is considered expedient by the parties to enter into this agreement: *First*, Mr Dunlop hereby renounces all claim to the said grazings of Knock-Damph and to every portion of the said commonty, accepting in lieu thereof a piece of land adjoining Balnakeil, commonly called Clashdhu, situated and bounded as follows:—' And then the boundaries are given. That is the 'black park'?—Yes.

Scourie, Sutherland-shire. Evander Maciver.

30,633. 'Second. Mr Stewart engages to extend the new line of road along the Durness glebe dyke, the length of the church and Balnakeil mill, as also the Balvollich road until it joins it about the north west corner of the glebe, as now lined off in our presence by Alexander Bauchop, County Road Surveyor, Mr Dunlop giving permission to take materials for the formation of the said road from his farm in the most convenient part, free of any charge . . " and so on; and there follows certain other provisions. Then your statement with regard to the matter is as follows:—

Scourie, 20th October 1893. I produce herewith copy of Agreement referred to at sitting of Commissioners in Durness, on 16th inst., relative to the 'black park' there, between Alexander Stewart, factor for the Duke of Sutherland, and Anthony Dunlop, tacksman of Balnakeil farm, dated 26th December 1839. I have not found the original, but the conditions as to this park contained in it were all carried out, and the pasture given up in exchange for it. The roads mentioned in it were made at the expense of the Duke, and the conditions as to seaware have been since observed by all parties interested. The Agreement has thus been homologated, and there can be no doubt that it was accepted at the time, and to be observed in the future. The 'black park' has siuce continued to be occupied by the tenants of Balnakeil, of which it forms a very important and useful addition. The arrangement altogether appears to have been judicious and valuable on both sides.—Yes, that is my statement in regard to the matter.

30,634. I understood you to say at the previous meeting that there was a reference or arbitration?—I thought there was, but when I looked into the matter I found it was an agreement between the factor and the tenant of Balnakeil.

30,635. But it was an agreement, as I understood, which related to lands previously in the possession of crofters?—Yes, the grazings of Knockdamph were situated in the centre of the common of Durness, and were a constant source of quarrelling between the tenant of Balnakeil and the people; and to allay this quarrelling this agreement was entered into, a most judicious one, in my opinion.

30,636. That may be; but were the crofters made parties to this arrangement?—There is no mention of them there at all; they held from year to year; but they have homologated it since by possession.

30,637. But it would rather appear, if I gather the thing accurately, that while the agreement appears to have been exclusively between the Duke's factor and Anthony Dunlop as tacksman; the crofters who had previously certain rights of grazing over this land were not made parties to the arrangement?—No, but they gave up the 'black park' in exchange for this right of grazing.

30,638. But what I am pointing at is that they are made to give up the 'black park' without being parties to the arrangement under which it was given up?—Exactly, it appears to have been entered into between the estate and the tacksman of Balnakeil.

30,639. The point is that while the crofters had certain grazing rights or privileges, or whatever they may be called, at that time, they were not made parties to this written arrangement?—No. The Balna-

keil farm was under lease, and the crofters' ground was held from year to year.

30,640. *Mr Sutherland.*—And with regard to the homologation of the bargain, is it not the fact that the crofters pulled down the fence and put their cattle in next year?—Not next year. It is a fact that when the farm of Balnakeil passed from Mr Dunlop to Mr Gabriel Reid, Gordonbush, they came forward and claimed the 'black park' back again, and took violent possession of it, and put their stock into it, and kept it for about a month or six weeks; but they gave it up on being assured that they had done a very illegal and improper act, and the matter has since remained as it is now.

30,641. All I wanted to say was, that it did not look exactly like homologation of the bargain on their part?—Well, it was six years after the original bargain that this happened.

30,642. *The Chairman.*—But still, can parties be held to homologate an arrangement to which they were not made parties? Can C be held to be bound by what is done between A and B, C being no party to the arrangement between A and B?—Well, they agreed to it at the time; it was done with their knowledge and approval at the time.

30,643. But they were not parties to it?—They were not parties to the arrangement; the estate took charge of it.

30,644. *Mr Gordon.*—Mr Stewart appeared on behalf of the estate?—No doubt; if he had not the crofters would have objected at the time.

30,645. Whether he did right or wrong, he was there as representing their interests?—Yes.

30,646. *Mr Sutherland.*—Mr Stewart was representing the estate. I have not heard any of the crofters in this district admitting that Mr Stewart represented their interests; on the contrary their position is, rightly or wrongly, that Mr Stewart misrepresented their interests.—Well, whether it was right or wrong, it was agreed to at the time.

30,647. *The Chairman.*—By the parties to the agreement, but not by others who were not parties?—There is no evidence that they objected at the time.

30,648. Yes, they made a noise about it?—Six years afterwards.

30,649. *Mr Sutherland.*—The question was mine, and the essential point is this, whether the people themselves agreed to the transaction, and I rather think if my memory serves me aright that you stated that you had documentary proof that they did so agree?—Well, those are all the documents I found in the office. That is a paper which was written many years before I came to Scourie, and I think it gives the whole story.

30,650. I accept it *pro tanto*, but it does not prove the statements made by you at Durness on this matter.

[ADJOURNED.]

THIRTY-SECOND SITTING.

Lochinver, Sutherlandshire.

LOCHINVER, SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

October 23, 1893.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

ROBERT MENZIES, Crofter, Elphin, Assynt (32)—*examined.* Robert Menzies.

30,651. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter under the Act of Parliament?—Yes.

30,652. Was your rent fixed by the Crofters Commission?—I believe so.

30,653. Who is the principal tenant of your holding?—John Macleod, an uncle of mine, a weaver.

30,654. Is he still in the holding?—His wife is; he, himself, is dead.

30,655. And you are a sub-tenant of Mrs Macleod?—Not now. I became the crofter in 1888, I think.

30,656. Holding No. 396 consists of 3 acres 0 roods 31 poles arable; 2 poles outrun; and $\frac{1}{19}$ share in a common of 3613 acres; the old rent was £8, 7s. and the fair rent £5, 8s.?—Yes.

30,657. You were first a sub-tenant on the holding of John Macleod, and now you pay rent direct to the estate?—Yes.

30,658. What rent do you pay?—£2, 10s.

30,659. How much of the croft have you got?—About $1\frac{1}{2}$ acre.

30,660. Off John Macleod's holding?—Yes.

30,661. One and a half acres arable?—Yes.

30,662. And have you a share in the hill grazing?—Yes.

30,663. What share have you?—Just according to the rest.

30,664. What stock have you got?—28 sheep, 3 cows, and a follower, but no horse.

30,665. Have you any other stock?—No.

30,666. You have no written statement, I believe?—No.

30,667. Are you here as a delegate appointed at a meeting of the Elphin and Knockan crofters?—Yes.

30,668. When was the meeting held, was it recently?—Yes, a week on Tuesday last, or a fortnight.

30,669. What is it the Elphin and Knockan crofters mainly desire to lay before us?—There are three farms contiguous to their holdings, Cromalt, Ledmore, and Ledbeg.

30,670. And what do you wish to say with regard to these farms? Do you suggest for our consideration whether your grazings can be extended by land being taken from one or more of these farms?—Yes.

30,671. Your claim, I suppose, is more a claim for extension of grazing than for new settlements?—Well, yes, I suppose so, but we need new settlements as well.

30,672. But are you more anxious about extending your grazings than about new settlements?—Yes.

30,673. Do you feel your present grazings to be too contracted?—Oh, yes.

30,674. You live at a very high level?—Very high indeed.

30,675. And your lands are greatly exposed to severe climate in winter?—Yes.

30,676. Are the three farms you mentioned, or parts of them, on a much lower level?—Well, Ledbeg is.

30,677. Have you difficulty in meeting your fair rents?—Oh, no.

30,678. You are able to do that?—Yes.

Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

Robert Menzies.

30,679. Have you anything to say with regard to your arable land?—Just the smallness of it; that is all.

30,680. Your own holding is a very small one, but you are not a crofter under the Act. Do you know what extent of arable is in the holding in name of John Macleod, from whom you got this land?—Nearly 4 acres I daresay.

30,681. And what outrun?—Just the same as the rest.

30,682. But has he not an outrun of his own?—No.

30,683. If I remember rightly the crofters of Elphin and Knockan derive the profit from their holdings mainly from their stock?—Yes.

30,684. And only to a very small extent from their crop?—The crop is nothing but potatoes.

30,685. Is it the desire of all the crofters whom you represent that we should consider the question of the claim they make with regard to these three farms of Cromalt, Ledmore, and Ledbeg?—Yes.

30,686. These are the lands to which they specially invite our attention?—Yes.

30,687. Were these the only lands mentioned at the meeting you have referred to?—Yes.

30,688. And does each of these farms march with the crofter lands?—Yes.

30,689. I need not ask you particulars about the farms, as I happen to know something about them, and I think some of the other Commissioners do also.

30,690. *Mr Sutherland.*—You have not a holding yourself?—Oh, yes.

30,691. But you are a sub-tenant with only half an acre?—Well, it is half an acre I have, certainly.

30,692. And would not you be desirous, if it could be obtained, to get the same amount of land as the others have?—Oh, most certainly.

30,693. Do you think it is possible to get it up there in the places you have mentioned?—There is plenty arable land up there.

30,694. Is it as good as, or better or worse than what the people have in cultivation?—Some of it better, and some worse.

30,695. But is there much of it that is better?—A good deal.

30,696. On those farms you have mentioned?—On Cromalt there is no arable land at all, but a shepherd's place; but on the other two there is plenty of arable land.

30,697. And do you say that a good deal of that land is better than the arable land the people of Elphin and Knockan have?—Yes.

30,698. Are there people in the district who would like to get larger holdings than they have now, besides the people who wish an extension of their present grazings?—I suppose some of them might, but I am not certain.

30,699. How many families are there altogether in Elphin and Knockan?—Thirty-six crofters.

30,700. Have all these got land?—Yes, besides the cottars.

30,701. I am asking you how many families altogether are in Elphin and Knockan combined?—Between 40 and 50.

30,702. And how many of these have no land at all, those whom you call cottars?—Eight or nine.

30,703. Do you think any of these would like to get land?—Oh, yes, some of them.

30,704. And is there land which, in your opinion, would be suitable for making new holdings for them in that neighbourhood, in the places you have mentioned?—Yes.

30,705. Do you think some of them would take such a holding if they got it?—Yes, I don't doubt they would.

30,706. In answer to a question by his lordship you mentioned that your great mainstay there was the rearing of stock?—Just so.

30,707. You cannot depend, you said, upon crops, except for fodder for your cattle and horses?—That is all.

30,708. You have, I presume, to get your meal and your bread stuff from other places?—Everything.

30,709. Have they got to do that in Assynt generally, do you know?—I suppose most of them have.

30,710. Is it the case that very large farmers do that as well, those that have arable farms?—I don't know about that.

30,711. Do you ever use wheat bread in Knockan and Elphin?—We use flour.

30,712. The flour does not grow in this country, does it?—I don't think so.

30,713. If you got a good price for your stock you could easily buy your bread stuff, could not you?—Yes.

30,714. The means of communication being, I suppose, very much developed from what they were some years ago?—Yes. Of course, the price of stock is very low at present, and we feel that very much.

30,715. And, therefore, the sources for purchase are not so great as they used to be?—No.

30,716. Now, have you any means of comparing the state of the people in Ard-Assynt with that of the people in Lower Assynt? Whom would you say are better off?—In a sense the people of Lower Assynt are better off, for they can get fishing whereas we cannot get work of any kind. We have to stay at home in our small holdings to keep things right.

30,717. Would you leave the holding you have got in Elphin and go down say to Nedd?—I don't think I would like it very much; I don't think I could live very well on the sea.

30,718. Do you think you are better off in that respect up in Elphin?—Not a bit, but I don't think it would suit me so well as the old hills up yonder.

30,719. Do you know the people in the north part of Stoer? Have you ever been up there?—Yes.

30,720. Are they as comfortably off as the people in Elphin and Knockan?—I don't know, I think they are pretty much the same; the one cannot envy the other very much.

30,721. But there are degrees even in adverse circumstances. Then could you tell us the amount of land you have got between the 45 families?—Between 4000 and 5000 acres I think.

30,722. How much does it give to each family?—Very little indeed, dividing that among 36 crofters.

30,723. How are these farms that you have referred to occupied at the present time?—One of them, Ledbeg, is in the deer forest, and the other two are in the Duke's hands.

30,724. Ledbeg is in the Glencanisp deer forest?—Yes, and Ledmore is in Mr Mundell's hands, a sheep farmer. That is the adjacent farm to Stronchrubie.

30,725. So that he has got not only the farm of Ledmore but also Stronchrubie?—Yes.

30,726. And does he live there?—No, I think he lives in a place called Moy in Ross-shire.

30,727. He has two farms and does not live on either of them?—He lives there for maybe a month at the clipping time.

30,728. But that is not his home?—No.

30,729. And these lands, I suppose, you would show us if we went there to see them?—Oh, yes.

30,730. *The Chairman.*—I wanted to ask you this. There was a claim made for enlargement by taking a part of the forest of Glencanisp?—Yes, so there was.

30,731. That application the Crofters Commission had to refuse, but do you wish to submit anything with regard to that matter to us now?—Most certainly.

30,732. What is it you desire to say about it?—It would be most useful to us, that part; it is the only low ground we could get up there.

30,733. Up by the shores of Loch Veyatie?—Yes, down to Allt-an-Fhamhair, Allt-an-Fhearna.

30,734. Allt-an-Fhearna is where the forest marches with your ground?—Yes.

30,735. And you would like us to consider that matter as well as the other places you have mentioned?—Most certainly.

30,736. *Mr Gordon.*—I did not catch the number of crofters in Knockan?—Sixteen.

30,737. And how many cottars?—Two.

30,738. How many crofters in Elphin?—Twenty.

30,739. And cottars?—A good many; seven or eight I think between the two townships.

30,740. Do the crofters all have about the same number of stock that you have, or have they more?—Some more and some less.

30,741. Would the average stock held by the crofters in both townships be something like what you have stated?—Hardly as much; not with the present souming.

30,742. Did you apply formally for any part of the outlying hirsel of Cromalt?—Not of Cromalt.

30,743. It was on the other side, the forest side?—On the other side; it was a bit between the bridges there.

30,744. Are there many people in your townships who would be willing to shift; or do you point more to an extension of grazings?—I think it is more an extension of grazings they would like just now.

30,745. You don't think there are many people in either of the townships who would be willing to flit to such a place as Cromalt or Ledbeg?—It is not a very easy matter for a poor man to do that: it would be much easier to put stock on the land if they could get it than to work new holdings.

30,746. Are there about 1000 sheep on the ground altogether?—I daresay there are more than that.

30,747. And is your pasture very bare at present?—Yes.

30,748. As a matter of fact, would it improve your position, would it be a greater advantage to get an extension of grazing for your sheep than to get new holdings?—I would certainly think so; that is my opinion.

30,749. And you are here to express the opinion of the township?—That is what I could take up from them.

30,750. *Mr Forsyth.*—What kind of sheep have you on the hills—cheviots?—Cheviots and black-faces.

30,751. Mixed?—Mixed. Well, we have very few black-faced sheep now; they are mostly cheviots.

30,752. Do you winter your hoggs on the ground?—No.

30,753. Do you send them away?—Send them away.

30,754. Do you find the cottars at the two places, Elphin and Knockan, a burden on the crofters in any way?—Well, of course, they are a little.

30,755. Do you not think that some of you could be removed with advantage to other places to relieve the others there?—Certainly.

30,756. But if you had plenty of grazing, you think you would rather that the townships generally would remain where they are: that they could live fairly if they had sufficient hill grazing according to your ideas?—Yes.

30,757. Do you do much with cattle, beyond keeping milk cows?—Of course, we would sell the young beasts, but we could hardly winter any at all there.

30,758. Your profit lies in the sheep up there?—Yes.

30,759. And on the whole, if you had more grazing land you think that your townships could live?—That is my opinion and the opinion of the township just now.

30,760. About this piece of land that you applied to the Crofters Commission for. I mean the land between Loch Veyatie and the Cam-Loch I think you called it, is that specially good wintering ground?—Wintering ground.

30,761. Do you think you could winter your hoggs there?—Yes.

30,762. Then is it specially for hogg wintering that you ask it?—Yes, or when a great storm comes on we could put some of the weaker sheep in along with the hoggs.

30,763. Is the ground on Ledbeg at the east end of Loch-Cam as good as the other side you ask for?—Much better.

30,764. Better than the ground between Loch Veyatie and Cam-Loch?—Much better.

30,765. Then, what you wish for is not only extended grazing but some lower ground on what you think you could winter your hoggs?—That is it.

30,766. Where do you winter your hoggs?—Some wintered them at a place called Ochto in Strathoykel, where they paid 3s. 6d. a head for their pasture. I sent fourteen hoggs there last year, and I got ten back.

30,767. How do you manage your hill grazing, have you a shepherd?—Yes, in summer time.

30,768. But you have not thought of keeping your sheep on the club stock system, have you?—We have been thinking about that, that we would do it if we could: we are just working our way towards that.

30,769. You think there would be no difficulty as to your agreeing about that?—I don't think there would be much at all.

30,770. Do you understand the advantages there are in being able to sell the sheep of the grazing in one lot as an even lot from the club farm?—Yes, very well.

30,771. Do you think that would make a considerable difference in the price you might get?—I think it would.

30,772. And you anticipate no difficulty in the matter of agreeing among yourselves as to a club farm system?—Oh, I think so.

30,773. You mean you think you could agree?—Yes, I really think so.

30,774. *The Chairman.*—Would you describe the Elphin and Knockan crofters as hill farmers and nothing else?—Nothing else.

30,775. They have no other means of livelihood?—Nothing at all.

30,776. And they get along as best they can from the returns given by the holdings?—Yes, that is so.

30,777. Now, you said something about cheviots and black-faced sheep. Are the Elphin and Knockan crofters gradually changing their stock from black-faced to cheviot?—Yes.

30,778. Why are they doing that?—Most of the sheep were cheviot ewes altogether, with the exception of black-faced hoggs now and then.

30,779. Which do you think is the stock more suited to the place, or do you try both?—I tried both, but I think the cheviots are just as hardy as the black-faced we have. There are some black-faced sheep that are much hardier than them, but they don't fetch the same price.

30,780. A much lower price than the cheviots?—Yes.

30,781. Your holdings at Elphin and Knockan are among the highest in the county in point of altitude?—Yes, they are.

30,782. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie, Agent for the Duke of Sutherland.*—I understand the Crofters Commission recommended that your name should be entered as tenant of part of that croft to which you referred in answering his lordship?—Yes.

30,783. And that was done?—Yes, by Mr Gordon and Mr Maciver.

30,784. So that you are now a direct tenant of the Duke of Sutherland and not a sub-tenant?—No. [*The Chairman.*—And under the Act?]

30,785. Not under the Act, but the Crofters Commission recommendation was given effect to. Were you not offered some grazings between Loch Veyatie and Cam-Loch, some 700 acres there?—Yes, the Crofters Commission pointed out that, but we never got a final settlement of it.

30,786. Did the Crofters Commission not call upon you to put up fences.

30,787. *The Chairman.*—Do you mean the Glencanisp enlargement?

30,788. *Mr Macaulay.*—These are the very lands we are referring to.

30,789. *The Chairman.*—Yes, but the fencing question was a very serious one; the value of the land as compared with the cost of the fencing. Besides, the case is under appeal at the instance of the late Duke.

30,790. *Mr Macaulay.*—The appeal has been withdrawn.

30,791. *The Chairman.*—We have no notice of the withdrawal.

Lochinver, Sutherlandshire.

Robert Menzies.

30,792. *Mr Macaulay.*—Was it not a recommendation that this place should be fenced?

30,793. *The Chairman.*—Oh, yes, but it was pointed out in the Order that the cost of fencing was a very serious question indeed. There is no reason for wonder that the thing did not come to a practical result.

30,794. *Mr Macaulay.*—The landlord, at any rate, was willing to give it, provided it was fenced.

30,795. *The Chairman.*—Provided it was fenced at the cost of the crofters. The question for the crofters to consider was whether the cost of the fence would be at all comparable with the value of the land assigned.

30,796. *Mr Macaulay.*—But the Commissioner who looked at the place thought a fence was required and recommended that it should be done.

30,797. *The Chairman.*—No doubt.

30,798. *Mr Macaulay.* (*To witness*).—These are the very lands you want?—But a much larger extent.

30,799. Do you take advantage of the Grazings Act? Have you had regulations for your township?—Yes.

30,800. And have these been kept up? You worked for some years under these regulations?—Yes.

30,801. And do you still work under them?—Well, I expect we are not quite done with them yet: this year there was not very much about it; we got the length of taking up the number of stock on us, but there was some misunderstanding about it.

30,802. Is it not the fact that you have practically dropped these regulations?—Oh, no.

30,803. Did you make up accounts last year showing the sums payable by those who had overstocked?—There was one man who had overstocked and he never paid for it. There is a gentleman here who is looking after that and who can give a better explanation than I can.

30,804. You had regular accounts kept for season 1890?—Yes.

30,805. Had you as regular accounts made for season 1891?—Yes.

30,806. You are one of the parties whose names are down under the Grazings Act,—at least you were; your stock is regulated in the same way as the other stock in this place?—Of course, everybody's is.

30,807. Well, when was the last statement made up?—Last clipping time.

30,808. And can you tell me how many people then had an overstock, and how many had not their sufficient stock?

30,809. *The Chairman.*—Stay a moment: are you a member of the Committee?—No.

30,810. Well, then, he is not bound to answer these questions.

30,811. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you, as a community, practically satisfied with the way in which you manage your sheep stock?—Yes.

30,812. *Mr Macaulay.*—But you do not put the regulations as to the Grazings Act laid down by the Commission in force?—I believe we are going to put them in force; we have the number of sheep taken down.

30,813. *The Chairman.*—Mr Macaulay, the Secretary tells me that we have laid down no regulations under the Grazings Act in regard to these two townships. You seem to have been misinformed by those about you. These regulations come into force when they receive the sanction and authority of the Commission; now *de facto* they have not received that sanction and authority.

30,814. *Mr Macaulay.*—Well, I have been misinformed then.

30,815. *The Chairman.*—They have not been before the Commission at all.

30,816. *Mr Macaulay.*—I am obliged for your information. [*To Witness*].—Do you remember the farm of Cromalt being offered to the crofters some three years ago?—Yes, but we made an application to the Marquis of Stafford direct, and his answer was that he did not want to put more burden on the people there, and that they had plenty of land already. As far as I know that is the way it was. [*The Chairman.*—Were you a party to that matter?—I had my name down.]

30,817. You told us, I think, that there were some cottars, who, you thought, would take new holdings if they were formed,—cottars, I presume, in your townships?—That is my opinion.

30,818. Who are the cottars in your township who are likely to do that?—There is one Stuart who I think would be able to do so.

30,819. Is it not the fact that most of the cottars there are old wives?—There are some women, but the world could not get on very well without women.

30,820. Are you in arrear of rent?—Last year my rent was not asked from me.

30,821. But has it not been asked several times since?—The winter was very severe last year, and it was not easy to pay the rent after the proper time.

30,822. But the fact is that you have been asked for the rent several times?—I was asked in May and June I think.

30,823. You have not paid it yet?—No, I have not.

30,824. *The Chairman.*—You would have paid it if you had been asked for it at the usual time?—I would have paid it if they had come for it at the usual time; I had it then.

30,825. And when they did not come for it at the right time you found a use for it otherwise?—Yes.

30,826. *Mr Macaulay.*—Is it the fact that you have not been able to pay your rent since it was asked?—I have been able.

30,827. You have been able, but still you did not pay?—I did not pay.

30,828. Where do the people usually send their sheep for wintering?—I told that already.

30,829. In your own case; but the people of the township generally?—I don't know much about the rest of them.

30,830. Do you not know where they actually send them?—No.

30,831. Do you know whether they send any of them into the forest sometimes?—There may be a strayed one or two going into the forest.

30,832. Is it not the fact that a good many more than a few stray ones go in?—I don't think so.

30,833. *The Chairman.*—I find that there were two applications for enlargement to the Crofters Commission, one known as the Elphin case and the other as the Elphin and Knockan case, and the orders are reported at pp. 190-1 of the Report for 1890. With regard to the first of these cases, the land in question formed part of the forest of Glencanisp and now forms part of the farm of Ledmore. It was held that the land might be granted without material damage to the letting value of the remainder of the farm of Ledmore, and the disposal of the case was continued for a month with a view to those crofters in Elphin who had not applied, also lodging an application with reference to the land under consideration, and that order was appealed against. We indicated the intention of granting the application, but adjourned it for a month with a view to the other crofters who were not a party to the application coming forward and being parties to it so as to make it an enlargement applicable to the whole of those locally concerned; and that order has been appealed, and as far as we know the appeal is still standing. Then the other case known as the Elphin and Knockan case, was for taking land from the forest of Glencanisp, and the order made was:—'Find that the claim made by the 'applicants for additional land better sheltered and at 'a lower altitude than the land presently in their 'possession is well founded and reasonable: Find that 'this claim might be met in part by the assignment 'of that portion of the land applied for immediately 'adjoining the township of Elphin, and extending to '880 acres or thereby: Find that this land consists of 'dry hills covered with rough bent or heather, with small 'portions of green and mossing in the hollows: Find 'that the annual value thereof would not exceed £7 'sterling; but find that in order to the said land being 'made available to the applicants, it is indispensable 'that a very substantial iron fence of fully one mile in

'length be erected along the line marked ABF on the 'said plan or tracing produced: Find that the cost of 'this fence would not be less than £106 sterling, viz., '£66 or thereby for the materials and carting, and '£40 or thereby for the erection: Find that although 'a fence might be erected at a cheaper rate, it would 'not, in the opinion of the Commissioners, keep stock 'out of the forest, and therefore would not suffice'; and the order goes on to call upon the parties to say whether they will put up this fence or not. But, of course, it is very manifest they would not put up a fence to cost £106 for the sake of land that is worth £7 a year. That order also was appealed against by the Duke.

30,834. *Mr Macaulay.*—And was the appeal not withdrawn?—

30,835. *The Chairman.*—The Secretary is my authority upon these matters of procedure, and he assures me that no such withdrawal has reached him.

30,836. *Mr Gordon.*—Is the old township of Ledbeg low enough for watering?—Well, it is a much warmer place than our place; the south side of it lies more to the sun.

30,837. But the other side lies more to the east than to the south; it seems to be pretty high ground, about 1000 feet to the head of the hill?—So it is, but it is not so high as Elphin and Knockan; and we have a lot of black ground on the south side of the hill.

30,838. Is Ledbeg the best wintering place in your neighbourhood?—Between the lochs.

30,839. That is the place you applied for?—Yes.

30,840. Which is the best ground for wintering?—Well, between the lochs.

30,841. *Mr Sutherland.*—You were asked a question by Mr Macaulay, whether some of the people got wintering for their hoggs in the forest. You remember that question, don't you?—Yes. [*Mr Macaulay.*—I beg your pardon, I did not say 'got wintering,' but whether they went into the forest.]

30,842. Whether the wintering was got there. Is the forest fit for wintering sheep? Can it winter hoggs then?—Yes.

DONALD MACLEOD, Crofter, Knockan, Assynt (46)—*examined.*

30,843. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

30,844. You seem to have two holdings of 2 acres 18 poles and of 4 acres 2 roods 4 poles arable; the outrun being altogether 3 acres 1 rood 35 poles, with a share in the common of 2534 acres. The old rent was £8, 10s., and the fair rent is £5, 15s.?—Yes.

30,845. Were you appointed as a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

30,846. Was that the same meeting at which Menzies was appointed?—Yes.

30,847. And you specially represent the interests of the township of Knockan?—Yes.

30,848. We are told there are 17 crofters in Knockan?—Yes.

30,849. And two cottars?—Two cottars.

30,850. Will you tell us in your own way what it is you desire to lay before us?—Well, they thought the ground was not sufficient to maintain the people.

30,851. Are the Knockan people desirous of obtaining an extension of grazings?—Yes.

30,852. By taking land, if land can be legitimately got, from the farm of Cromalt and the farm of Ledmore?—Exactly.

30,853. And the part of the deer forest known as Ledbeg?—Yes.

30,854. Are there, in your judgment and in the opinion of those whom you represent, lands suitable for extension of grazings there?—Well, it is suitable for extension of grazings, but it is not much lower than our present land.

30,855. Not lower in altitude, but suitable for grazing purposes?—Yes.

30,856. Is it more suitable for wintering purposes than the land you have?—A little, not much.

30,857. Are all the crofters of Knockan with stock in the habit of sending their hoggs away south for wintering?—Some of them winter them at home and others send them away.

30,858. How do they manage to winter them at home?—Just by hand feeding them.

30,859. On their own holdings?—Yes, some of them do so.

30,860. Are any of the Knockan crofters desirous of leaving their holdings if they could get other holdings in the county?—If it could be done.

30,861. Was that subject discussed among you?—Yes, it was discussed many a time.

30,862. What then is the general feeling?—They would like to get some way of moving some of the people, because it is overcrowded.

30,863. It is an overcrowded township?—Yes.

30,864. And it would be a great benefit if some of them could be removed elsewhere, and their holdings assigned to those who remain?—Yes.

30,865. How many of the 17 do you think would be inclined to move?—I think we could manage ten or twelve in the township.

30,866. You think the land would accommodate ten or twelve?—Yes.

30,867. That would leave six or seven to remove?—Yes.

30,868. Do you think there are six or seven willing to remove?—I cannot say about willingness, but some of them would.

30,869. And do you make the same observation, or can you make the same observation, with regard to Elphin?—I cannot say anything about Elphin, but on their present holdings they can only keep about 30 sheep each on an average, and don't consider that sufficient.

30,870. What would you say would be an adequate stock of sheep for crofters living there, and subsisting entirely by the holding?—I would think any man that would live by stock would require to keep about 100 sheep.

30,871. But you think if the crofters of Elphin and Knockan had land sufficient to enable them to keep an average of 100 sheep each, they would do?—I think so.

30,872. Paying always a fair rent?—Exactly.

30,873. Did the crofters of Knockan consider among themselves the land that we had to refuse as an enlargement?—Oh, yes.

30,874. And are you still of a mind that that land would be suitable in some degree at least for the purposes of extension?—Yes, it would be of some benefit to the crofters.

30,875. Now what would be its main benefit; it stands pretty high, I suppose?—Just in time of snowstorm to put the sheep there.

30,876. Is there what is called *bield* there,—protection from storm?—There is no protection, but there is heather on rough ground. On our present ground we must take them high up, because there is no heather on the lower ground, it is all green.

30,877. The heather is more accessible?—Yes.

30,878. And the heather affords some little fodder for the sheep when the snow is lying deep on the ground?—Exactly; and they can scrape away the snow off the heather better.

30,879. Your townships are very liable to deep snow?—Very.

30,880. And the snow lies for a long time?—About six weeks at a time sometimes.

30,881. In winter, therefore, I take it, it is much colder there than the average temperature of the country?—Oh, yes, I have seen black ground at Strath Caniard, when we could not take a cart from home owing to the depth of the snow.

30,882. That is how many miles from Knockan?—Seven.

30,883. It was all covered with snow till you got to Strath Caniard?—All snow, we could not take a horse and cart.

Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

Donald Macleod.

30,884. What time of year was that?—Sometimes in winter or spring: any time of the year between December and the latter end of March.

30,885. Is there anything else you would like to say to us?—Nothing.

30,886. The Secretary has called my attention to a very interesting passage with regard to this locality from Captain John Henderson's work, entitled A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Sutherland, where the author says (p. 17):—"After crossing Drum-'croy and Glenmuich by Alltnacallagach, the first place 'that presents itself in Assynt is Ledmore, to the south 'of which is Loch Borelan, and a rivulet from it to 'Loch Kirkaig, at the west sea divides Assynt from 'Coigach in Ross-shire. Assynt is the most mountainous 'and rugged part of the county of Sutherland. At 'Ledmore and Ledbeg Mr Mackenzie (Ardloch) and Mr 'John Mackenzie have 12 sub-tenants on about 30 acres of 'land; and in the neighbouring hills, quarries of white 'and variegated marble are wrought by Mr Jopling.

'From this place I proceeded due north through 'what is called the valley or glen of Assynt by a road 'of 12 miles made by Mr Jopling to carry his marble 'to the seaport at Unabol. The first habitable place is 'Stroncroubie. Here Mr Mackenzie has 8 sub-tenants 'on about 40 acres of arable land, they have a corn-'mill, and pay £40 rent" Now that was written by a well know writer in 1815?—Yes.

30,887. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you know what stock is upon Cromalt at present?—I cannot say what number of stock is on it.

30,888. Do you know what kind of stock is on it?—Cheviot stock.

30,889. Are they eild sheep or ewes?—Eild sheep from Achmore farm.

30,890. Is there any part of the hirsel of Cromalt that would keep ewe stock?—There was ewe stock on it when William Gunn, Dornoch, had it.

30,891. Cheviot ewes?—Yes.

30,892. Upon that hirsel by itself, or was it in connection with some other ground?—On the hirsel alone.

30,893. What stock has Mr Mundell upon Ledmore?—Black-faced sheep.

30,894. And how do they do there?—I believe they do middling there.

30,895. Does he keep black faced sheep there in preference to cheviots?—Yes, but I believe he is going to change them; that is what I have heard.

30,896. Because he thinks cheviots would do better?—Yes.

30,897. *The Chairman.*—When did Mr Gunn of Dornoch have the farm of Cromalt?—I cannot say exactly when he left.

30,898. Is it some years ago?—Some years ago.

30,899. And it is now in possession of Mr Mundell, is it?—No, of the Duke of Sutherland.

30,900. He has had it for some years?—Yes.

30,901. Is there a farm house and a steading on the ground?—No, a shepherd's house; there never was a farm house.

30,902. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—Do you remember that farm being offered to the crofters of your township?—No, I don't remember it being offered; I remember putting in an application for the farm, and the application being refused.

30,903. Did the township put in that application?—Yes, they did.

30,904. What stock have you got yourself at present?—About 35.

30,905. And your rent was fixed by the Crofters Commission I understand?—Yes.

30,906. Have you fulfilled your obligation now?—Hardly.

30,907. Are you much in arrear?—One rent and some of the arrears that were left by the Commission.

30,908. And what is your reason for not settling up these arrears?—That it was not very easy for me.

30,909. It was inability in your case, was it?—Well, not altogether inability; I think if I would be hardly pushed for it—

30,910. You would pay if you were hardly pushed for it?—Yes; but owing to bad prices for stock it would be very hard on me.

Lochinver Sutherlan shire.

Donald Macleod.

30,911. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to the payment of rent, is the rent due now?—Oh, yes, last year's rent is due.

30,912. What is the usual rent time for crofters here?—About the beginning of December.

30,913. Then, when you pay in December is it the rent up to that date that you pay?—Yes, up to 1st December.

30,914. Is it not to May of the following year?—Yes.

30,915. Your rents are always half a year in advance?—Exactly.

30,916. Now, keeping that in mind, is it the proportion of your rent that is due from this time last year only that is to pay?—Oh, no. [*Mr Macaulay.*—There is a full year's rent, besides that, now payable.]

30,917. A year and a half?—Yes.

30,918. *Mr Macaulay.*—And some of the arrears of the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

John Macleod.

JOHN MACLEOD, Crofter, Knockan, Assynt (50),—*examined.*

30,919. *The Chairman.*—Your holding has 3 acres 15 poles arable; 1 acre 3 roods 30 poles outrun; and $\frac{1}{10}$th share in the common of 2534 acres, the old rent was £7, 13s., and the fair rent £5. Were you appointed as a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

30,920. The same meeting as the other two witnesses from your quarter?—Yes.

30,921. And do you desire to express the same views as they have done with regard to the extension of grazings for the Elphin and Knockan crofters?—Yes.

30,922. Is there any serious desire for new settlements among the Knockan crofters?—Yes.

30,923. How many do you say would be prepared to remove if they got suitable holdings elsewhere?—I am not sure about the number, but I know I would shift myself.

30,924. When you say you would shift, you mean you would shift to a holding where you could obtain a living by the holding?—Yes.

30,925. At present you live by your holding?—Yes.

30,926. You have no fishing or labour to depend on?—No.

30,927. Am I right in saying that the Elphin and Knockan crofters generally depend entirely on their holdings for their living?—Yes.

30,928. They are too far from labour, and they are a long distance from the sea?—Yes.

30,929. Have you anything to add to what we have heard already with regard to part of the forest of Glencanisp, and the farms of Ledmore and Cromalt?—Just the same. But there is another thing that the people want to put before the Commission and that is with regard to Coulmore. They thought they were paying the rent since 1812; I think that is the time it was taken from them.

30,930. It was taken away?—Yes. It was taken off the crofters, we think, and off the estate and the county.

30,931. It is in the county of Cromarty?—Yes.

30,932. You thought your predecessors were paying rent for it in 1812?—Yes, till the Commission fixed fair rents. The estate lost nothing from it till then; they went on the New Years Day to look at the marches, and they are quite distinct from all these present day cairns put up.

30,933. The marches of 1812?—Yes.

30,934. Are they field dykes?—No, cairns on the watershed.

30,935. And were these cairns indicative of a line of march between the old forest?—It was before it was a forest that these cairns were put up.

30,936. What were they a march between?—Between the two counties we think.

30,937. Well, we are going down to the locality and we will have a look at the ground. Are you in arrear of rent?—Last year's rent.

30,938. Nothing more?—No.

30,939. Were you left by the Commission with some arrears to pay?—No.

30,940. You had no arrears when you came before the Commission?—No.

30,941. And you have no arrears yet, except last year's rent which was not asked from you at the usual rent collection time?—No.

30,942. Did that circumstance lead to some hanging back on the part of the crofters?—Yes, it did.

30,943. Would most of them have paid their rents if the rent collection had been held at the usual time?—Yes.

30,944. But I daresay many of them when they were not asked for the money at the time found other uses for it?—They used it otherwise, and it was reported that it was not required.

30,945. *Mr Sutherland.*—What do you say was the old boundary of Coulmore?—The watershed.

30,946. At the top of the hill?—Yes; the cairns are there still; any man that goes there will see them.

30,947. Did you ever hear the occasion of the boundary of the county being changed?—Yes, a man who is at Achnahaird came, and he was thinking of getting the two townships together.

30,948. But you made some reference to a circumstance that led me to think that the boundary of the two counties was changed?—Of course, it was.

30,949. From Coulmore to where it is now?—It is on the watershed on the hill till then.

30,950. And what were the circumstances that led to the change of the boundary between the counties?—It was this man.

30,951. No man could do it by himself?—It was, indeed, sir.

30,952. But your contention is that the boundaries of the counties were changed, and that you were put back again into Sutherlandshire, is that it?—Yes.

30,953. And that you still continued to pay the old rent; is that your contention?—Yes, until the time of the Crofters Commission.

30,954. You stated that you, yourself, wished a new holding?—Yes, indeed, I do.

30,955. Could you get such a new holding as you have indicated upon the land that has been mentioned by Mr. Macleod, the other witness?—I could; I could get much better than anything in Elphin or Knockan.

30,956. And you think it could be taken off the holding of this non-resident farmer?—Government could do it.

30,957. What I mean to indicate is that the land is there?—The land is there.

30,958. And it is at present waste?—Of course, it is.

30,959. And you could cultivate some of it and occupy it to advantage?—Yes.

30,960. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—Would you take the farm of Sronchrubie altogether, the rough part as well as the better parts?—Myself?

30,961. Yes, or you and some other crofters?—I could if there were plenty of us.

30,962. You mean that you would take the whole farm?—Yes.

30,963. You, I believe, and some others about Elphin and Knockan are employed as gillies, in the forest, are not you?—No.

30,964. You are not a gillie?—I am a gillie but not in the forest.

30,965. Where then?—Fishing.

30,966. So that that really is the means of livelihood apart from the land up about Elphin?—Yes.

MURDO MACLEOD (FINLAY) Culkein-Drumbaig—*examined.*

30,967. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—I represent my mother.

30,968. What is her name?—Widow Ann Mackenzie or Macleod.

30,969. I see the holding extends to 2 acres and 16 poles arable; 1 rood 18 poles outrun; and a share of the common pasture of 907 acres; the former rent was £3, 14s., and the present rent is £2, 8s. There was an enlargement of holding there, of which you have a share as well, the land that was taken from Oldney?—Yes.

30,970. That is to say 256 acres divided into 16 shares, the rent of each share being 8s.?—Yes.

30,971. Is that 8s. included in the £2, 8s.?—No, the rent is £2, 16s. with the enlargement.

30,972. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

30,973. At a meeting held recently?—Yes.

30,974. Is Murdo Maclean from Nedd, the other delegate appointed along with you?—Yes.

30,975. Have you any written statement?—No.

30,976. What desires do the township you represent wish to lay before us?—They are wishing that some of the crofters would be removed to where there is plenty land.

30,977. Is the township overcrowded?—Altogether.

30,978. How many crofters are in Culkein, Drumbeg?—Eighteen I suppose.

30,979. Are there any cottars?—Oh, yes.

30,980. How many?—Five.

30,981. And it is their desire that if arrangements could be made a number of them should be removed to other ground?—Yes.

30,982. And the vacated croft made available for those who remain?—Yes.

30,983. How many are willing to remove?—I could not be exactly sure about that; but I know one thing, I would be willing to remove myself and a good few along with me, although I cannot say exactly how many.

30,984. Do you point us to land anywhere that you think would be suitable for new settlements?—Any place in the country where there is land I would be willing to go.

30,985. Anywhere within the county?—Anywhere within the county.

30,986. You would be quite willing to leave the parish?—To leave the parish altogether, and go where I could live on a croft.

30,987. How do you live at present?—Very middling.

30,988. But what is your means of livelihood?—The only means I live on is if I will get anything to do, to labour. I have a brother who goes from home now and again helping to support the family; without that we could not live on the croft.

30,989. You get along by means of outside labour, either your own or your brother's?—Oh, not in the country.

30,990. But by going far afield?—Yes, of course.

30,991. Is there any land in the immediate neighbourhood of the township to which you ask our attention?—Yes.

30,992. What land is that?—There is the land of Ardvar farm.

30,993. Is this suitable for settlements, or for extension, or for both?—For both.

30,994. Does that land of Ardvar farm march with Culkein-Drumbaig?—It marches with Nedd.

30,995. And you ask us to inspect the farm, and consider the land that may be pointed out to us there?—Yes.

30,996. In whose hands is that farm at present?—The Duke of Sutherland's.

30,997. Has he had it in hand for some time?—Yes, for four or five years I think.

30,998. Is the stock managed through a local manager?—Yes, the manager is living on Achmore farm: he manages both Achmore and Ardvar.

30,999. What is his name?—John Mackay.

31,000. Then is Achmore farm also in the hands of the Duke?—Yes.

31,001. Are the two worked as one grazing farm?—Yes. There is fully better land on Achmore farm.

31,002. You ask our attention to Achmore as well as to Ardvar?—Yes, and to Kirkton, bordering Achmore again.

31,003. Is that a separate holding?—Yes.

31,004. Is it up Loch Assynt?—Yes, at the farthest end of the loch.

31,005. Is Kirkton in the hands of the Duke?—Yes.

Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

Murdo Macleod.

31,006. Who was in it before?—It was inhabited by crofters before.

31,007. But is it now worked as part of the farms of Achmore and Ardvar?—Yes.

31,008. Does any one live upon it?—No, except shepherds and gamekeepers.

31,009. But Mackay manages the three, Ardvar, Achmore, and Kirkton?—Kirkton is only a hirsel on Achmore farm.

31,010. Now, when you ask our attention to Ardvar and Achmore of which Kirkton is a part, may we take you as representing the feelings of the meeting who delegated you to appear?—Well, I think you may.

31,011. Are there any other lands you desire to mention?—No, these are the principal places. There is a place called Little Assynt up there, on the farm of Achmore, that would be very suitable for a crofter or two.

31,012. We will see it when we are looking at Achmore. You got an extension of holdings from the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

31,013. And since that additional land was assigned, has it been occupied by the crofters?—Yes.

31,014. Has it been found to be insufficient?—Quite insufficient.

31,015. Is it the desire of the crofters for whom you appear that they should have such an amount of stock as would enable them to live by their holdings?—Yes, that is their only desire.

31,016. In the same way as was represented to us by the crofters of Elphin and Knockan?—The very same way, but more so.

31,017. Your folks are worse off, you think, than the Elphin and Knockan people?—Yes, a great deal.

31,018. But if you and the others for whom you appear had land sufficient to raise and keep a certain stock, you would be satisfied?—Yes, that is our only wish.

31,019. What stock would you consider sufficient?—About 150 sheep each.

31,020. And how many cows?—Six or seven cows.

31,021. Any horses?—And a horse.

31,022. Do you know the farm of Oldney?—Yes.

31,023. Is there land there?—Oh, yes.

31,024. Who has Oldney at present?—The present tenant is Macaulay, and the rest of the farm is divided into shares among the crofters.

31,025. There was an enlargement of holdings granted from the farm?—Yes.

31,026. Does Macaulay live upon the farm?—Yes.

31,027. Is Oldney island a part of Oldney farm?—Yes.

31,028. Now, is there land there that would be suitable for extension to the Culkein crofters?—Very suitable. There is no more suitable place in the country.

31,029. It lies very near?—Very near.

31,030. What sort of steading is there upon Oldney?—A first-class steading. I forgot to mention a place, Unapool.

31,031. What do you wish to say about Unapool?—It is a good place for crofters.

31,032. What farm is that on?—Ardvar or rather Achmore.

31,033. And you ask our attention to it also as a part of the farm of Achmore?—Yes.

31,034. Is that land suitable for extensions or for new settlements?—For new settlements.

31,035. Is there low-lying ground with high ground also?—Yes.

31,036. That is on the shores of Loch Glencoul or Loch Cairnbawn, close to Kylesku?—Yes, within a mile.

31,037. I see that Captain Henderson whose work I mentioned says on p. 19:—'The next farm is Mrs 'Mackay's at Auldney, who has six families of fishers. 'Mr Clark at Culkein-Drumbaig, has 20 acres; Drum-'baig contributes 15 families and 4 boats; Ned, 15 'families; Glenlerag, 24 families; at Ardvaar, Captain 'Scobie has six families, all fishermen, and about 15 'acres; Reantragaid, on the north Kyle's Cow border, 5 'acres; Unabol, 30 families, and about 40 acres, rent '£70. Balnacaul and Glendow are at the head of 'Kyle's Cow or the narrow Kyle. Upon the whole 'there are in Assynt about 300 families, and if I except '40 families the rest are fishermen on the coast of the 'Atlantic.' That seems to have been the state of possession in the year 1815.

Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

Murdo Macleod.

31,038. *Mr Sutherland.* — How many families are there within the district of Culkein-Drumbaig? I see the number of tenants is 18, and are there people who have got no land?—Yes.

31,039. How many families in Culkein-Drumbaig have got no land?—I think four families.

31,040. That would make along with the 18 tenants 22?—I daresay there are more: there may be seven.

31,041. Are there nearly 30 families in Culkein-Drumbaig?—Yes, I believe there are.

31,042. Then, do you hold your pasture in common with the Drumbaig and Nedd people?—No, we have it separate.

31,043. You are adjoining each other?—Yes, we have marches between.

31,044. Do you know the number of families in Drumbaig and in Nedd as well?—John Maclean knows that.

31,045. There are 20 tenants on Drumbaig, and do you know how many cottars besides these?—Seven cottars.

31,046. Then taking Nedd, there are 15 tenants, and are there any cottars there besides?—There are some five.

31,047. That then makes about 69 families in all. Do you know what extent of land these 69 families have got between them?—Of arable land it is not much.

31,048. Have they less than 4000 acres?— Oh, yes, I think it is less.

31,049. And do you know the extent of the farms you were talking about to the Chairman, the farm of Ardvar for instance, do you know the size of it?—Not the acreage.

31,050. Do you know that it has 9000 acres?—9000 acres.

31,051. So that this one farm alone has got double the land that the 70 families have?—Yes, I know that.

31,052. And do you know the extent of the farm of Achmore?—No, I don't know.

31,053. Do you know that it is over 40,000 acres?—I believe it is all that.

31,054. And there is no tenant at all on these two?—No.

31,055. And I think your reasonable contention is that the overcrowded people of these townships should get the lands of these three farms that are at present lying tenantless?—Yes, I think so, seeing that their fathers and forefathers were living there.

31,056. You heard the statement that was read by his lordship out of a book written in the year 1815, in which it was mentioned that there were then 24 families in Glenleraig?—Yes.

31,057. Could you tell us how many families are in Glenleraig to-day?—One shepherd.

31,058. From the same quotation we saw that there were 16 tenants in Ardvar?—Yes.

31,059. How many are in it now?—One shepherd.

31,060. And the land in Glenleraig and Ardvar generally, is it better land than the land in your possession?—Much about the same, I daresay the land we have would be as good if we had plenty of it.

31,061. But what you complain of is that that is not a just or rational distribution of the land?—Yes.

31,062. You think you could occupy that land which is now lying tenantless and in large farms if you got an opportunity of doing the best you could with it?—Yes.

31,063–4. Have you any idea as to the comparative rental of the land that you hold and this other land in large farms? Which of you pays most per acre for the land?—I think we pay most for the acreage.

31,065. Do you know what you pay per acre in Culkein-Drumbaig?—No, I don't know exactly what we pay per acre, but I could tell if I was preparing.

31,066. Do you know that the tenants of Nedd used

to pay 10½ per acre before the Crofters Commission went there?—Yes, I was told that.

31,067. And do you know that they still pay 9¼d. per acre for their holdings?—Yes.

31,068. And are you aware that the large farm of Ardvar pays only 7d. per acre?—I am not aware of that.

31,069. Do you think now that if the people got this land for occupation they would raise the value of the land?—I am of that opinion.

31,070. In your opinion are Nedd and Drumbaig, and particularly the place you represent yourself, in need of getting a chance to live and thrive by means of land?—Actually in need.

31,071. You think the means is there for bettering their condition?—Yes, the land is there.

31,072. And to any of our number who may go to look at the land you would be glad to show it, would you?—Very happy to get the opportunity.

31,073. *Mr Macaulay*, Solicitor, Golspie.—About the farm of Achmore, you said there were 40,000 acres in it?—So I am told.

31,074. Would you be surprised to find that there is not more than half the area, so that if the acreage is only 20,000 acres it is just about half what you estimated it at?—(No answer).

31,075. *The Chairman.*—Are there only 20,000 acres?—[*Mr Macaulay.* Just about that].

31,076. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your authority?—[*Mr Macaulay.* The information has been given me].

31,077. My authority is the estate map that has been supplied to us.—[*Mr Macaulay.* Well, I can assure you, that there are not 40,000 acres; 20,000 is about the number. Probably you include Ardvar and the crofters and everything].

31,078. It is just as it is here on the map?—[*Mr Macaulay.* Well, it is not the fact].

31,079. *The Chairman.*—That would make it 1s. 2d. per acre.

31,079*a*. *Mr Macaulay.*—8500 acres for Ardvar. (*To Witness*). Now you tell us that your idea of a holding is one to carry 150 sheep, 6 or 7 cows, and a horse?—Yes.

31,080. Supposing you had an opportunity of taking such a place, could you stock it?—No.

31,081. You would not be in a position to stock it?—No, I could not. I could partly stock it, perhaps, along with help.

31,082. I see that the rent of your mother's croft is considerably in arrear?—Yes.

31,083. How do you explain that state of matters, two years in arrear?—It is one year, I may say; and last year, owing to the fault of the officials in not collecting, made it two years in arrear.

31,084. The officials were not to blame for the year before last?—Yes, of course.

31,085. You were a year in arrear this time last year, and now you are two years in arrear?—Yes.

31,086. Is it because of inability on your part?—Yes.

31,087. You are not able?—No: but why? Owing to the smallness of the croft.

31,088. Do you prosecute fishing at all?—No.

31,089. Is fishing not the principal means of livelihood of the majority of the tenants?—Yes, of those who are following the fishing; it is bread and bone to them.

31,090. But do the most of them not follow the fishing?—Yes, most of them do; without that they could not live at all.

JOHN MACLEAN, Crofter, Nedd (35)—*examined.*

31,091. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—It was.

31,092. Your holding occupies 2 acres 2 roods 28 poles arable, 4 acres 3 roods 29 poles outrun, and $\frac{1}{15}$th share in the common pasture of 811 acres; the former rent was £3, 1s. 5d., and the present rent is £2, 8s.?—Yes.

31,093. There was an extension of holdings, I see; you got $\frac{1}{15}$th share of land taken from the farm of Ardvar, and in 1891 there was another adjustment by which you got other two shares, making altogether three shares on the farm of Ardvar?—Yes.

31,093*a*. You pay altogether £3, 9s. 3d. for the extension?—Yes.

31,094. Were you appointed as a delegate?—I was, not at a public meeting but informally.

31,095. Was there an informal meeting of some of the crofters at which you were appointed to represent the views of the township of Nedd?—Just so.

31,096. What are their views particularly?—It was to give general information about these farms; of course, they got an extension already.

31,097. But is that extension insufficient?—It is insufficient to make a living by.

31,098. The crofters of Nedd would like such an extension of their holdings as would enable them to live upon the spot?—Some of them would, I suppose, like to remove.

31,099. How many crofters are in Nedd?—There are 15 crofts, but only 13 crofters now.

31,100. And how many cottars?—Five cottars.

31,101. What has become of the two unoccupied crofts?—Two others got them.

31,102. Is there any desire on the part of any of them to leave the holdings?—As they are situated just now, there are very few of them that could stock a larger holding in another place.

31,103. But suppose they were able to meet that difficulty, would they be willing to leave?—I think so, a good few of them.

31,104. Is the township overcrowded?—Certainly, it is, as to arable land.

31,105. And they would be in favour of some of them going away, and getting land elsewhere, and the vacated lands going to those who stayed?—Certainly.

31,106. Where in particular are there lands suitable, either for settlements or for extension of grazing? In which farms or forests?—The two farms that lie adjoining us, Achmore and Ardvar.

31,107. And you desire, I daresay, to submit the same views with regard to these farms as has been mentioned to us already?—Just so; there is a lot of old arable land on them.

31,108. Is there old arable upon both?—Yes, where the crofters stayed in olden times. But it is not very good land; there is a lot of it that could not be ploughed; just the same as we have in Nedd already. There are only a few acres in Nedd that can be ploughed at the present time.

31,109. There was an application for enlargement of holdings by the crofters of Nedd which was refused, I think?—The application was refused, but it was compromised by this piece being given them, which they got.

31,110. The 434 acres?—Yes.

31,111. You agree, I daresay, with the evidence you have heard already with regard to the farms of Ardvar and Achmore?—Yes.

31,112. And do you wish to add anything, or has the matter been laid before us with sufficient fulness?—There is no doubt the land is better than the land that we have, but there are not many places in it where a large arable croft could be got. The land is pretty rocky, the same as we have at present.

31,113. Would the necessities of the Nedd crofters be met substantially by an extension of grazing, or have they both in view?—Both.

31,114. Both settlement and grazing?—They could not get arable land, only extension of grazing.

31,115. How do the crofters of Nedd live at present?—They live by fishing or work in other places.

31,116. They supplement what they get for the holdings by fishing and labouring?—Yes, they could never live by the produce of their crofts.

31,117. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do they leave home and follow the fishing round the country?—Yes, they go to the east coast, Morayshire and Aberdeenshire.

31,118. How many months of the year do they get fishing at home?—Some years there is no fishing at all; there is herring fishing in Glendhu at present, and there was last year, but not for a good while before then.

Lochinver, Sutherlandshire.

John Maclean.

31,119. The herring fishing at home is rather uncertain?—Rather uncertain; there are many years they get none at all.

31,120. But is there constant white fishing, is it more constant?—Well, yes, out at the banks; but in our district they have very few boats that could work there.

31,121. The boats are not large enough?—Not large enough.

31,122. The holdings do not pay the rent out of the land, do they?—Certainly not.

31,123. That is your opinion decidedly, is it?—I am sure of it.

31,124. Do you know the lands that were spoken to by the previous witnesses?—I daresay they could sell as many sheep, some of them, as would pay the rent; but would not keep themselves living, because they don't get any produce except potatoes off the croft.

31,125. The first claim ought to be to support the people themselves?—Unless they be supported there would be nobody to pay the rent then.

31,126. The rent-producing instrument would be destroyed?—Yes.

31,127. You got an extension of holding from the Crofters Commission, and I suppose that, small as it is, you have found it to be of some good?—Oh, yes; but that there are some of us who have not got sufficient stock on it yet.

31,128. But I suppose they will be stocking it by degrees?—Just by degrees. There are very few who can buy stock.

31,129. You got 434 acres among 13?—Yes.

31,130. That is about 33 acres each, which, at ten acres to each sheep, represents the keep of three sheep to each tenant; and you have found that a benefit, have you?—Yes.

31,131. Do you argue from that that a still greater extension would be of still greater benefit?—Certainly.

31,132. You think that is a rational deduction to make, and a reasonable one?—Yes.

31,133. Then I think you stated very fairly the quality of the land that was there, in comparison with the land in Achmore and on the Ardvar farm; and do you see any good reason why the people who are able to pay this 9½d. per acre should not pay 7d. per acre for the land in Ardvar?—Well, I would think they could.

31,134. And do you think if they had the opportunity they would be able to do that, and to make a livelihood for themselves?—If they had sufficient of it.

31,135. I am assuming that there would be sufficient of it,—as much land as would maintain 100 sheep. Do you agree that that size of holding is desirable?—I daresay it would require to carry more than 100 sheep before a family could make a living on it.

31,136. Perhaps 150?—Yes, or even 200; because they could not rear many cattle on it?—they could not get wintering for them.

31,137. That would depend upon how much could be made arable, I suppose?—Just so.

31,138. But is there any land being cultivated at all upon the farm of Ardvar just now?—There is nothing cultivated. There are three parks in it, but they are only grazing.

31,139. Have they been cultivated at one time?—Yes.

31,140. And now they are waste?—Now they are waste.

31,141. Do you think it would be profitable that these should be cultivated?—Yes.

31,142. Now, would the cultivation of the land increase the capability of the land for maintaining stock in winter?—Yes, it would.

31,143-4. So, then, we would not be justified in taking the present wintering capabilities of Ardvar as a criterion of what it could be made if more land were cultivated? Would not it maintain more stock, if more land were tilled?—I am not very sure myself, but I know that there has been a lot of cattle on it in former times.

31,145. And do you think it was due to the fact that more was cultivated then than now?—Some people say that if there is cattle roaming about a place more grass will grow on it: I heard a shepherd saying so.

Lochinver, Sutherlandshire.

John Maclean.

31,146. And is that in accordance with your own observation?—I think it is.

31,147. *Mr Gordon.*—You have not very much experience in sheep, have you?—I have been for a few years now working about them in our own place.

31,148. But, personally, you have never had charge of any sheep apparently?—No, except just about the crofters for twelve or thirteen years. I have never been a shepherd myself.

31,149. You have spoken generally to these two farms of Achmore and Ardvar as being suitable for new holdings?—That is all that I know of in the parish here. I am not acquainted with the parish over here.

31,150. Did you refer to any part of these farms as suitable for extension of grazings for your township?—Well, we got some grazing already out of the two farms.

31,151. Can you suggest to us any further land in that neighbourhood?—Yes, the place that we applied for when we got this.

31,152. What did you apply for?—Contiguous to the place we got, to the south side of it.

31,153. Do you know the name of that loch, Loch-an-Leothaid?—Yes.

31,154. Was it near that?—It was to the south west of that.

31,155. Was that up between you and Loch Assynt?—Yes.

31,156. Is that good ground for wintering or for summering?— For summering it is good.

31,157. I have seen that ground, and I think that is as worthless ground as there is in that part of the country: is it not very black ground?—There are a number of green places in it, about Gormchnoc.

31,158. Between you and Assynt Lodge?—Yes, but not altogether as far south as that.

31,159. Is it not very black ground?—There is a lot of green in it.

31,160. Is that the most convenient part to your place?—It would be the most convenient for an addition to our holdings; there is a nearer part to us on the farm, but there is a small loch or arm of the sea going up between us just opposite our crofts—Loch Nedd.

31,161. But that is not the part of the country you are speaking of just now?—No, but I mean that is nearest: but it is not convenient, for the sea separates us.

31,162. *The Chairman.*—With regard to the extension of 434 acres, what stock is upon it just now?—Perhaps 70 or 80 sheep, sometimes more: they come down in winter to the croft generally.

31,163. But you have 70 or 80 during the summer season?—Yes.

31,164. And have you any other animals on that ground?—Some eild cattle go on it sometimes.

31,165. How many?—Five or six.

31,166. And any horses?—The horses have not been going: we are trying to keep them off.

31,167. For the sake of the other stock?—Yes.

31,168. And how do you feed the horses?—They were grazing out in summer, but we graze them in in winter, and feed them.

31,169. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—With regard to this extension, are you aware that some of the crofters have forfeited their shares of this extension by not complying with the Order?—There were some four, I think.

31,170. And these, then, were parcelled out among the other crofters?—Yes.

William Matheson.

WILLIAM MATHESON, Crofter's Son, Badnamban (21)—*examined.*

31,171. *The Chairman.*—Are you here representing your father?—The crofters of the township.

31,172. Are you a crofter yourself?—No; my father is a crofter.

31,173. What is his name?—Norman Matheson.

31,174. His holding appears to have 1 acre 0 roods 32 poles arable, 3 acres 2 roods 34 poles outrun, and one-ninth share of 239 acres common pasture; the former rent was £2, 6s. 9d., and the present rent is £1, 18s.?—Yes.

31,175. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

31,176. At a meeting of the Badnamban crofters?—Yes.

31,177. What farm does your township march with?—The township of Inverkirkaig on the south, and on the north-east Strathan township.

31,178. You march on the east with the deer forest of Glencanisp?—No; Strathan cuts us off.

31,179. And Strathan marches with the forest?—Yes.

31,180. What is it you desire to say?—Simply that they wish some additional pasture.

31,181. And where do you think it may be obtained?—The townships of Badnamban, Strathan, and Inverkirkaig could join together for a piece of the forest.

31,182. The forest of Glencanisp?—Yes.

31,183. Do you mean a part of the forest marching with Strathan?—Yes.

31,184. As an extension of grazing?—Yes.

31,185. And you wish us to look at the land there with a view to our considering that question?—Yes.

31,186. Is extension of grazing the only matter that you have considered, or have you considered the question of some of your number leaving?—There is not a proper place for settlements.

31,187. How many crofters are in Badnamban?—Nine.

31,188. And how many cottars?—One.

31,189. How many are in Inverkirkaig?—I cannot tell.

31,190. Do you know how many are in Strathan?—No.

31,191. Are these townships at least as large as Badnamban?—Larger.

31,192. I think we may take it that Strathan has 14 and Inverkirkaig has 18 crofters (you will correct my figures, Mr Macaulay, if they are wrong), and probably one or two cottars besides?—Yes.

31,193. But, I understand, the feeling you represent is that the occupants of the townships of Strathan, Inverkirkaig, and Badnamban combine to ask our consideration of the lands of Glencanisp forest marching with Strathan?—Exactly.

31,194. *Mr Forsyth.*—What is your idea with reference to this portion of the forest: do you wish to keep sheep?—Yes.

31,195. And you think it is suitable for sheep?—Yes.

31,196. Do you see your way to stock it in due time with sheep?—Some could, and others could not, without assistance.

31,197. Would it be as a common grazing between the whole of the townships, or would each township ask for the land for itself?—No, I suppose it would be in common to the three townships.

31,198. How many sheep do you think you would try to keep if you had sufficient ground?—About 100 sheep or so to a share, or even less; that is, taking it all over.

31,199. There appear to be a good many crofters in each of these places; do you think there are too many?—Yes, there are too many; the place is overcrowded.

31,200. Some of them would be inclined to move elsewhere, would they?—Yes, a few would.

31,201. Have you heard of that?—Yes.

31,202. They have absolutely said they would go?—There are at least two who said they would be very willing.

31,203. But they consider they might get on if they had additional hill grazing?—Exactly.

31,204. Do they fish in your township?—Yes, they do.

31,205. Have you boats?—Yes, small boats.

31,206. Do you follow the lobster fishing?—Yes.

31,207. And herring when the chance comes?—Yes.

31,208. And white fishing?—Yes.

31,209. Do you cure any fish?—No, we sell it all fresh.

31,210. How do you manage as to a market?—We send the fish away by the steamer, and by the mail.

31,211. And you find that something is to be made by that?—Yes.

31,212. *Mr Sutherland.*—Have you a definite idea of where the grazing you referred to could be got in the forest? What had you in your mind?—Simply that an addition might be made to the present pasture.

31,213. How far up do you think it could, with advantage, be extended?—It could be extended up to Suilven.

31,214. The southern slope of Suilven?—Up to about the middle of Suilven.

31,215. And is that as good pasture as you have got in Badnamban?—Most of it is better.

31,216. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—I understand there was an extension of grazing given to the townships there?—Yes, to the townships of Strathan and Inverkirkaig, but Badnamban did not get any.

31,217. Are you aware that some of the crofters there have not taken up their share, so to speak, of that grazing?—Yes, for the reason that they thought it too dear.

31,218. You know that a number of them have not taken it up?—I understand there are a few who did not.

31,219. *The Chairman.*—You were no party to the applications by Strathan and Inverkirkaig?—Yes, we were.

31,220. Have you anything else to say?—To explain the way in which the Badnamban crofters were thrown out of that claim. When the first application for the pasture from the forest was sent in, shortly before the Crofters Commission came here, the Inverkirkaig crofters wrote an agreement, which most of them signed, giving Badnamban a portion of their own pasture contiguous to Badnamban, on condition that they would forego their claim to the pasture in the forest. This they did, and sent in an application for the pasture; but when the Commission came here the Inverkirkaig crofters would not give them this.

31,221. They did not adhere to the arrangement?—They did not. The Crofters Commission went over the ground, and the Kirkaig crofters showed them the piece they were willing to give, which was to be fenced. Sheriff Brand pointed out, when he was examining the place, that a fence should be erected. The application did not come from the Sheriff Clerk until Saturday, and the court rose thatevening before the applications came, so they were deferred, and it was two years afterwards before the case was taken up again: and then the Inverkirkaig crofters denied that ever they wrote such an agreement.

31,222. So the thing fell through?—The thing fell through.

31,223. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did the people consider whether it would be possible for the Crofters Commission under the Act to take an extension of holdings from crofters' land?—They thought so, seeing the other crofters were willing to give it.

31,224. *The Chairman.*—I think the matter stood in this way, that the Crofters Commission were not unwilling to deal with it, if all parties consented; but under the Act we did not feel that we were able to assign to the Badnamban crofters land which belonged to Inverkirkaig, unless with the full consent of the crofters of Inverkirkaig?—But we thought, if we could have produced the letter, we could have compelled it.

31,225. But you were not able to produce the letter?—No.

31,226. What we held was this:—The Commissioners 'find that the land applied for is therein 'described as Point of Inverkirkaig: Find that the 'said land already forms part of the holdings of the 'crofters of Inverkirkaig for which Fair Rents were fixed 'under their applications disposed of by final orders, 'dated 22nd December 1888: Therefore sustain the 'objection stated for the respondent,' *i.e.*, for the Duke: his objection was that it was already crofters' land.

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Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

William Matheson.

Of course, if the alleged arrangement could have been made good by production of evidence, we might have taken another course.

31,227. *Mr Sutherland.*—But you must remember that the 'respondent' is not the Inverkirkaig crofters?—I understand that.

Angus Matheson.

ANGUS MATHESON, Crofter, Baddidarach (46)—*examined.*

31,228. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

31,229. Your area is, I find, 1 acre 0 roods 27 poles arable, 3 acres 3 roods 2 poles outrun, and one-ninth share in a common of 397 acres; the former rent was £2, 12s. 6d., the present rent is £2?—Yes.

31,230. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

31,231. Along with John Macleod and John Matheson?—Yes; but John Macleod could not appear to-day, and John Mackenzie is to take his place.

31,232. With what lands does your township of Baddidarach march?—We are hemmed in between the townships of Ardroe and Torbreck and the farm of Inver.

31,233. Have you a written statement?—I have got a statement of our desire.

31,234. Just read it, if you please?—We put it down in the form of a petition, but we can read it all the same.

APPLICATION to the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands) by the Baddidarach Crofters.

GENTLEMEN.—We, the undersigned, beg to petition you requesting additional land, viz., a part of Inver sheep farm, adjoining our neighbourhood. Seven or eight years ago we submitted a similar application to the Marquis of Stafford (now Duke of Sutherland), but without success. Encouraged by the ancient proverb 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try, 'again,' we again produced our petition to the Crofters Commission when at Lochinver, and latterly to the County Council, but both with a similar result to that of the preceding one. The above-mentioned farm, along with that of Clashmore, Stoer, is at present in the possession of David Macbrayne, Esq., proprietor of the Lochinver and Culag hotels, and Shipowner, Glasgow. Our pasture and arable land taken collectively merely comprises about one square mile, thus affording an average not exceeding 1½ acres of very inferior arable soil for each of the nine crofters whose present rent, for total, amounts to about £20.

(Signed) JOHN MACLEOD.
ANGUS MATHESON.
JOHN MATHESON.
WIDOW MURDO MACLEOD.

31,235. You say there are nine crofters in Baddidarach?—Yes.

31,236. How many cottars?—One cottar, who would be glad to get a portion of this land we desire to get.

31,237. Do you happen to know how many crofters are in Ardroe?—Four crofters.

31,238. And any cottars?—No, no cottars.

31,239. How many are in Torbreck?—Five crofters and no cottars.

31,240. The land occupied by these townships lies between Loch Roe and Loch Inver, I think?—Yes.

31,241. And goes back to the march of Inver farm?—Yes.

31,242. Which you say is in the hands of Mr Macbrayne. Does he hold it under lease for a term of years, do you know?—I suppose so; I cannot say about that, because it is difficult to find out.

31,243. He only got it a few years ago?—Two years ago.

31,244. Who held it previously?—The hotels had it before.

31,245. But he is at present the occupant of the farm of Inver, the neighbouring farm in Stoer of Clashmore, and of both hotels here?—Yes. Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

31,246. He is a non-resident shipowning farmer?—Yes. Angus Matheson.

31,247. Is that land of Inver suitable for settlements or for grazing?—For grazing.

31,248. The other lands marching with you, or near to you, are, I think, crofters' lands?—Yes.

31,249. *Mr Forsyth.*—Is there any arable land on this farm of Inver?—There is.

31,250. Do you contemplate making new settlements, supposing any portion of the farm were given to you?—I believe they would not like to be removed; the crofters want additional pasture.

31,251. Then it is as pasture that you ask for part of this farm?—We want the help of arable land too; that part of Inver farm which is below the road on the left hand going to Baddidarach is all arable; there will be about seven or eight acres of arable land which would be a great help to crofters.

31,252. Is that across the river?—Yes, on the other side of the river, on the left hand side going to Baddidarach after crossing the bridge.

31,253. Then, is your application that part of this farm should be added as grazing to these various townships, or only to your own township?—To the township of Baddidarach. It is that township that I represent.

31,254. Are there any applicants here for Torbreck or Ardroe?—Not so far as I know.

31,255. But you represent Baddidarach only?—There are two others from the same township to be called after me.

31,256. *Mr Sutherland.*—Those others, I take it, are the parties who have signed this paper along with you?—Yes.

31,257. And you detail there the various steps you have taken to get an enlargement of holdings, and you have always failed?—Yes, for the last eight or nine years.

31,258. So it cannot be said but your desire is for enlarging your bounds?—We desire it very much.

31,259. And you are so situated that this farm of Inver is the only land that is contiguous?—Yes.

31,260. And you have also said in your statement that the land is at present in the occupation of a Glasgow shipowner?—Yes.

31,261. Well, I wish to ask you with regard to the other lands held by the Glasgow shipowner, there is part of it not contiguous to Inver; is not there part of it at Clashmore?—Yes.

31,262. How many miles away is Clashmore?—About nine, I think.

31,263. And you have pointed out also, I think, in your statement, that you have only got 1½ acres of arable land?—We have not got that altogether; I think I have only got 1⅙ myself, but the crofters might average nearly 1½ acres.

31,264. And that land is easily seen from here, is it?—Quite easily.

31,265. And you will show it to us when we are there?—I shall be very glad to have the opportunity.

31,266. *The Chairman.*—I find that the ground on which your application was dealt with was this:—'Find that the land applied for forms part of an 'existing farm or holding, the rent or annual letting 'value of which does not exceed £100, being only £50; 'therefore sustain the objection stated on that ground 'under section 13 (3) c. of the Act?'—Yes.

31,267. Now, who manages the farm of Inver for the occupying tenant?—The shepherd.

31,268. Who is the shepherd?—One Roderick Mackenzie.

31,269. Does he live on the farm?—Mr Thomson is manager.

31,270. Who is Mr Thomson?—The hotel manager.

31,271. You mean the gentleman who takes charge of the hotel?—Yes. He has got a shepherd, Roderick Mackenzie, who lives on the ground.

31,272. *Mr Gordon.*—I see that a part of the farm of Inver comes to this side of the river?—Yes.

31,273. Are there any crofters' holdings in connection with that?—No.

31,274. There are only the village lots there, I suppose?—Some of the villagers keep a cow on the grazing. [*Mr Maciver.* They get grazing from the innkeeper.]

31,275. Is there any arable land on this side of the river?—No, there is none on this side of the river, but there is a good bit of arable land here, just about 100 yards beyond this house we are in.

31,276. That is the ground the innkeeper works in connection with the hotel?—Yes.

31,277. But the sheep are kept principally upon the north side of the road leading from Lochinver towards Clashmore?—They are on both sides of the road between Torbreck and Lochinver.

31,278. But the larger portion of the grazings is to the north or north-east side of the road?—Yes.

31,279. *The Chairman.*—What do those who have cows on this patch of land pay to the hotel-keeper?—I am not sure how much they pay.

31,280. But do they pay to the hotel-keeper, Mr Macbrayne?—Yes. I think it is £2 a year, and sometimes more for the summering.

31,281. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—Those that have cows pay £2, I understand, and they also get half an acre of arable land, don't they?—I cannot say.

31,282. This Inver farm has been in connection with the hotel for many years,—I suppose since ever you remember?—Yes.

31,283. Are you aware that a portion of it, the lower part of it, has been laid out for feuing purposes?—Well, that is said by Mr Gordon, but I do not see any marks of feuing; there is not a feu taken up there.

31,284. Oh, yes, there are feus taken?—But supposing it was, that would not matter if we got it, and if the rent were to be reduced according as the sites were taken up; we would have no objection.

31,285. I am quite sure you would have objections; the fact is, however, that it is let for feuing purposes, and some feus have been taken?—Well, it may be so.

31,286. The Free Church are going to build a manse there?—That is all very good; we don't object to that, but we want a part for all that.

31,287. What employment are you engaged in?—Anything I can earn a penny by honestly.

31,288. Do you act as gillie for the hotels?—I do.

JOHN MACKENZIE, Baddidarach (36)—*examined.*

31,289. *The Chairman.*—You attend here, I understand, instead of John Macleod, who is unable to be present?—Yes.

31,290. Are you a crofter at Baddidarach?—No, I live with my mother-in-law, who is the crofter.

31,291. What is her name?—Widow Murdo Macleod.

31,292. I see her croft has 2 acres 1 rood 34 poles arable, 10 acres 0 roods 34 poles outrun, and one-ninth share in the common of 397 acres. The former rent was £2, 17s. 6d., and the present rent is £2, 10s. You heard the evidence given by Matheson?—Yes.

31,293. And you appear as a delegate along with him?—Yes.

31,294. Do you agree with his evidence?—I quite agree with it, but I don't agree as to the amount of outrun stated in our petition there; I don't think we have a square mile. Of course, you will know better, but I am pretty well acquainted with the west coast, and I don't know a township that is more needing additional ground than Baddidarach.

31,295. And you think that part of the farm of Inver is very convenient?—Yes.

31,296. And suitable for extension of grazings?—Very suitable, and this part of Inver for arable land. We will be very glad if the feus are taken up, and to part with it just the same as Mr Macbrayne does. Of course, if we were to lose ground by feus the rent would be reduced accordingly.

31,297. You don't think the matter of feuing offers any difficulty?—I don't think so.

31,298. You would be quite willing to give it up?—Quite willing.

31,299. In fact, you would be very glad to see Lochinver extended considerably by means of feus?—I would.

31,300. Are you one of those who have cows' grazing upon the ground?—No, I belong to Baddidarach.

31,301. Do you know anything about this giving of land for cows?—No, excepting that there are some of them that have a cow on the ground belonging to the hotel, and they pay so much.

31,302. Do you know how much they pay?—I am not certain. A man present here who has a cow says he pays £2 a year for the summering.

31,303. Mr Sutherland tells me that the acreage of your outrun is not more than half a square mile?—I thought so. The township of Badnamban is, I think, the nearest to Baddidarach for not having pasture. They are very close in; but we are hemmed in with other townships, and, of course, we don't blame them, for we just chase their cattle and they chase ours.

31,304. You are hemmed in by Ardroe and Torbreck on the one side and by the Inver farm and Lochinver on the other side?—Yes.

31,305. How do the tenants of Baddidarach obtain their livelihood mainly?—They are willing to turn their hand to anything. There are a good few of them employed as gillies from the hotel going out to the fishing; some of them work in the winter at the lobster fishing and the herring fishing.

31,306. They depend upon labour for paying their rents and getting along?—Principally on labour: the crofts do not afford much at all.

31,307. *Mr Gordon.*—Does this small township of Torbreck have any share in the large area of pasture lying to the north? There is a place there called Achmelvich?—Some of the crofters of Torbreck got an addition from the Achmore farm along with the Achmelvich crofters.

31,308. There is a place called Richarn?—Yes.

31,309. Do the Torbreck people and the Richarn people and the Achmelvich people have any pasture in common?—Yes.

31,310. Does the Ardroe township participate in the common?—No.

31,311. Neither Ardroe nor Baddidarach?—No. There is another man in the township with me (of course, I am really the crofter, although the croft stands in the name of my mother-in-law), and we have to keep a horse each, as we cannot do without it. We are the farthest away in the township up the hill, and we have no place to keep the horse, but we cannot do without it; we try as well as we can to keep the horse at home, but we cannot. One season we were making a footpath in the forest for Lord Brownlow; and we got paid for it, certainly. We employed our horses to bring up the necessary things we required there, and when our horses got the good taste of the grazing in the forest there we were never able to keep them out of it since. They used to go every summer, and as soon as they would get the chance they would stray into the forest. Well, they kept pinfolding them in the forest; and on various occasions never sent us any word of it. The keeper told me the horses might die there before he would give us word that they were in the pinfold. Well, the forest is not fenced, and it is very difficult for us to keep our horses out of it. [*The Chairman.*] And is your horse up there now?—Very likely. It was a week in the pinfold not very long ago, and the keeper told me of it yesterday. I said he ought to tell me at once, and he asked whether I would pay for the messenger. I said 'Certainly, if the law compels me to pay; but I think if you don't fence the forest I am not bound to pay for the messenger.'

31,312. What part of the forest do they go into?—The other side of Brackloch, through the river: I don't think it is right to pinfold horses in a forest that is not fenced.

31,313. But before you can get at that you must

Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

John Mackenzie.

trespass upon Brackloch or upon the Inn farm?—Yes, that is quite true; but she takes the main road to it. The main road leads directly to the river, which is the boundary of the forest. I cannot do without a horse as long as I am there, wherever I am to keep her; but if I get a part of Inver farm I shall be able to keep her off the forest.

31,314. *Mr Sutherland.*—In the circumstances you relate to us, don't you think that the horse displays a great deal of intelligence?—Well, she knows what's good for her.

31,315. And, following up the hint, might you not have asked for an extension of your grazing from the forest?—I shall be very glad to get it: there is a park on this side of Glencanisp that is fenced in.

31,316. A park in the forest?—Yes, I do not see why we should fail in getting this; but if we fail I should be very glad to take my ninth share of that, and pay a fair rent for it: we don't want it for nothing.

31,317. You complain that outside the forest, on the boundary of it, there is no fence?—No.

31,318. Now, you tell me that inside the boundary there is a park fenced?—Yes.

31,319. Does the deer forest come to the dykes of the houses of the people here? Does it not come down to near the public school?—Yes, it comes down to the public school up there; and this wood plantation, of course, is included in the deer forest. The pasture we talk of we don't get the use of until we come to Brackloch; but the park is within 500 yards of us.

31,320. Would not the natural outlet for you in the way of pasture be the Inver farm and part of the deer forest also?—There is more than sufficient for us in the Inver farm, if we were to get it. There are some in the township who would not be very able to go in for it, very likely, but if we could get a good part of the Inver farm we would do with it for the present.

31,321. What strikes me most is the small area you hold for so many families?—Yes, there are above 60 people on that.

31,322. *Mr Gordon.*—In the nine crofts?—Yes, and one cottar.

31,323. Now, don't you think, with regard to this deer forest, that with the expansion of Lochinver and the feuing ground there will be a necessity for some outlet to the people for pasture for their cattle?—It would be very suitable: those who take up feuing ground will be pretty well off, and will not need it so much, but we require it.

31,324. But I am talking just now of the encroachment of the forest upon the village of Lochinver: don't you think it is much too near it?—I would not object to the forest being near if I and my neighbour had plenty of grazing.

31,325. But is it not a natural outlet for the people who have feus in Lochinver or who may have them afterwards?—Very suitable.

31,326. And do you think if an opportunity were given to those people they would be very glad to get pasture for cows,—those who would have the feus?—I should think so, certainly.

31,327. And do you think they have sufficient grazing at the present time?—I think a good many more would be very glad to take more grazing.

31,328. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—I think you said that the crofters of Torbreck and Baddidarach held grazings in common?—[*Mr Gordon.* No, he said the very opposite].

31,329. Is it not a common thing for your stock to wander across this river to the forest?—My two horses only.

31,330. These are the only two obstreperous animals?—The only two horses that went in from Baddidarach, or that go, and I gave the reason why they go.

31,331. Ordinarily, I suppose, the river boundary would be a pretty good boundary? Do you not look upon the river as a pretty good march?—Very good, but it does not keep horses out. There may be cattle straying from other townships, but not from Baddidarach.

31,332. *Mr Sutherland.*—Is it natural for cattle that have not sufficient grazing to go where the grazing is?—Certainly it is. But my horse would never have gone there if she had not got the taste of the grass.

Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

JOHN MATHESON, Crofter, Baddidarach (40)—*examined.*

John Matheson.

31,333. *The Chairman.*—Was your holding dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

31,334. It contains 1 acre 0 roods 34 poles arable, 2 acres 2 roods 30 poles outrun, and one-ninth share in a common of 397 acres; the former rent was £2, 12s. 6d. and the fixed rent is £2?—Yes.

31,335. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

31,336. To represent the views of the Baddidarach crofters?—Yes.

31,337. Do you concur with what we have heard from Angus Matheson and John Mackenzie?—Yes.

31,338. How many cows have you?—Three.

31,339. Any stirks?—No; I had one calf.

31,340. What sheep have you got?—Thirteen or fourteen.

31,341. Ewes?—Yes.

31,342. Your desire is to obtain, if it can be got, an extension of grazing from the farm of Inver?—Yes.

31,343. And also arable land, if there is arable land there?—Yes.

31,344. I think we will take you as concurring with what we have heard, as it has been very fully gone into: I think we understand your case, by the evidence given by Matheson and Mackenzie?—Yes.

EVANDER MACIVER, Factor for Scourie (82) recalled—*examined.*

Evander Maciver.

31,345. *The Chairman.*—I understand you wish to make a statement?—Yes, a short statement regarding the parish of Assynt. I wish to make it as brief and laconic as possible, just as I did with my evidence regarding the other parishes. At the same time it is proper for me to state that I am instructed by the Duke of Sutherland to give every possible information, and I am very much inclined to do so myself, in connection with anything that I know.

The parish of Assynt contains, according to the Ordnance Survey [less 8953 acres of water and foreshores], 110,111 acres, which appear to be occupied as follows:—

	Acres.
Sheep farms,	46,880
Deer forest,	28,500
Crofters' holdings,	31,040
Minister's glebe,	1,300
Woods [enclosed],	2,000
Hotels, sites, feus, &c.,	391
Total,	110,111

The area of the farms may be thus divided:—

Farm.	Arable.	Outrun.	Moor Pasture.	Total.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Achmore,	12	63	18,925	19,000
Cromult,	1	4	1,995	2,000
Ardvar,	5	13	8,982	9,000
Stronchrubie and Ledmore,	20	40	12,940	13,000
Oldney Mains and Island,	10	20	818	848
Inver,	...	5	1,995	2,000
Brackloch,	5	10	872	887
Clashmore,	80	3	...	83
Culkein,	34	...	28	62
	167	158	46,555	46,880

The following is the rental of the farms :—

	£
Achmore [in proprietor's hands],	550
Cromult [in proprietor's hands],	40
Ardvar [in proprietor's hands],	275
Hotel farm,	80
Stronchrubie and Ledmore	412
Oldney Mains and Island,	38
Brackloch,	16
Clashmore,	54
Culkein,	20
Total,	1485

The rental of the deer forest of Glencanisp is £950, but this rent includes wages of foresters, rates, and taxes, and maintenance of houses, roads, and paths, which may amount to about £300 annually.

The crofters' holdings may be thus divided : —

Number of townships,		24
Number of holdings,		331
Area of Land :—		
Arable,	1,025	
Outrun,	3,152	
Common pasture,	20,346	
		24,523
Land assigned,		6,518
Total acreage,		31,040

The total rental of the crofters in Assynt is £1067. Since 1888 there has been expended by the landlord a sum of £440, 15s. 9d. in providing wire fencing, materials for enlargement of crofters' holdings in the parish.

The arrears due at 30th September last by the crofters of Assynt amount to the large sum of £1535, 12s. 4d., and another year's rent is due by them next month.

When I became factor on Assynt, in the year 1845, the crofters' rental in Assynt amounted to £967, 6s. 6d.

The rent of the additional grazings given to the crofters since the passing of the Crofters Act was fixed by the Commission at £174, 19s. 9d.

The Crofters Commission visited Assynt in 1888, and fixed fair rents for all the crofts in the parish, making a reduction of about 13 per cent. on the rents. They cancelled about 32 per cent. of the arrears, and ordered the difference to be paid, a small portion of which is still due.

The rates in Assynt are a very serious burden on both landlord and tenants. For the year ending Whitsunday 1893, the rates were :—For poor, &c., 2s. 4d. per £ ; for education, 1s. 6d. per £ ; for county rates, 1s. 1d. ; in all, 4s. 11d. per £, divisible between landlord and tenants, the landlord's portion being £696, 15s. 9d. ; and I regret to add that the rates for poor, education, and registration alone amount this year to 4s. 3d.

The rental of the sheep farms was more than double what it appeared at in 1845 up to the year 1882, but since that date there has been a fall of about 40 per cent., and the letting of sheep farms is now difficult.

My experience as to reclamation of lands here, by a landlord, is that it is a very poor speculation. The district is so rocky and hilly, with deep mosses intermixed, and the climate is so adverse and wet that arable farming is carried on under great difficulties. I found the greater part of the crofters' holdings was held in 1845, when I came to the country, under the old runrig system, under which few or no improvements were carried on by the occupants. The arable land was lotted, and considerable improvements were executed both by the landlord and by the tenants after these lots were formed.

There was a good deal of outlay on reclamations at Culkein, Achnacarnin, and at Clashmore, with less or more all over the parish ; but the result was a very heavy outlay per acre on inferior subjects from which good returns were never obtained. The grain produced on the west coast is inferior, and proves very badly when sent to the mill. Most of the grain grown in Assynt by crofters is given to their stock, and they purchase the meal they require for domestic purposes at Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Wick.

When the potato disease first broke out in the district in 1846 and following years, a strong desire was expressed by a large number of crofters and cottars in the district, especially in Assynt, to emigrate. Numerous petitions were sent to the Duke of Sutherland asking him to assist them to go to America. His Grace considered these petitions, and ultimately agreed to give assistance. About 400 persons left, principally for Upper Canada, in 1847, where friends had previously preceded them. The Duke paid the whole expense of their passage to America, and gave other assistance. The expense on the average was £5 for young and old. The whole outlay on emigration in 1847 and 1848 was upwards of £6000. For many years afterwards I received letters from some of these emigrants thanking me in the strongest terms for the advice and assistance I had given them, and informing me that they were getting on and becoming comfortable. Since these years, a considerable number left this district, to whom loans were made to enable them to emigrate to America and elsewhere, which loans have in most cases been repaid with gratitude, and some of whom appear to have been very successful.

(Signed) E. Maciver.

I may add that Mr Gordon has been sub-factor here for several years, and has had more to do with many matters connected with the parish than I have had ; and I should wish that you would examine him also.

31,346. If you will allow us, we shall put a few questions to you first. [*Mr Gordon.*]—How is it that the rates appear to be so much increased this year ?—It is just because the funds were found to be necessary, I suppose.

31,347. On account of a fall in the rental, or because of the greater necessities of the case ?—The necessities of the case, and partly owing to a number of the rates not having been paid last year. There is an arrear of rates at present such as never existed before ; so much so, that the Parochial Board were obliged to institute proceedings against a number of those who had not paid their rates ; decrees were taken against a number of them.

31,348. The rise appears to be very heavy ; the rate has jumped up in one year from 2s. odds to 4s. ?—4s. 3d. is the new rate, it was formerly 3s. 11d.

31,349. In 1893 the poor-rate was 2s. 4d., and now it is 4s. 3d. ?—The 4s. 3d. includes both poor and school rates.

31,350. What was the poor-rate last year ?—For poor and registration 2s. 4d.

31,351. But, at any rate, the rates have increased from 2s. 4d. to 4s. 3d. upon poor, education, and registration ?—No, from 3s. 10d. The poor-rate this year is 2s. 9d., as against 2s. 4d. last year ; the whole increase is on the poor-rate.

31,352. *Mr Sutherland.*—You mentioned with regard to reclamation of land by the landlord that you did not find it a profitable speculation at all. Did you refer to reclamation that was made on the crofters' holdings, or reclamations that were made on other holdings ?—On other holdings ; I referred to those I mentioned, Culkein, Achnacarnin, and Clashmore.

31,353. Were these reclamations made upon crofters, holdings by the landlord ?—Partly.

31,354. To any considerable extent ?—When the potato disease came on, there was a good deal done all over the parish ; the crofters were allowed to improve, and we sent a person to value the improvements, and we paid for the improvements.

31,355. And can you tell me at what rate per acre you paid for these improvements ?—I can tell you that Clashmore cost nearly £40 an acre.

31,356. But was the reclamation carried on at Clashmore on crofters' holdings, or on another holding ?—On crofters' holdings, and upon ground that was not

Lochinver, Sutherland-shire.

Evander Maciver.

cultivated by them, but was added when we took it in hand.

31,357. Added afterwards?—Yes.

31,358. But did you pay for reclamations made in 1847 to crofters at the rate of £40 an acre?—Yes. They were valued by a valuator whom we appointed for the purpose of looking over them. When a crofter had made any improvement, he called upon this man to go and value it; and upon receiving a report from him the man was paid for his work.

31,359. And are you enabled to state that they were paid for at the rate of £40 an acre?—Well, I cannot say that; that would depend very much on the nature of the improvement.

31,360. But you say, I suppose, with some degree of assurance, that the reclamations made at Clashmore cost you £40 an acre?—I say so.

31,361. That was upon part of the common which was previously held by the people of Clashmore?—Yes.

31,362. And that land has since had a history? It is the same land that has had a history which I do not wish to characterise more than this; I want to make sure of its locality?—It is the farm of Clashmore.

31,363. Concerning which there were some proceedings not very long ago?—There were some people apprehended for rioting.

31,364. It is the same land,—that is all I wish to know?—Yes.

31,365. But are you prepared to state authoritatively that land reclaimed by the crofters themselves without aid has been unprofitable to the landlord?—No, I am not; it would be profitable to themselves if they improved their land.

31,366. And, as a matter of fact, has it been profitable to the landlord?—Of course, the better off the tenants are the better off the landlord is.

31,367. The more rent they pay. You have given us no comparison between the rents paid per acre by the 331 crofters in Assynt and the large tenants?—Mr Gordon will give you that.

31,368. Then you made reference to a matter of which you spoke at Durness, the emigration of the people in 1847?—Yes.

31,369. Has there been a desire on the part of the people to emigrate at any other time than 1847?—Not near so general as it was then; but there have been a very great number of instances of single parties and some families asking to be assisted who were assisted.

31,370. What were the particular circumstances in 1847 that led the people to have this unusual desire?—The potato disease.

31,371. It had no connection whatever with the state the people were in before the clearances?—Oh, none whatever.

31,372. You never heard that the people petitioned to be sent from the places they were in before they came down to the sea-coast?—No, it was two years after I came to Assynt that that occurred.

31,373. You came in 1845?—Yes.

31,374. Then you stated that £6000 were spent at that time on emigration. Did that expenditure of £6000 add in any degree to the comfort of those that remained?—I think it was a very great relief to Assynt that so many left it.

31,375. Do you know what became of the holdings that these people had?—They were added to those who remained behind.

31,376. So that there was a time when their holdings were smaller even than they are now?—They would be a little smaller, but they have been added to very much since, in consequence of the lotting. I may mention to you that since I was examined in Durness, I received a letter from a Durness man whom I had assisted to emigrate. He wrote from the United States, and gave a most pleasing account of his success and prosperity. He is settled in Texas.

31,377. Where did he go from?—From Eriboll.

31,378. I am not surprised at that?—Perhaps not. He was fortunate enough to go to a place in Texas where a town was just being created, and he made himself so useful to the community that the town was actually called after him, Rossville, his name being Ross. This poor lad from Eriboll is now Judge there; he married a Spanish lady, the daughter of Don Antonio, of some celebrity in that part; he has now a large family, and he writes me to say that he had the pleasure of calling one of his children after myself.

Lochinver Sutherlan shire.

Evander Maciver.

31,379. Then, do you get letters from any who have not succeeded?—I cannot say I ever did.

31,380. And how many have you been, I won't say instrumental in sending away, but connected with the emigration of?—I have been instrumental in the case of something like 700 or 800 souls.

31,381. And how many congratulatory letters have you received from all that number, may I ask?—Oh, I cannot tell you that; they gave up writing about twenty years ago for the most part, but I got a great many soon after they went.

31,382. Would you recommend, then, instead of enlarging holdings, and getting additional holdings in the neighbourhood, that the people should go out to this place, Rossville?—I certainly would, if I were a young man, have no hesitation as to what to do in the circumstances.

31,383. You would not hesitate to do differently from what you did, is that so?—No; and I think I never did anything by which I felt I had done more good than by sending these very people that went, and advising them to go.

31,384. But in reference to yourself, you were saying that if you were beginning life again you would go yourself?—I think I would, if I were in their circumstances.

31,385. But, as a matter of fact, you did not go?—I was not in their circumstances.

31,386. Then, do you think it would be better for these people themselves to go, or is it more reasonable to suppose that they would like to exhaust what opportunities there are of thriving in their own country first?—I think it is more likely they would thrive there than in this country.

31,387. Would they not thrive in Ardvar farm, or Achmore, far more than they are doing in Nedd?—I don't think so.

31,388. So you cannot help us, then, to find the land we are in search of?—No.

31,389. *The Chairman.*—You mentioned particularly the three farms of Achmore, Cromalt, and Ardvar, and I think you say in your statement that the whole of these three farms are in the hands of the proprietor?—They are.

31,390. These farms include an area of 30,000 acres out of a total farming area of 46,880 acres?—Yes.

31,391. For what length of time have these farms been in the hands of the proprietor?—Seven or eight or nine years, I think: we could not get them let.

31,392. You tried to let them as sheep farms?—We are most anxious to let them.

31,393. Have they been carried on to a profit?—No, to a loss.

31,394. Has any part of these farms been afforested since they fell into the proprietor's hands?—None. A considerable quantity, as was described to-day, was taken from Achmore, and given to the crofters.

31,395. The parts given in enlargement of holdings were parts of Achmore; does their area fall to be deducted from the 19,000 acres which you have given as the area of Achmore?—No, that is the present area.

31,396. And the same remark, I presume, also applies to Cromalt and Ardvar?—Quite so.

31,397. Has the estate management, either through yourself, or in any other way, considered the question of dividing these large farms into smaller farms?—We have considered that subject, it is under consideration at this moment.

31,398. Has anything been done to carry out the proposal?—There has been nothing finally decided yet.

31,399. But the question is under the serious consideration of the estate?—Of the Duke and his advisers.

31,400. Have you proposed at any time to let these farms in smaller divisions? Have you offered them to the public?—No, they were advertised this year to be let separately or together.

31,401. The three farms?—Yes.

31,402. But not in sub-divided portions?—Yes, in sub-divided portions, separately or together.

31,403. But not in lesser areas than they occupy at present?—They were divided into several divisions.

31,404. You did not propose to let Achmore, for instance, as more than one holding?—Well, it was proposed to divide it also.

31,405. But that has come to nothing?—It has not been settled finally; I was to have gone down to Dunrobin the very day that you met in Durness, and I could not go. The Duke has gone since, but it was very much to consider that very important question.

31,406. *Mr Gordon.*—The question his lordship wanted to put was, when you offered Achmore to let last summer, did you offer to let it as one holding, or as more than one holding?—As both; it was advertised to let either as a whole or in divisions.

31,407. The three farms?—Yes.

31,408. But not Achmore by itself?—No.

31,409. You did not offer to let a hirsel of Achmore on the west?—Yes, that was it.

31,410. *The Chairman.*—Has anyone acquainted with the district, and following the occupation of a sheep farmer, come forward and offered to take a part of Achmore as a separate farm?—There is a party connected with the district who has come forward to say that he was seriously thinking of proposing to take it.

31,411. Part of Achmore?—Yes. [*Mr Sutherland.*—There is an intention, on the part of the estate management, to offer the present farms in lesser holdings than they are in at present?—Yes, if suitable offerers come forward.]

31,412. Now, you mentioned that there were in the form of crofter holdings 28 townships with 331 tenants. I understand that you use the word tenants there as meaning crofter tenants?—Crofters.

31,413. Can you tell me how many cottars there are in these townships?—I cannot condescend upon particulars.

31,414. Are you able to say there are a considerable number?—There are a few in every township, I believe.

31,415. And do these pay a rent of 10s. for the site of a house?—They were asked to pay 10s., but they ceased to pay it, and we actually expunged their names from the books altogether, in a number of cases.

31,416. These cottars, as I understand, have no land?—I think some of them have little bits behind their houses.

31,417. But they have no assignment of land from the Duke?—None.

31,418. And these cottars, whatever their precise number may be, constitute a considerable burden upon the crofters, I suppose?—Of course, but that is generally done with the consent of the crofters themselves.

31,419. I merely wished to get at the fact. We know, also, that many of the cottars are relatives of the crofters?—Sons and sons-in-law, and so forth.

31,420. You mentioned in Durness the extent to which the Crofters Commission had reduced the rental of the crofters,—I think you state that the net reduction was the sum of £2 or so?—Yes, £2, 13s. I think it was.

31,421. Would you give us the corresponding figure for this parish?—It would require a little calculation to give that.

31,422. We have endeavoured to make the calculation? Mr Sutherland brings out the sum of £134, 8s. 1d. as the reduction in Assynt?—Very possibly; I think it is 13 per cent.

31,423. You say the arrears amount to £1535, 12s. 4d., and another year's rent is almost due. Now, dealing with arrears due at this moment, £1535, that falls to be divided among 331 tenants?—Yes.

31,424. And would mean an average arrear of £4 or £5 each?—Yes.

31,425. Part of that, however—one year's rent of that—was a rent falling due after the death of the late Duke?—It was.

31,426. And I think you admitted at Durness that you found that the non-payment arose partly from the rent collection not being held at the usual time?—It did so, I have no doubt. And, in this connection, perhaps, I may be allowed to remark that the Duke is taking that matter into very serious consideration, and that the crofters may hear something about it ere very long.

31,427. You heard it stated by some crofters that they would have paid their rent if the rent collection had been held at the usual time, and that the necessities of the case led them to spend the money afterwards?—I heard that, and I believe it to be true.

31,428. Can you tell me how much of the total arrear of £1535 may be described as judicial arrears?—It does not amount to a very large sum; I did not calculate it, but it is not very heavy.

31,429. Then, would you say that the judicial arrears have, as a whole, been pretty well paid?—They have; what was ordered to be paid by the Crofters Commission.

31,430. Has in the main been paid?—Yes.

31,431. Would you say that the remainder, what has not been paid, is in the main due to inability to pay?—I believe so.

31,432. Would you also say that the last year,—I mean the farming year that is now over,—has been a very bad year?—Very bad; the price for Highland cattle has been very low.

31,433. And that might account, to some extent, for the inability of the crofters to meet their rents?—It is at Martinmas that we shall be able to tell as to that.

31,434. You referred particularly to the character of the land in this district which you described as largely consisting of hills, rocks, and waste. I take it that you apply that observation quite as strongly to the land held by the crofters as to the land held by the large farmers?—The whole parish is of that description.

31,435. Then, is the life of a crofter in this parish, owing to the character of the land, attended with peculiar difficulty?—I should say that it is.

31,436. And, therefore, the extension of their holdings,—I am not considering the question of whether it could be done or not, but the extension of their holdings, if it could be done, would be a great improvement to their condition?—Oh, it should.

31,437. You said that the grain was poor in this parish?—The grain produced all over the west coast is poor. I have a farm myself, and I know what it is from practical experience.

31,438. Is the grain in the parish of Assynt poorer than the grain in the parish of Durness?—I don't think it is: I think it is very much the same.

31,439. Where would you say in the county of Sutherland that the average quality of the grain is better?—On the east coast, generally

31,440. *Mr Macaulay, Solicitor, Golspie.*—Attention has been drawn to-day to the matter of rates in this parish. I suppose the rents obtained for the forests in the parish tend considerably to keep down the rates?—The rental derived from shootings, fishings, and forests materially affect the rates, because the larger the rental from these sources the less is the assessment over the whole parish.

31,441. Suppose the forest here were just now to be chopped up, and pieces taken off it, do you think that would affect the rental of these subjects?—I have no hesitation in saying that it might affect it very injuriously. We have seen such an effect produced already.

31,442. Where was that?—At Glencanisp. We had a tenant there, who, when land was given to the Inverkirkaig crofters, actually threw up his lease, and left us altogether. I refer to Major Paynter.

31,443. And that forest was let again with what result?—At a very serious loss and a lowering of rent.

31,444. And that is just a lesson of what might happen?—[*The Chairman.*—That is your own opinion,

Lochinver, Sutherlandshire.

Evander Maciver.

Mr Macaulay]. [Mr Macaulay.—I have no doubt Mr Maciver is of the same opinion, and he is under examination at present.]

31,445. *The Chairman.*—It may be convenient to state that the arrears dealt with by the Crofters Commission in 1888 amounted to £599, 15s. 11d., of which the sum cancelled was £188, 7s. 6d., and the sum ordered to be paid £411, 8s. 5d. That, I think, I may take it from you has been nearly all paid since?—Not nearly all, but a considerable portion of it.

31,446. More than the half of it?—More than half.

31,447. *Mr Macaulay.*—Is it not the fact, however, that the first payments made were applied towards clearing off these judicial arrears?—Yes, that is so.

31,448. They were applied in the first place to that purpose?—Yes.

31,449. *Mr Sutherland.*—Mr Macaulay asked you a question as to the incidence of the rates. Does the rate not depend upon the value of the subject that is rated? It is a poundage, is it not?—So much per pound.

31,450. A poundage upon the value?—The valuation roll is taken as a basis, and the district board consider what amount is required, and fix the assessment accordingly.

31,451. Well, then, if the people of Achnancarnin got the deer forest, is the probability not that they would put up the value to what they pay at present, 1s. 2d. or whatever it is per acre?—I will not venture an opinion on that subject.

31,452. You know the land of Achnancarnin in possession of the crofters?—Yes.

31,453. You would be prepared to admit that it is not very superior land?—It is just something like the rest of the land in the parish.

31,454. Is it as good as the deer forest, taking it all over?—It is a very different subject.

31,455. Assuming for the moment that the effect of putting the people into the deer forest would be to raise the value of it per acre to the value of the land they now hold, would the rates not benefit by that?—I don't know that; the more you increase the people and the crofters, the more you increase the rates.

31,456. You are assuming that they are always kept below the pauper line, but we intend to raise them above the pauper line. Is it not a rational conclusion that if you increase the comfort of the people you do away with pauperism to that extent?—Yes, but in a growing population you have to provide for education as well as for pauperism; and the more you increase the number of people the more expensive does education become, and therefore the larger is the rate.

31,457. I am quite prepared to admit that the education rate is a permanent rate?—And in a parish like Assynt, with an immense coast line, and the people scattered all along the coast, the education becomes very expensive.

31,458. But the poor-rate is not necessarily so heavy in proportion?—It depends on circumstances.

31,459. Just so; if you better the circumstances of the people, then you decrease the poor-rate?—We have not found that what additions we have made add much to their benefit as yet.

31,460. But we have had that admitted by the tenants themselves here to-day?—Well, we have not found any advantage in practice. Look at the arrears that exist.

31,461. But, from their point of view, look at their comfort?—We shall be able to judge of that better after the Martinmas collection, when we see how they pay their rents.

31,462. From the landlord's point of view?—Yes.

[Adjourned.]

Tain.

THIRTY-THIRD SITTING

TAIN, November 2, 1893.

Present:—

David Brand, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
Angus Sutherland, Esq., M.P.
James Noel Muller Forsyth, Esq.
George Gordon, Esq.
William Mackenzie, *Secretary.*

John James Robertson Meiklejohn, Factor for Novar (43)—*examined.*

John James Robertson Meiklejohn.

31,463. *The Chairman.*—You are factor on the Novar estate?—Yes.

31,464. And I understand that you, along with some others from that quarter, desire to tender evidence to this Commission with regard to forestry?—Yes.

31,465. Have you a written statement?—Yes.

31,466. Then we will be glad to hear it.—The great importance of the subject is Mr Munro-Ferguson's excuse for asking the Royal Commission to hear some evidence respecting forestry as a means of providing work and overcoming the unsatisfactory state of the congested population in various parts of the Highlands. It appears to Mr Munro-Ferguson that, if available land is found, crofting alone will not be a successful mode of effecting the purpose of replacing the population in the Highland counties on the soil; and I may say I entirely concur with him in that opinion. Crofting in the upland glens, far removed from markets and outlets for surplus labour, must he made into very considerable-sized holdings, and these are unsuited to men of small means; and even with holdings of considerable size these upland straths are subject to late harvests and sunless seasons—such, for example, as last year, when these high lands yielded no grain. If large holdings were successful and free from the objection stated, yet their size would preclude the possibility of placing many people in these upland districts. It appears to me that if a number of people are to be enabled to occupy holdings in these counties, you must give them comparatively small areas, and also facilities for marketing surplus labour. On the seaboards, where there are good harbours and quick and moderately cheap means of transit, you have the provision for such surplus energy in reaping the harvest of sea, and in some counties the seaboards are already partially provided with the class of holdings I have indicated. In the more inland portions of the counties the problem is to provide for the surplus labour of the crofting communities; and by such a system of forestry as will be described to you by the skilled witnesses that will follow me, you will have that problem solved on a remunerative plan. The people might be, first of all, supplied with cottages suitably placed on the best available land, and employed in the formation of forests. Those of them who merited, and seemed capable of occupying holdings, might get suitable areas added to the cottages, and so form a large permanent population, having all the comforts and independence their holdings would give them, and having a constant and convenient outlet for their surplus labour. Any indiscriminate selection of occupiers would, in all probability, be a failure; as, for example, the experiment of loans to fishermen. Speaking from personal knowledge, I would say that in those cases I am acquainted with nine out of ten of these loans were made to the least successful men in the fishing community, and hence its failure. It is a great mistake to think any man will make a successful occupier of a small holding. It seems such a simple business at first sight, but to be successful it requires energy, constant hard work, and self-reliance on the part, not only of the head of the household, but of all his family. It is an old proverb that a man thrives as his wife lets him, and in no station of life is that more

the case than in the case of a crofter. This is corroborated by the study of small holdings recently published by W. E. Beare for the Cobden Club, where he states that the success of these largely depends on the work of the women of the household. Large farm hands, male and female, unless reared on small holdings, have not a suitable training for being successful occupiers of such holdings as those referred to. They have had the assistance of labour-saving machinery, and all the planning and management of farm operations done for them; and when put on their own resources, generally speaking, they do not take kindly to work from daylight to dark as a crofter must do to be successful. Whatever may be the failings of crofters, activity is, or ought to be, one of their virtues; and those I have lived amongst, and studied closely, have practised that virtue, carrying their surplus labour, if need be, across the globe to sell it in the best possible market, while those of the household left at home were equally untiring in their efforts to make the most of everything.

The Act of the Scottish Parliament of 1661, of which I produce a copy, contemplated some such mode of peopling the country as I have shortly endeavoured to describe; and had it not been allowed to fall into abeyance, congested population might not have been a difficulty of the present age.

(Signed) JOHN J. R. MEIKLEJOHN.
2nd November 1893.

31,467. That is an important statute. It is an Act of Charles II. reviving an Act of James I., and providing that those who had lands of a valued rental of not less than £1000 a year are to plant certain trees, particularly elm, oak, ash, plane, and larch, to the extent of four acres every year for ten years. These trees are to be planted three yards apart, and those who do so are entitled to cast about the highways to a certain extent with a view to the greater facility for such planting?—Yes.

31,468. And the Act provides certain penalties to be inflicted on those who destroy such trees as are planted, and also that the land planted is to pay no land stent for a period of 19 years?—Yes; and I think it enacts that those who had a smaller rental than £1000 a year are to plant in proportion to the rental.

31,469. To the best of their ability?—Yes.

31,470. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you wish to answer questions yourself with reference to forestry in this country, or do you wish to leave that to the skilled witnesses who are to follow?—I leave that to the skilled witnesses who will give you the figures they have actually had experience of.

31,471. Then you would prefer that these skilled witnesses should be asked practical questions on forestry management in Novar?—Yes.

31,472. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to your statement, you went into the general question of the probability of the success of any repeopling of the glens upon certain lines?—Exactly.

31,473. Have you special knowledge with regard to that problem?—I have lived a great deal amongst the crofting population, and know their habits.

31,474. But beyond that you have no experimental knowledge of how a crofter lives?—I know from observation how a Highland crofter lives.

31,475. But you stated that land in these places could not be occupied to advantage, except upon certain conditions?—As ordinary agricultural holdings.

31,476. Then, while planting of trees is a very desirable thing of itself, is it your opinion, that without the planting of trees, they could not be profitably occupied?—I think they would require a market for their surplus labour; because, with bad seasons and other things, a man situated in these remote places requires some industry to turn his hand to.

31,477. But that would depend altogether upon the size of the holding given him?—Exactly.

31,478. And if a holding were given him which would employ all his own time as a farmer, would that not meet the case?—I think he would require even a larger holding than would occupy his time, in order to combat these deficiencies.

31,479. But if the holding were large enough to employ his time, that would meet the case even without forestry? I am not denying that the planting of trees is a very good thing.—I don't think it would meet the case, because, if he simply had a holding that would occupy his own whole time, he might meet with untoward seasons, and be left in destitution for the time being, if he had nothing else to turn to.

31,480. But the question is one of labour; would not the labour require to be done whether the season was good or bad?—But when the holding would not repay the labour, he would require to have other means of making a living.

31,481. That might be the case one year, but take an average of years?—You will find that in those upland places the number of cold, wet seasons predominates.

31,482. More than in more favoured places?—Yes.

31,483. I had all that in my mind. But surely they have good years and bad years, just as they have them in lowland places?—Yes, only the bad years are more frequent there.

31,484. If I remember your statement aright, you stated that they would have a cottage attached to the land to be planted?—In the formation of a forest, to begin with.

31,485. While the forest was being formed?—Yes. By that means you would get the people there who were most desirable: you would have an opportunity of selecting the farmers that would really be industrious and would make successful occupants.

31,486. From the evidence you gave, and from the Act which his lordship quoted, there has evidently been an attempt made in the past to encourage forestry?—Yes, that is quite evident.

31,487. Have you any idea why these efforts have not been more successful?—The Act has been allowed to fall into abeyance.

31,488. Was it because of a want of sufficient interest in the subject?—No, I don't think so. I think that to some extent the Act was successful; it was meant not only for forestry, but also to promote the reclamation of the soil, and at the time of the tax upon corn the efforts of individuals went more in the direction of agriculture, and forestry was neglected because it was not of so much importance when grain was so very dear.

31,489. Is it your opinion, then, that it was not from any want of public interest in the subject so much as something inherent in the Act itself that it had not succeeded?—I think it is owing to the difference in the times. In those days the Act was operative more in the direction of agriculture, because agriculture was more quickly remunerative than forestry.

31,490. You don't know of anything inherent in the Act itself that would prevent its becoming operative?—No, I think not.

31,491. Whose property were the trees after they were planted and grown?—They were the property of the owner, but he was stimulated to do this by being relieved of taxation, and he was encouraged by the protective clauses of the Act.

31,492. And was it the proprietor of the land himself who planted the trees?—Yes, it was the proprietor.

31,493. And they naturally then became his property?—Yes.

31,494. Being planted on his land?—Yes.

31,495. Now, in what you contemplate for the future, in giving evidence here to-day, would you look forward to the time when the trees would become the property of the tenant, if it were put upon the tenant to plant them?—It depends entirely on whether the land was acquired by the Government, or whether, in the wording of that Act, Government were encouraging the individual owner to plant them in order to provide labour for the population.

31,496. But supposing in any rearrangement of the land, or any redistribution of the people upon it, it were a condition imposed upon the tenant that he should plant and protect a certain number of trees, and that

Tain.

John James Robertson Meiklejohn.

public money should be got for the purpose of assisting him, would you then contemplate that the trees would be his property, the property of the landowner, or the property of the Government who advanced the money?—If the trees were planted on land occupied by a tenant who paid rent for it, of course he would have a certain interest in them after paying interest on the Government money expended.

31,497. You, no doubt, quite appreciate the importance of that point, and the effect it might have on the success of the undertaking?—I quite see that.

31,498. You, no doubt, also have in your mind how that would weigh with Parliament as a reason for doing anything the one way or the other, that there would be a certain assurance given to them that there would be a sufficient return for any expenditure upon planting trees?—Yes, if it was properly supervised I have no doubt the thing would be successful.

31,499. Do you think that access to wood has a great deal to do with improving land, say, for instance, as an advantage to the tenant in erecting fences and putting up gates?—Yes, it has a very important bearing on that question.

31,500. Has it ever struck you in going through the country the great advantage people have who are near plantations, quite apart from the question of the labour they may afford?—Yes.

31,501. And I presume it is actuated by that knowledge you have given us your views to-day?—It was simply in order to put this question of forestry before the Commissioners, so that they might keep it in view in considering the general question whether something might not be done, because it seems such a reasonable way of giving occupation to the people and enabling them to be put on the soil in a healthy way, financially speaking, and one with some prospect of success.

31,502. And are you of opinion that the proposal has merits of its own quite apart from the question of migration or emigration?—Yes; but, of course, it would infer migration.

31,503. My question was rather directed to the fact that you mixed it up sometimes with other questions which perhaps had been better left alone?—I was not aware of that.

31,504. *Mr Gordon.*—Where did you derive your experience in regard to crofters?—In the east and north of Caithness and in Orkney and Shetland.

31,505. You were never acquainted with them in Sutherlandshire?—No.

31,506. Are you aware of any part in these counties where crofters had self-supporting crofts?—Yes, in those places I have referred to, there were several of them self-supporting, according to the size of the place and its situation. Of course, these were at low altitudes in nearly all cases.

31,507. What was the size of the crofts where you found the crofters able to support themselves and their families from the produce of their crofts?—Twenty to forty acres of arable.

31,508. Forty acres would scarcely be a croft; it would be a pair-horse holding, would it not?—Any holding is supposed to be a croft when under £30 of rent.

31,509. Were you ever in Strath Halladale?—No.

31,510. Well, you will find crofters there with less than a fourth part of 40 acres, who have evidently shown to the Commission that they are able to support themselves from their crofts, and nothing but their crofts?—They may live upon them.

31,511. They appear to thrive upon them. With regard to this question of forestry, it is no doubt very interesting, and, looked at from the national point of view, very advisable? But may I ask where is your experience of forestry apart from Novar estate?—I propose to put other witnesses before you to give you details of the forestry.

31,512. Then you are talking more theoretically than from practical knowledge?—Well, of course, I know it from observation.

31,513. Because my experience is that the successful growth of trees is confined to a very small area of Scotland: you cannot grow them in Caithness, you cannot grow them in Sutherland to any extent; we cannot grow them in certain parts of Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, as the value of the wood, except in very favoured places, would not repay the cost of its growth. Even in the southern parts of Scotland much the same condition of matters exists. Along Speyside, and along this firth here in Ross-shire, you do get a very superior class of timber; and there is a part of Inverness-shire, and a belt of country extending to the south of Perth, where it can be done successfully: but to the west of that again, in Argyllshire and in the outer islands, it is impossible. Even in the better lands in the south, such as Wigtownshire, it is only in very good places that they can grow hard wood, and they cannot grow firs at all to profit?—I quite believe that may be your opinion, but it is not corroborated by history or experience, as Scotland was at one time a dense forest, and the inhabitants living in log huts, even in Argyllshire.

31,514. Take the case again of the crofting counties, to which your paper would more naturally apply, as the suggestion is made to give occupation to the crofters. I don't know any great extent of land in the crofting counties that would grow wood, do you?—I think there are large areas in this county and in Inverness-shire.

31,515. But not in a crofting district?—Yes, in the latter county.

31,516. What part of it?—There is a good deal in Inverness-shire.

31,517. I am afraid that if you condescend upon particulars, you will find that the successful growth of timber would, owing to the climate, be confined into a very small area of the crofting counties. Do you think I am right or wrong?—I won't contradict you; but I think wood has not been sufficiently tried in these districts.

31,518. If you go to Sutherlandshire you will get rocks in plenty?—The rocks are no barrier to the growth of timber. If you go to Norway you will find more rocks than anywhere else, but you get excellent timber there all the same. You would think, if you were to see the land there, that nothing could grow on it; but the timber grows quite readily.

31,519. I would rather confine my observations to this country, as it is the one I am best acquainted with. I have no wish to make light of the effort to give employment to crofters; but I only wish to point out that in my opinion the benefits to be derived from forestry would be confined in actual practice to a very small area of the five crofting counties.

31,520. *The Chairman.*—I suppose you are of opinion that if land held by a crofter under the Act were planted with trees, he, or his successors in the holding, would be entitled to the benefit of the crop of trees, just as he is entitled to the benefit of any other crop that grows upon his holding?—Yes.

31,521. And that he himself or his successor, his son or grandson, would cut those trees and sell them, and have the benefit of them, in the same way as he cuts the annual crops?—Exactly.

31,522. Now, is it within your knowledge (and this is the only other question I detain you with) that, from the character of certain lands within the crofting area, the mere enclosing of these lands would lead, in the course of time, to the indigenous growth of timber?—In a great many cases it would.

31,523. And you would be in favour of steps being taken for enclosing such lands with that object?—Yes.

31,524. *Mr George Malcolm*, Secretary, Highland Property Defence Association.—With reference to what Mr Commissioner Gordon has said, you do not know the area actually under wood in the county of Inverness?—No, I do not.

31,525. Would you be surprised to know that there are no less than about 170,000 acres in Inverness-shire alone already planted and under timber?—I am very pleased to hear it: I have no doubt it is quite correct, and I think it could be increased very considerably.

31,526. Have you considered the altitude to which

you would carry this planting scheme? To what height do you suppose trees would successfully grow in these crofting counties?—Yes, of course, they would not grow above a certain altitude.

31,527. To what altitude do you suppose you could successfully plant trees along the western seaboard?—I do not know the western seaboard in the counties of Inverness and Ross.

31,528. Then, to the extent that you lay down plantations in these counties, the land that would be suitable for giving to crofters would be withdrawn for that purpose?—No.

31,529. The land that you would propose to plant would be precisely the land that is now proposed to be given off to crofters, would it not?—There would be a great deal of other land. What I contemplate in making this statement is purely hill grazing that would be more profitable under forestry, as will be shown by the witnesses who will follow me.

31,530. The land that you propose to plant would be precisely the land that would otherwise, if these proposals are carried out, be given to the crofters for grazing purposes?—It might be used for grazing purposes, but it would be very much more profitable to them if under wood.

31,531. But it could not be used for both purposes, of course?—Not for a time, but after a time it would.

31,532. *The Chairman.*—Are you of opinion that trees might quite successfully grow upon land not available in the sense of the remit to us?—Yes, that is exactly what I do think; and it would render the land available in the sense of the remit—profitable to the owners, the occupiers, and the nation.

DONALD ROBERTSON, Forester, Novar (41)—*examined.*

31,533. *The Chairman.*—How long have you been forester on the Novar property?—Eleven years.

31,534. Where were you before?—On the Duke of Athole's estate in Perthshire.

31,535. Were you a forester there?—I was under-forester.

31,536. How long were you on that property in the capacity of under-forester?—I was born there, and lived there practically all my life, with the exception of three and a half years I was in Ayrshire.

31,537. Then your experience as a forester extends over a great many years?—Yes.

31,538. Have you a written statement?—I have.

31,539. We shall be glad to hear it.—Timber-growing as it affects the working classes of a country has not received the attention it deserves in the north of Scotland. There is a vague idea prevalent that timber-growing is only beneficial to sportsmen, and that it is detrimental to agricultural interests; this idea has been caused by game-preserving landlords planting, specially for game, coverts in the vicinity of arable lands. When plantations are formed for this purpose, it is not to be matter for wonder that agriculturists look upon it with aversion.

In what follows it is intended to show that by planting large areas of the so-called waste lands in the north of Scotland, agriculturists would be benefited to begin with, and when the timber was being sold they would derive still more benefit by getting a better local sale for their produce. The working classes would be immensely benefited, because, instead of their getting a few pence per acre per year from waste land, as at present, they would have from 15s. to 30s. per acre per year if under timber. Therefore we maintain that if Government wish to develop the resources of the Highlands, there is no better way in which they can do so than by planting the waste land suitable for timber-growing; thereby giving immediate employment to those requiring it, and providing a vast amount of employment for the future.

Germany affords us a very good example which this country might copy; the main idea with the Germans is that all land should bear whatever crop it is best adapted for growing for the benefit of the nation: large areas of their timber lands are directly under Government; other portions in the hands of communes resembling our County Councils; there are also extensive tracts of woodlands in the hands of private proprietors, but the whole have to be managed on a system approved of by Government.

The planting of waste lands in the Highlands of Scotland is essentially a Government question; because returns for money invested are too long in coming to hand, and many proprietors have not the wherewithal to plant extensively; the man who plants seldom reaps the full returns, and although one proprietor may plant judiciously and extensively, he may be followed by a proprietor who neglects the woods and allows them to be destroyed, or who cuts them down before they attain maturity, thereby causing a loss not only to the property but to the nation at large.

It is estimated that there are over 5,000,000 acres of waste land in the northern counties of Scotland very well adapted for growing timber, and of very little account for any other purpose. As to the exact area we are unable to judge, but we know that in the parishes of Alness and Kiltearn in Ross-shire there are 25,000 acres of such land very well adapted for growing timber, which is at present under sheep and deer, and which only yields from 1s. to 2s. per acre of yearly rent, grazing and sporting combined, and yields something under 3d. per acre yearly to the working classes, if shepherds, ghillies, and gamekeepers may be so classed.

Now, if by planting this land it can be made to yield 3s. to 5s. per acre of yearly clear rental, besides giving from 15s. to 30s. per acre per year to the working classes, is it not the duty of Government to at least give it a fair trial? We venture to say that money invested in planting will give a better return to Government, and be of far more lasting benefit to the people than what has been and is now being sunk in railways and harbours in the Highlands will give; without the land being under crop where is the traffic to come from to make railways and harbours pay?

We will now endeavour to show how the foregoing returns may be got out of waste land by planting; and at the outset we may say that it is very difficult to get all the information desirable, because it is seldom that one can get a correct account of expenditure and income relative to a particular section of wood or plantation covering the whole time the timber has been growing, because said accounts are either lost or have not been kept: however, we can give the clear income from the last clean cut of the timber on land similar to the above-mentioned 25,000 acres.

In 1883, a piece of wood land, 24 acres in extent, was sold by private tender to be clean cut, except a few hard-wood trees which were reserved; the wood was 61 years old, and there were 159 trees per acre, composed of 90 larches, 64 Scots firs, and 5 spruces, and fetched £77, 9s per acre. Which would be as follows:—

1 acre, 159 trees, in last clean cut gave	£77	9	0
5s. per acre yearly rental, with compound interest at 3½ per cent. for 60 years, comes to about . . .	£49	10	0
First cost of planting, including fencing and draining, say £3 per acre, taken at compound interest at 3½ per cent. for 60 years, is about . . .	23	0	0
	£72	10	0
Leaving a clear profit per acre of after paying first cost of planting, and a yearly rent of 5s. per acre, with compound interest on both items.	4	19	0

It will be noticed that we have not taken the previous thinnings into account at all; but let us give an estimate, seeing we have no records of value of said thinnings: the wood had every appearance of having been planted at three feet apart, or with 4840 plants per acre, and there were only 159 in the last clean cut, leaving 4681 plants unaccounted for; but let us suppose that 3000 of said plants died or never came to any market value, and we

Tain.

Donald Robertson.

have 1681 trees which had been taken out as thinnings, and let us put the small average value of 6d. each on them, and we have the sum of £42 per acre for thinnings, leaving a clear profit of £46, 19s. per acre.

But the above is not all the profit, as we have still to add a grazing rent of 2s. per acre which was got during the last thirty years it was under timber, with compound interest, and also compound interest on the £42 received for thinnings at 3½ per cent. We have as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Profit per acre on last clean cut, . .	4	19	0
Grazing rental at 2s., with compound interest at 3½ per cent. for thirty years,	4	12	0
Estimated value received for thinnings £42, with compound interest at 3½ per cent. for fifteen years, . .	65	8	0
Total clear profit per acre,	£74	19	0

Let us now consider how much the working classes had per acre out of this clean cut, and in doing so we base our calculations upon figures given us by the timber merchant who purchased the wood, and had to pay the working expenses.

Cutting off root cross-cutting and branching :—

	£	s.	d.
Cross-cutting and branching, 159 trees at 9d.	5	19	3
Carting to sawmill, 159 trees at 1s. 6d.	11	18	6
Sawing and stacking, average per acre,	11	2	0
Carting to railway station, average per acre, ...	7	8	0
Measuring and loading in trucks per acre,	3	14	0
Repair to wood roads, average per acre,	2	4	0
Cost of moving mill to wood, average per acre	0	10	0
Railway rates to Forres and Wick, average per acre, ...	11	2	0
Total, ...	£53	17	9
But we have still to add what would be spent on labour in connection with the thinnings, and this we have no hesitation in placing at	42	0	0
Giving a total per acre to labour of .	£95	17	9

Or, if spread over sixty years, giving something over 31s. per acre per year.

It is a well-known fact to all who are engaged in our northern home timber trade, that the cost of working thinnings is higher than the cost of working a clean cut, because the timber is more difficult to remove, and there is more waste from small trees, such as thinnings, than from heavier timber. We have invariably found that the cost of working is equal to the first cost; that is, the price paid for the trees as they stand in the wood.

To give an idea of the cost of working thinnings, we submit the following which we have ourselves paid :—Cutting off root-branching and dressing Scots fir pit props, 3 inches diameter, 3d. per 72 lineal feet; carting 7 miles to shipping port, and placing on board ship, 1s. per 72 lineal feet; total, 1s. 3d. per 72 lineal feet. Price received from F. O. B. 2s. 3d. per 72 lineal feet, leaving for the wood 1s. per 72 lineal feet clear; but heavier wood, such as 5 inch diameter, would leave 2s. clear; when heavier, and when it has to be manufactured at a sawmill, the cost is considerably more for working. When we consider that our country pays somewhere about £20,000,000 a year for foreign timber, and if we reckon that one-half of that sum goes to foreign labour, say £10,000,000, and if we divide this sum by 50, a labourer's year's income, we find that we pay for the upkeep of 200,000 foreign workmen in the timber trade alone, while thousands of our own workmen are unable to find work.

It may be argued that we could not produce all the timber our country requires, especially the finer classes of timber. It is true we could not produce some of the finer kinds of wood, but certainly we could produce the greater bulk of timber required for ordinary constructive purposes, and more than we do of the finer sorts.

Tain.

Donald Robertson.

Many well-meaning people say :—'There is no use of 'planting, because there is plenty of virgin forests wait-'ing the axe in many parts of the known world; and even 'should this run out, the ingenuity of the age will find 'a substitute.' The same class of people predicted that wood would not be of any use, or that very little of it would be required, when iron and steel began to be used in ship building and other constructions, but what are the facts? Since the introduction of iron and steel for constructive purposes, the consumption of timber has steadily and rapidly increased, and this has been the case in most nations of the old world, and the increase in newer countries has been and will continue to be more rapid still.

I would say that this generation could not do a kinder turn to themselves, and more so to the coming generation, than plant extensively the waste land throughout the country, and have part of it ready to supply our country's wants when the above-mentioned virgin forests give out.

Further, we are confident that however much the price of agricultural produce may be reduced in the future, the price of timber will increase at no very distant date; the better class of timber has been pretty well cut down near shipping ports and floating rivers in most foreign countries, and the cost of bringing wood to our markets is increasing, although I believe freights from port to port were never less than they have been during the past few years.

It may appear to some that what we advocate savours too much of land nationalisation; but we maintain that if the present landowners consider this matter fairly they will see that what is best for the community at large is also to their advantage; and if they help on the development of our country's resources, there is less inducement for the people to demand nationalisation of the land. We wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not advocate the planting of arable land nor any pasture land that is worth 5s. per acre of rent, although we are firmly convinced that many portions of land at present under cultivation would be much more profitable to the country at large if under timber; because the present occupiers only manage to eke out a miserable livelihood from the land in question, and contribute very little to the national purse.

Further, we submit that any land adapted for timber growing which is at present under sheep or deer would be much more profitable to the country if planted than if handed over to crofters.

We might further suggest that any landowner who held waste land suitable for timber growing should be allowed to improve it himself either by planting or otherwise; and if he plant the subject that he receive money from Government at fair interest, said money to be spent under Government supervision; and failing his improving such waste land within a reasonable period, that Government be empowered to step in and plant said land, giving the landlord fair valuation for the subject.

But we must leave such matters to men better qualified to deal with such subjects, with the hope that many who have never considered timber culture from a national point of view may do so, and that our Government may be induced to give it a fair trial.

(Signed) D. Robertson.
2nd November 1893.

31,540. *Mr Forsyth.*—You have given us an illustration of a wood of 24 acres, and have told us the financial results of it: I take it that that wood is at Novar?—It is.

31,541. It may, roughly speaking, be called a wood consisting of one-half larch and one-half Scots fir?—More larch than Scots fir.

31,542. I presume you have studied pretty closely the kind of trees most planted in this district of Easter

Ross: so far as my observation goes, the woods are mostly Scots fir?—They are.

31,543. Can you give any special reason for that?—All classes of land are not adapted for growing larch.

31,544. Then, the fact is, that it is being planted with Scots fir mainly because it is not adapted for growing larch?—I would not like to say so; I do not know the reasons the proprietors may have had. They may have planted it so because they could get Scots fir cheaper than larch.

31,545. I take it you would consider, on the whole, that if you could grow good larch, it is much more profitable than Scots fir?—It is at the present day, but I question very much if it will be by-and-bye. The difference is not nearly so much as it was twenty years ago.

31,546. That is a point I wish to get at. Assuming, then, that a considerable portion of this country might be planted advantageously with larch,—that larch would grow,—would you not have a much greater profit in the earlier thinnings? Are they not much more saleable than Scots firs?—They are.

31,547. Could you put any revenue upon the thinnings of Scots fir plantations up to, say, 25 years old?—I would not.

31,548. Any nett revenue?—I would not.

31,549. Would the thinnings pay the cost of cutting out?—I question if they would in many places. But I may say that I consider thinning is carried on far too much in many parts of this country: to grow good, clean Scots fir you must leave them thick, so that they naturally clean themselves.

31,550. But I am talking of it as a matter of revenue in the earlier stages of your planting: there would not be much revenue from thinning if you took Scots fir?—If you take Scots fir, you cannot look for very much revenue until the wood is thirty years of age.

31,551. And at what age do you consider Scots fir most marketable, I mean for the final cutting?—From 60 to 100 years old; it depends entirely upon the class of soil. Scots fir may be perfectly fit for cutting at 50 years in one class of soil, and it may not be fit till it is 100 in another soil.

31,552. Well, then, as to Scots fir: would you see your way to market as much Scots fir as you could grow, if, it be mature, and of good age? It is not likely at any time to become a drug on the market, is it?—I don't think so. The home timber is at the present time more a drug in the market than it would be if you had a large quantity of it, because in that case you would be able to supply all the wants of the country, and keep out the foreigner.

31,553. Do you think you could grow Scots fir wood that would take the place of foreign timber?—Certainly, the ordinary classes of foreign timber, the red and white, such as are used,—the spruce and fir that we get from the continent.

31,554. Has good mature Scots fir been used in this country for, say, the interior wood-work of a house?—It has: in Fowlis Castle you will find the interior done up with Scots fir, which has been there for over a hundred years, I understand.

31,555. Has not that been Scots fir of great age, cut when very old?—It does not appear to have been slow-growing, judging by its appearance.

31,556. But still probably old wood?—It may have been: I cannot say.

31,557. Was it not likely to have been wood of at least a hundred years old?—Probably it would be.

31,558. I want to get at that point, because, so far as I can make out, it appears to me that Scots fir requires to be at least that age before it is first-class timber in any way?—It depends on the use to which it is put.

31,559. I mean such wood as would be likely to compete with foreign timber, that would mostly be in the construction of buildings?—There is a great bulk of timber that goes into railway sleepers, which does not necessarily require to be of fine quality: if it takes enough creosote to preserve it, they do not particularly care whether it is old or young if it has size.

31,560. But for railway sleepers the wood is generally creosoted and bought comparatively cheaply, is it not?—Yes.

31,561. Now as to larch: do you think that a large extent of larch could be grown in this country successfully?—There is the question of disease, but outside the question of disease there is no doubt larch will grow in many parts of this country.

31,562. Have you any theories as to larch disease? Do you think it is accounted for by the seed used, or by the site in which the plantations are put?—I have an idea that a good deal of the disease is caused by trees being grown from home-saved seed: for this reason, that among the older class of trees anywhere throughout Scotland, and in many parts of England wherever you get larch trees from 80 to 100 years of age, you invariably get them sound; and these would naturally be raised from imported seed. But when you go to the following generation, from 50 to 70 years of age, there is a considerable amount of decay in them.

31,563. Then to what cause do you trace the disease to the foreign seed?—To the home seed: that is my opinion.

31,564. It is a somewhat difficult subject; but, on the whole, you are inclined to think that the home grown seed is not so good?—That is my opinion. The seed is better, and will propagate much more easily than foreign seed; but I do not think the timber produced from it is so good.

31,565. You put down roughly £3 as the cost of planting. Do you consider that if large areas were to be planted in one block that estimate might be reduced?—Very much,—by more than half.

31,566. Your £3 per acre applies for the most part to the ordinary plantations which are put about an ordinary estate, and are generally of a small size, for the sake of amenity, and for other reasons?—Yes.

31,567. Could you give any idea of the cost of planting, say, 500 acres in one block,—would that reduce the cost very considerably?—It would, unless there were a heavy cost for drainage.

31,568. Precisely, but we will take that as proportional for a big and a small plantation?—But if you were to take a 5000 acre block, that would reduce the cost very much.

31,569. Of course it would reduce the cost of fencing enormously, and that is the main expense of small plantations, is it not?—It is.

31,570. Now, assuming that there were lands which might be profitably planted, and that the financial statements that you have given us are correct throughout, do you consider that in forming new plantations on a large scale, that is to say, by Government, continuous labour could be given to a staff all the year round from the beginning?—It could, if you did not overdo the planting to begin with. If you plant a certain number of trees yearly, by the time you have got over your district the part that you planted first would be ready for the thinning to commence. So, if you took thirty years to finish your block (it would perhaps be wise to take a longer time) you would not have all your timber ready for the market at the same time.

31,571. But by planting a larger area each year, and taking in supplementary labour, say, from neighbouring crofters, do you think the amount forested could proceed more rapidly and be done equally effectually?—I do not quite follow you.

31,572. I assume that you have a permanent staff, and that, during the planting season and at certain other times, you would take in a considerable amount of extra labour,—temporary labour; could you then, under proper supervision, get over your area more rapidly? could you not cover a great deal more ground, if you had a large block to plant, by taking in extra labour largely at the planting season?—You have always to do that.

31,573. I ask this because it appears to me that you would rather have simply a permanent staff all the year round of a certain size: now that is not likely to produce the casual labour which would be required or might

Tain. Donald Robertson.

be required by neighbouring crofters. You would simply employ a staff of foresters?—I would employ outside labour during the planting season at a time when crofters had no other work. It is during the winter months, or, at any rate, the autumn and early in spring, when there is very little other out-door work being done that planting has to be done. You would have to employ all the labour to be had in the district, whether crofters or otherwise, and probably have to import labour.

31,574. Then you would calculate on having during the planting season a large demand for extra labour?—Certainly.

31,575. Now, have you looked over any parts of this district, or, let us say, Easter Ross generally, where you think you could find a large extent of ground in one block available for planting?—I have not been over much of the easter district here.

31,576. To what part could you refer us?—To the parish of Alness, and to Kiltearn parish.

31,577. And do you think you could in any other parts of the crofting counties, say, towards the west coast, find large areas available for planting in one block that would be easily accessible by water, from the sea on the west coast?—Certainly, many parts of the west coast.

31,578. Say of Ross-shire and Inverness-shire,—I don't wish to take you too far from home just now,—do you know the west coast of Ross-shire or Inverness-shire at all?—Not minutely; I have been through part of it.

31,579. But you have perhaps not examined it with a special view to planting operations?—No, but I know that on the Ardross property on the west coast there is very good timber,—I mean on Sir Kenneth Matheson's property.

31,579A. Do you think it likely that the plantations that you propose could be made on a large scale, and yet within fairly easy reach of market, in view of the expense of carriage?—I do; but apart from their being within easy reach of the present means of transit, if you have a large block of timber it will pay you to lay down the means of transit; whereas, with the isolated patches of wood we have now, it never pays either a timber merchant or a proprietor to lay down the means of transport.

31,580. That would be in the case of a very large extent of plantations?—Yes.

31,581. And the success of the sale would depend very much upon such conditions as those?—Yes.

31,582. Your area of wood to be sold must be very large in order to make it worth while to put down special means of transit for the wood?—It would.

31,583. You think on the whole that there would be no difficulty in establishing a profitable industry?—I have no doubt of it.

31,584. And that this would employ a great deal of labour besides the permanent staff?—It would.

31,585. And that it would not interfere, but rather it would take up ground that could not well be used for any other purpose?—Ground that could not be cultivated, and that was not of much value as a grazing subject.

31,586. And would you be prepared to verify these financial statements that you have given in your report should we require it? You could give us access to the accounts and sales that would show us any further information as to the financial results of the case?—I could give you access to the sale books where the sales are recorded, but the figures regarding the working expenses and other particulars are of course in the hands of the timber merchants. I could, however, give you access to the working figures of lots similar that we have worked ourselves.

31,587. That would be more useful to us. Do you consider that this statement that you have given is a fair average statement of results on the Novar estate, or is it rather a favourable one?—That particular one is a good one; one of our best.

31,588. You would not expect to average as well as that all over?—Not all over.

31,589. But still you hold that there would be a good working profit made?—Yes.

31,590. After paying a rent for the land?—Yes.

31,591. *Mr Sutherland.*—I think the concluding sentence of your statement was to the effect that you think land would be better employed if planted than if given to crofters?—I do.

31,592. That is to say, you contemplate that land that is proposed or that may be proposed to be given to the crofters could be planted instead; is that your position?—Yes.

31,593. Have you ever thought of the possibility of the land being given to crofters and planted also?—No, I have not.

31,594. Do you think it is impossible to do that?—I do not think it is workable.

31,595. What is your reason for supposing that?—I don't suppose, unless the crofter were put under very stringent regulations, that he would allow his timber to come to maturity, or that he would work it to the best advantage for the benefit of the country.

31,596. For the benefit of the country? Would his own interest and the interest of the country not be identical, do you think, in this matter?—I don't quite think that he would see it.

31,597. It is a question, then, of his knowledge?—I don't know that it is altogether a question of his knowledge, but it is a question of husbanding a subject that would only be beneficial to perhaps his son or grandson.

31,598. Do you think he is not actuated by the ordinary human motives?—I believe he is,—it is very human to wish to get as much as you can out of the subject you have in hand.

31,599. But is not that being done by people whose action is not controlled by the same limitations at the present time? Do not landlords do that at the present time with regard to timber?—There is very much less being done in that way now than was done in the past.

31,600. Experience has taught them, in fact?—Not experience but necessity has made them cut and not plant, because they have not had the money to do so.

31,601. But, supposing that legal conditions were imposed upon the landlord, by which he would not be allowed, except upon certain conditions, to cut down trees, would not that also be beneficial?—It would.

31,602. And if the same conditions were imposed on crofters getting land, would not that also be beneficial?—It would.

31,603. If such conditions, then, were imposed on crofters who got the land, do you not think there might be trees and crofters on the land at the same time?—Certainly, but I am afraid it would be a very expensive system of going to work.

31,604. But you referred to the system of forestry in Germany?—I did.

31,605. Do you know how it is carried out there?—I have no personal knowledge of it.

31,606. But you have read of it, I suppose?—I have read and I have heard of it from Germans.

31,607. Well, have they any difficulty in regulating the forests of their country?—I have not heard of any.

31,608. Nor Switzerland.—I do not know that country.

31,609. You do not know the way in which the communes of Switzerland regulate the forests?—I do not know.

31,610. You are not aware that the timber in Switzerland is the property of the public?—I believe to a certain extent that is so; but not the whole of it.

31,611. And that there are very stringent regulations laid down for the preservation of the timber, and its proper management?—I believe there are such.

31,612. We have nothing, I suppose, analogous to it in this country?—Nothing.

31,613. Now, you have given us a very interesting statement with regard to the ultimate value of timber per acre. I think Mr Forsyth asked you a question with regard to the location of these 24 acres, and you stated that they were rather above the average. You applied a certain agricultural test to that land, as to the value of it,—I mean, being 5s., I think, per acre. Was this land above or below that standard?—It was below; we cannot get 5s. now for it after being cleared.

31,614. The land you could not get 5s. per acre for

bore a crop of timber in how many years?—Sixty-one years.

31,615. Which was worth £77, 19s., was it?—That was the last clean cut from the 159 trees, I think.

31,616. And then there would be the value of the thinnings at various times, over and above that?—I estimate that at £42.

31,617. Yes, I think your calculation involved that. But you see no difficulty, provided regulations were made under a competent public department, why land if handed over to crofters for new settlements should not also be devoted in part to the rearing of trees?—The only objection is, that I think it would be an expensive mode of going to work, and the restrictions would require to be very stringent.

31,618. I am taking for granted that we would have something analogous to the regulations they enforce in continental countries. Is it not because you have never contemplated any other system than the present system that you saw that difficulty?—I never thought of the question of handing such land over to crofters for the purpose of growing timber.

31,619. But, supposing certain lands were allocated to crofters to form new holdings, would it be a great hardship, do you think, that certain parts that would be pointed out to these crofters should be planted with trees; that regulations should be made that these trees should be kept properly and not interfered with until a certain time; and that all this should be done under public supervision?—Where the land would be suitable for growing timber, I think it would be a very wise step in the interests of the country at large.

31,620. But would your objections be overcome by regulations of that kind?—Certainly.

31,621. And there would be competent public officers appointed as foresters under the supervision of the County Council or any other local body, who would see that these regulations were carried out?—Just so.

31,622. Does that appear to you to be a feasible scheme?—It is quite feasible.

31,623. And is it possible,—I will not put it further than that?—It is possible; the only difficulty I see is regarding the expense, and the number of people these officers would have to contend with. If it were entirely under Government control, or under the control of the present landlords, or under the supervision of these officers, it would be much easier, I should say, for them to deal with the matter.

31,624. They would have the sanction of the law, and the authority of the law, at their back, for any steps they might require to take; is that your position?—And they would have only one man to deal with, instead of perhaps 50 or 60 crofters.

31,625. I am afraid you are assuming that crofters are more unreasonable than other people?—No, but where you have the opinions of 50 or 60 different people to deal with, is it not necessarily more difficult than where you have only one?

31,626. You gave us some rather striking figures, to the effect that we are paying twenty millions for foreign timber, and I think you expressed the opinion that that could be saved to this country?—Not the whole, but the great bulk of it, if we grow what timber other countries are capable of growing.

31,627. You would thereby considerably reduce that figure?—Certainly.

31,628. Now, with regard to the value of timber-growing, quite apart from how it would improve the scenery and amenity of the country, would it not, from the grazing point of view, be an advantage to those bleak places in order to afford a sort of shelter?—A decided advantage, and the woods themselves would be much better grazing than the land is at present, in many cases.

31,629. Does not the planting of trees improve the grazing?—The planting of larch materially improves the grazing underneath; larch or hard wood materially improves the grazing.

31,630. Are you aware whether the growing of trees has any appreciable effect on the climate? Did you ever notice that it had?—I have no doubt it has.

31,631. Does it promote underground drainage?—I am not quite certain as to that.

31,632. Do you know if tree roots take moisture out of the soil?—Oh, they certainly do.

31,633. And you have doubtless heard of certain trees being planted on marshes in order to dry them?—I have; and I know a district in Perthshire (Tullymet), which is at rather a high altitude, and which grows very good corn, and where the grain ripens very well. There is another district, Strathbraan, which is at the very same altitude, but which has no timber on the hill-sides; and the crops there are very much inferior, and do not ripen every year the same as they do in Tullymet. I have given these two districts as being about the same altitude and pretty near the same exposure.

31,634. And do you think the difference is due to the one being planted with trees and the other not?—I have very little doubt that has something to do with it.

31,635. Have you formed any idea as to the age up to which trees must be protected by enclosures for grazing purposes?—It is not a question of the trees being protected; when your trees are, say, twenty years of age, you may allow anything in the way of cattle to go in among them, but there is very little for them if there is a crop, as there ought to be, on the ground. You cannot expect to get much in the way of grazing until after you have thinnings.

31,636. But for the purpose of shelter in winter, say?—Oh, yes, you could let cattle in as soon as the trees are quite beyond their reach for eating the tops off.

31,637. Then are sheep more destructive?—I have an idea that sheep are rather detrimental to the growth of trees; they leave their wool about the stems of the trees, and that imparts a certain oil.

31,638. Or perhaps it may be the substance with which they are washed that is deleterious?—I could not say, but I think there is a certain oil that is absorbed.

31,639. But is it a fact that trees to which sheep have access do not flourish as well as others?—After they are of a certain age I do not see that it makes any difference.

31,640. At what age do they cease to be injurious to trees?—If your timber is, say, thirty years of age, and there is a certain amount of cork on the bark, I don't think sheep do any harm. But in young plantations, say, from fifteen to twenty years of age, I do not think it is advisable that sheep should be allowed to run through them; the bark has not cork enough, and I think they give off some sort of oil, or something else that is injurious to the bark of the trees, in the wool which they leave attached to the stem.

31,641. Could you call our attention to any place in Scotland where trees have been planted, and where they have failed to grow to any large extent?—I am not personally acquainted with any large extent that has been planted.

31,642. But your experience is pretty considerable, is it not?—Well, I have been over a good deal of Scotland.

31,643. And in all your experience you have not seen such a place?—I have seen patches, but I have not seen a large extent that has not been a success.

31,644. So that, as a general statement, it would be quite correct, according to you, to say that trees have succeeded wherever they have been planted,—as a general statement, with the small exceptions you have referred to; is that the case?—No.

31,645. Where have you seen them a failure?—I have seen in many cases where a tree was not adapted to the soil it did not prove a success.

31,646. That was owing to want of knowledge on the part of the person who planted it?—Certainly, but where trees adapted to the soil were planted they were perfectly successful.

31,647. Is it not true, then, as a general statement, that where trees have been planted they have grown and succeeded?—I would not quite put it that way:

Tain. Donald Robertson.

where the proper kind of trees have been planted on suitable soil they have succeeded.

31,648. And, in your opinion, there is no danger but they would succeed if planted with due judgment in those places that have been referred to to-day?—I have no doubt they would.

31,649. You have seen a great deal of the indigenous wood of this country, the old birch wood?—I have.

31,650. Have you observed that it is now dying out?—In many places it is.

31,650A. How do you account for that?—Sheep and deer in many cases kill them.

31,651. Is it not also the case that in a great number of cases no trouble is being taken at the present time to replant where trees are cut down, so as to keep them growing?—I don't think that, so far as birch is concerned, anything at all has been done in the way of preserving them.

31,652. Would we be justified in coming to the conclusion that wherever we see still existing clumps of indigenous birchwood, other trees would grow?—There is very little doubt that if that land were enclosed against stock, these birches would seed the soil. Birches are, as a rule, very good at seeding.

31,653. And, in exposed places where they grow, would they afford shelter for other young trees if planted?—They would.

31,654. Very good, do you think?—Yes, if the surface was in any way broken the birch seed would strike at once.

31,655. Then are you of opinion that the neighbourhood of woods is a benefit to people round about, apart altogether from the question of affording labour?—I have repeatedly seen very sickly gentlemen sent to the neighbourhood of pine woods in this country for their health.

31,656. But take the case of small occupiers of land, who live in the neighbourhood of a wood where trees are easily got, does not the proximity of the wood add a great deal to the value of their holdings? Cannot they put up fences more cheaply, and make improvements on their places such as people who are far away from a wood cannot do?—Oh, certainly: for instance, those living in this neighbourhood can put up a holding much more cheaply than those in the wilds of Caithness or in the Lews.

31,657. Take the case of Skye, where there are practically no woods: are there not many small improvements and amenities possible round their houses which the people would carry out if they had woods convenient?—I have no doubt.

31,658. And a great deal of the squalid nature of their surroundings is due to the fact that they have not such wood?—I believe it is; the dilapidated state of their buildings may be due in great measure to their being a long distance from timber; and the cost of carrying wood to their districts is very heavy. For example, we send wood from Novar to Stornoway, and it costs nearly as much as to send it to London.

31,659. *Mr Gordon.*—You have given us a very favourable account of those wood sales which you have mentioned in your paper as an illustration of the profits. It amounts to this, I think, that for the sixty-one years in which the 24 acres of wood were growing, the sum derived from profits during the period of its growth was about equal to the last price paid for the clean cut. The clean cut amounted in value to £77, 9s., and the profits derived from thinnings and grazings during the growth of the wood amounted to £74, 19s.; is that so?—It is.

31,660. Which would show an average return per acre of something like 24s. or 25s. per annum?—About that; but there is the 5s. to add, which is the yearly rental, that I took into account from the beginning.

31,661. Yes, but you have deducted that before showing the profits?—The 5s. is over and above that.

31,662. But you adhere to the statement that the profits derived from these 24 acres during the whole life of the wood were about 25s. per acre?—I don't quite understand.

31,663. After charging the estate with interest and compound interest at 3½ per cent., and deducting the annual rental of the land lost while the wood was growing, you brought out a final profit of £74, 19s.?—That is the estimated value of the thinnings,—of course, I do not certify that as the actual value of the thinnings, but I can certify all the other figures.

31,664. Now, do you think that that is a fair estimate of the wood-growing qualities of timber in this country?—Many parts of the country that I am acquainted with have grown a better crop of timber than was on these 24 acres.

31,665. I have no doubt you will find pieces: there are some pieces of timber that I have seen near your place which are worth twice £77 per acre. But the Novar estate is an especially good estate for wood?—Simply because it was specially planted.

31,666. I will not quarrel with you about that; it is a specially good place for wood, however?—It seems to grow because it is there. There are many places which have no wood, where timber would grow equally good if it was put there.

31,667. I have seen wood planted which was not a success. I am quite as much in favour of timber planting as you are, only I do not put the estimate of return quite so high. During your experience as a forester, what would be your average of clean cut per acre?—It depends on the number of trees per acre.

31,668. Would not £25 be much nearer the ordinary price per acre, for old fir wood?—At what age?

31,669. I don't care very much what age, whether 60 or 160, provided it is mature. But I think your estimate of the period of maturity is much too small. My idea is that fir wood is not ripe unless it is at least 100 years old?—I can put fir wood into the market just now at 60 years of age which will be accepted as first-class timber.

31,670. That may be on account of its being of special growth and from a special locality; but I am asking you whether such wood may be taken as a fair specimen of the wood in this country?—I have said that those 24 acres were rather above the average.

31,671. Are you inclined to give us a few more details as to the prices? How many cubic feet would you give to each of these trees?—I cannot say here, but I could give you my estimate of the cubic contents of the timber upon each acre before I sold the lot.

31,672. What would be the average contents of an ordinary fir tree? I do not refer to the woods in Novar, but an ordinary fir tree cut in the north of Scotland, a ripe tree, ready for the market? I say a ripe tree, because I do not think the value depends so much upon the age as upon the size?—That is just what I say.

31,673. I don't think you could depend upon having ripe wood at 60 years of age, as a rule?—When a tree is large enough to make scantling of 11 by 3, or to go into sleepers at 9–10 by 5, I consider it is ripe.

31,674. What would you get for a cubic foot of that just now?—If within reasonable distance of a shipping port or railway station, you would get just now about 4d. a cubic foot for it.

31,675. Now, is not 12 cubic feet a fair average of the contents of a Scots fir?—By no means.

31,676. Are there not a great many more Scots firs cut as ripe wood under 12 cubic feet than over it?—Oh, there may be; the numbers may be more, but you have far more cubic contents in the bigger woods.

31,677. Yes, in the bigger woods?—Take the Morayshire woods, which I have gone over, and with which you appear to be well acquainted. I valued a wood in Morayshire, at Blackstaff, near Findhorn, and the average, so far as my recollection goes, in that wood was about 18 or 20 cubic feet per tree.

31,678. Do you happen to know what each of these trees fetched?—I know the value I put on them.

31,679. But what is the value the man got for them?—The man who bought them at first had to pay very near my valuation for them. That was the purchaser of the property with the timber on it; I don't know what he got when he sold it.

31,680. Are you aware whether this proprietor when

he sold the wood got your valuation?—I don't know; I never asked him.*

31,681. Do you recollect how much you put upon each tree?—I cannot say off-hand, but I have still got my notes.

31,682. You cannot tell us what the rate per tree would be?—No.

31,683. In that case you were within a little more than a mile of a railway station?—Yes.

31,684. But suppose you had gone up to the top or middle of Nairnshire, ten miles from a railway station, what would a fir-tree of 17 cubic feet be worth there, with ten miles of land carriage?—If I have 5000 to 10,000 acres of timber to sell there, I will make it worth as much as at Blackstaff.

31,685. I am sorry I cannot give you that, but take the case of 50 acres?—Well, then, it would be less by the difference in carriage.

31,686. Suppose a carpenter got a house to build at Nairn, and was offered the wood at Culmony, which is ten miles from Nairn, for nothing, if he could cut and carry it down, do you think he would use that wood, or buy foreign timber delivered at Nairn?—As a rule, when one is building a mansion-house, or any ordinary sized house, the specifications are made up by an architect, who may specify foreign timber simply because he cannot get home timber seasoned.

31,687. I do not refer to the case of specifications; I assume that the builder is free to use home wood if he chooses?—I have no reason to know what the man would do.

31,688. That is hardly an answer to my question.—If I were offered good wood ten miles away, I would take it, and it would pay me.

31,689. Would it not be cheaper for the carpenter to buy foreign wood at Nairn station than to cut and manufacture the wood ten miles up in Nairnshire, and carry it down?—One man might be much cheaper to do so; another might make a very decent profit out of it.

31,690. I have no desire to discourage the growth of timber. I am very favourable to it, but I do not think it can be grown to the amount of profit that your paper shows. Now, I would like to ask you another question. Are you acquainted with Sutherlandshire?—Not much.

31,691. Do you know whether the Duke of Sutherland's plantations in the glens on his estates have been a success?—I do not know.

31,692. Well, I would recommend you to look into that before you can say that wood can be grown successfully in this country.—I would like to know how they were managed.

31,693. I have no doubt they were carefully planted; the Duke of Sutherland has good men.—[*The Chairman.*—The general belief is that they are well managed.]

31,694. I think you would acknowledge that they manage matters well, even if they do not succeed?—I do not wish to throw any doubt on the management, but before I would credit the statement that they were not a paying concern, I should like to know how they have been managed from the beginning. Dukes may make a very lavish expenditure.

31,695. My question is whether the woods planted by the Duke of Sutherland on the glens of Kildonan Strath and away up on the heights of Loch Shin have been successful?—I have not seen them.

31,696. They are not grown successfully, and I think there are many other parts of the country in which wood cannot be successfully grown?—There certainly are large tracts of land in this country that it would be unwise to plant; but what I referred to is waste land that is well adapted for growing timber. I am far from saying that timber should be planted indiscriminately all over the country.

31,697. Then, you do not mean that, even in the average ground which you would recommend to be planted, you would expect at the end of sixty-one years to get a revenue of £77 an acre from it?—Certainly not.

31,698. What would you estimate the average revenue at?—If it yielded 3s. an acre of clear rental, it would be much better than at present.

31,699. That is one way of answering the question, but would you not think that £25 an acre would be a big price for an average acre of wood, even in Rossshire?—I do not think so, I think it would be a very small price. I take it that your question refers to the entire income from the wood during the whole course of its existence?

31,700. No, my question is not that, but what is the average value per acre of a clean cut of mature wood in the county of Ross?—A great many woods, when cut as mature, do not carry a crop, or what ought to be a crop. There are many cases of woods in a landlord's hands at the present day where the landlord requires money, and therefore cuts down the wood. The result is that the woods are thinned to such an extent that when the clean cut comes to be taken out there is not probably a third of a crop upon the ground. In that case I should say that £25 an acre was a fair average price.

31,701. I may say this, that in all my experience,—and I have had to deal with the sale of a good many woods,—I am sure the average price obtained for the final cut would be considerably under £25 per acre.—An average acre of mature wood bearing a full crop should contain 4000 cubic feet of timber, and this number of feet at £25 would be a very low price. There are many cases where, as I have said, woods have been overthinned, and in some of these I would consider £12 to £15 a big price for them.

31,702. Well, that is coming nearer it now, but that is a big difference from £77?—But you must bear in mind what came out of them before.

31,702A. It resolves itself into this, that you can plant a certain extent of this country profitably?—A large extent.

31,703. But that there is a very considerable extent of the crofting area with which this Commission has to deal which is not quite so suitable,—or perhaps you are not so well acquainted with it. Are you acquainted with the land to the north of this,—Sutherland and Caithness?—No, I do not know much about Sutherland and Caithness. I believe that Caithness nearly, as a whole, is unfit for the cultivation of timber. I judge that from what I have seen of it, and I do not think it is at all adapted for timber-growing.

31,704. Are you acquainted with Argyllshire?—I know the district about Poltalloch and Loch Awe.

31,705. Wood is not grown there to a large extent?—There are very good woods about Poltalloch, Mr Malcolm's estate.

31 706. In certain parts of the counties of Argyll, Ross, and Inverness, wood is grown successfully?—Yes.

31,707. But in the counties of Sutherland only moderately?—So far as I can judge from the nearer portions of Sutherlandshire there is a considerable area of ground there well adapted for timber-growing.

31,708. On the eastern seaboard?—Not quite.

31,709. Where then?—Not quite on the seaboard, but on these rocky hills that you see from Altnabreac station.

31,710. Did you ever see wood at Altnabreac?—I did not see wood, but I saw land that would grow wood.

31,711. Did you see an attempt to grow wood at Altnabreac?—Yes.

31,712. Which was an utter failure?—I think the Railway Company have done a little in the way of planting there.

31,713. Did you see anything like a promising growth of trees there alongside the railway?—I have seen trees promising to grow well on the railway banks there.

31,714. It is more than I have seen, and I have been there oftener than you. Then, again, in Caithness, they cannot grow wood, so that it is only a limited area of the crofting counties that your statement applies to?—I think my statement applies to a very considerable area of the crofting counties.

31,715. Well, kindly state them?—Argyllshire,

* Since then I have learned that the witness John Laing offered more than my valuation for the lot when for sale, and did not get it; and this after the proprietor had cut a number of trees for estate purposes.

Tain.

Donald Robertson.

Inverness-shire, Ross-shire, and part of Sutherlandshire.

31,716. To a certain extent I agree with you, but I cannot admit that there is a large portion of Sutherlandshire of that description.

31,717. *The Chairman.*—Is it the fact that during the last half century, say, landlords in the Highland counties have cut down a great deal more wood than they have grown?—I believe that that is true; they have cut far more than they have planted.

31,718. As wood has been cut down, proper steps have not been taken to plant new timber to take the place of the wood cut down?—I believe that is so.

31,719. So that a wise policy in the matter of wood growing has not been pursued by the landlords in the past?—In many cases, no. Some landlords have planted, of course.

31,720. Can you mention any large landowner who has, during the last fifty years, planted wood as he has cut it down, so as to keep up the area under timber?—I will take those that I am personally acquainted with. The Duke of Athole has planted very considerable areas, and he has also cut large areas of timber; and the money realised from the Athole woods is considerable, —it is equally good with what I have realised from the woods of Novar.

31,721. What area of timber have you under your management?—Somewhat over 4000 acres.

31,722. And how many different kinds of trees are grown there?—I am not quite sure as to the number.

31,723. I mean the different species?—I cannot say exactly.

31,724. What are the principal species of timber grown?—The principal is Scots firs, these are the most numerous; then there are larch, beech, oak, elm, ash, birch, alder, and poplar.

31,725. Now, when you happen to sell wood, for what purpose is it mainly used?—We have a sawmill steadily manufacturing, and we sell joist battens of all sizes and sarking for roofing purposes. We also cut railway sleepers of all sizes, and pit sleepers, from the refuse of our timber. Then we make railway fencing posts, and farm posts; and we contemplate creosoting our Scots fir into fencing posts.

31,726. These are the main purposes for which the wood is sold?—Yes. Then as to our hardwood, with the exception of the small oak, which we manufacture into cart-wheel spokes, and the elm, which we cut into nave, and the ash into planks for wheels, the better class of hard woods is sent away to the southern markets, — sometimes to Inverness, sometimes to Sunderland, sometimes to Dundee or Glasgow.

31,727. And when you speak of increasing your area under timber, is it mainly with the view of selling for such purposes as these?—If the area of timber were increased, I have no doubt that the timber that is imported for ordinary building purposes could be got at home.

31,728. You mean for the internal construction of dwelling-houses?—The internal construction of dwelling-houses and farm buildings.

31,729. You mentioned that it had been estimated that there were five million acres available for planting?—I did.

31,730. Is that your own estimate?—No, it is not.

31,731. Whose estimate is it?—Mr Mackenzie's, Mortonhall, near Edinburgh.

31,732. Do you know upon what materials that estimate is based?—On the Ordnance Survey, after making due allowance for land that is above the altitude fit for planting, and for bog lands.

31,733. It is not based upon any knowledge of the ground?—Well, I understand that Mr Mackenzie is very well acquainted with the ground throughout Inverness-shire and Ross-shire, and part of Sutherlandshire; he has worked timber in many parts of Inverness-shire and Ross-shire; he has worked at cutting it up and sawing it.

31,734. But his estimate is not based on any knowledge of Sutherlandshire, or Argyllshire, or Orkney and Shetland?—Oh, he does not take that in.

31,735. You have no personal knowledge, as I gather, which would enable you to estimate the area that could be planted?—Not of the whole counties.

31,736. You are taking your figures from that authority?—I have taken these areas from him.

31,736A. From the gentleman in the south?—Yes.

31,737. I gathered from your paper that in your opinion the area under sheep and deer is excessive?—I did not say so, my lord.

31,738. No, I do not say you said so, but may I gather that that is your opinion?—It is.

31,739. And you would reduce that area, if it could be done in a proper way, by planting a considerable part of it?—Certainly.

31,740. Are you of opinion that a large portion of the lands at a lower altitude, presently under sheep, might be successfully planted with timber?—In the deer forests that I am acquainted with there are considerable tracts that would grow timber very successfully

31,741. And in your opinion, I suppose, I may say would be better employed in growing timber than in giving room for deer?—It would be much more beneficial to the labouring classes of our country.

31,742. And more profitable?—More profitable, I have no doubt.

31,743. Now, which are the deer forests you refer to?—Wyvis and Gildermoie,—those I am personally acquainted with.

31,744. What extent of land in Wyvis do you think might be successfully planted with timber?—I have carefully gone over the ground in making up my estimate of 25,000 acres for the two parishes. These two deer forests are within the parishes I named.

31,745. Is the greater extent of the 25,000 acres within these deer forests?—No, I should say only the half of it, so far as my recollection goes.

31,746. Can you mention any other forests besides Wyvis and Gildermorie?—The deer forest in Blair Athole; very extensive tracts there would be very good for planting.

31,747. And you think, as a forester, that they would be better if devoted to timber than to deer?—Certainly.

31,748. Where timber is grown, deer could not be allowed to roam?—Certainly not, for some years, until the timber was high enough to be out of their reach.

31,749. They would be destructive to the young growth?—Yes, they feed upon young trees during a storm, and eat them down.

31,750. Would you say that they are even more destructive to young trees than sheep?—Very much more.

31,751. Are you of opinion that this question of planting land with timber could only be successfully taken up by the Government?—I think it is essentially a Government question.

31,752. Don't you think that since landlords have cut down so many trees they might set to work to plant the areas again with timber themselves?—They certainly ought to, but it requires a landlord with something more than a life interest in the property to do so at the present day, seeing the unsettled state of the land question. There is no inducement to landlords to plant at the present time.

31,753. Then landlords planting could not expect to compete with foreign timber, as trade is at present carried on, suppose they had the wood ready?—They certainly could compete with foreign timber.

31,754. You think they could?—We at Novar have got to compete with the foreign article, and unless we undersold the foreign article we could not sell.

31,755. But you have land, have not you, exceptionally favourable for the growth of timber?—I do not consider it so. The subject has been favourably planted, and well attended to and cared for.

31,756. Don't you think the woods under your charge, and the land on which they grow, are much more favourable for the success of timber growing than the land in Caithness and Sutherlandshire?—Certainly Caithness.

31,757. And large parts of Sutherland?—Probably large parts of Sutherlandshire.

31,758. You mentioned Sir Kenneth Mackenzie's estate of Gairloch. On what part of that estate do you say timber is successfully grown?—I forget the name of the place, but a section of it was sold to Messrs Cooper, Glasgow, lately, which fetched a very good price I think.

31,759. Is that the only transaction you are going upon?—Oh no, I saw part of it, but I do not recollect the name of the district.

31,760. Have you been through that district?—I was once through it.

31,761. You have no practical acquaintance with it?—No.

31,762. You say the question is essentially a Government question. How would you propose to deal with the matter, or in what way would you suggest to the Government that it should deal with the matter?—I think the best way for Government to deal with the matter would be to take up the land suitable for timber growing, and have it planted themselves under Government control.

31,763. Become owners of the land and grow the timber themselves?—Either that, or give the landlord the chance.

31,764. In what way?—By saying 'Here is a subject fit for timber growing, you must either improve it or put it under timber within a certain time. Failing your doing so, Government steps in and does it for you.'

31,765. Forfeits the land, do you mean?—Gives a fair value for the subject.

31,766. And if the landlord proceeds to plant, do you mean that he is to plant with Government aid?—I think he ought to get Government aid at reasonable interest.

31,767. Then, if you gave Government aid to landlords to grow timber, would you not be prepared also to give Government aid to crofters if they undertook to grow timber?—Certainly.

31,768. On equally favourable terms?—Oh, yes, by all means. My impression is that if the whole of the land available for planting in the north of Scotland is handed over to crofters the working classes must shift; there is no work for them, and the shopkeepers will follow them.

31,769. *Mr Gordon.*—I have one other question. With reference to your plan for the proprietors taking up the matter of planting, are you aware to what extent the ground of one of the late Earls of Seafield was planted at Strathspey?—I have read of it, but I do not know it personally.

31,770. You do not know Strathspey personally?—I know part of it.

31,771. Well, I believe the extent of ground that was planted there within the last thirty or forty years, as stated to Lord Napier's Commission, was 60,000 acres.—I thought the time was rather more,—50 years, I believe.

31,772. It is getting on to ten years since Lord Napier's Commission was round, and, if I recollect aright, it was stated to be forty years at that time. That, then, is a pretty large area that is being replanted, though you spoke of proprietors as not replanting?—I made exceptions.

31,773. But even up above the Seafield estates, there has been a large extent of ground replanted by Rothiemurchus and other proprietors?—Yes, but there are many landlords who have cut and who have not planted. I admitted there were some landlords who cut and planted, and I think I mentioned two instances.

31,774. Then, upon the Lovat estates again, there has been a large amount of timber cut down, but there has been quite as much, if not more, planted?—On the Lovat estates during my recollection there has not been very much cut down until within recent years.

31,775. But there has been a large extent planted within the last forty years?—Yes, I can see that.

31,776. These are two of the largest estates in the north of Scotland, on each of which planting has been extensively carried on?—Yes. [*The Chairman.*—Speaking generally, would you say that there has been far more cutting down of trees without corresponding planting, than planting trees to replace those cut down?—That is certainly the case.]

31,777. What is the state of matters on the Novar estate? Are you planting as much as you are cutting?—We are planting more. We have during the last eleven years planted over 2000 acres.

31,778. Taking the country between Novar and the upper reaches of the Beauly, is there not what you would call a fair proportion of young wood upon the ground?—Near the seaboard or near the railway there is.

31,779. That is, within marketable distance of the railway or the sea?—I do not at all confine myself to a few miles as a marketable distance: I hold that if you have a sufficient body of timber it will pay a timber merchant, or the owner of the timber, to lay down the means of transit.

31,780. You have mentioned that once or twice, and I would like to get from you what you consider a means of transit; is it a railway?—A railway or the chance of a canal.

31,781. The people in the internal parts of the country would be very much indebted to you if you did lay down a railway; but I am afraid the extent of wood would have to be much beyond what it is in our day before you could expect a man to lay down a railway?—Timber merchants have gone to considerable expense in making roads and making rails to haul their timber upon, and there is nothing to prevent them from laying a light railway a considerable distance inland, if they had a body of timber that would repay them for such outlay.

31,782. But you would require a considerable extent of wood?—Certainly.

31,782A. You mentioned 10,000 acres, I think?—Well, if you had probably the half of that, it might do.

31,783. *The Chairman.*—Is not this the case that in answering my questions you have been dealing with the general area under consideration, while in answering Mr Gordon you have been dealing with specific areas he put before you?—I do not quite follow you.

31,784. [Question repeated].—That is so.

31,785. *Mr Sutherland.*—I would like to ask you one question with regard to the success or otherwise of tree planting in Sutherlandshire. You do not profess to know that part very well, do you?—I do not.

31,786. But are you aware that a great deal of the parish of Dornoch and the parish of Creich, the southern parish, has been very considerably planted?—Yes, there is a considerable extent of timber there.

31,787. Valuable timber?—What I saw of it is pretty valuable.

31,788. Do you know that we had it in evidence that a certain parish could not very well apply to this Commission because it had no land available, all the land being taken up with timber; were you aware of that?—I was not.

31,789. Would not that imply that the greater part of that parish was taken up by plantations?—It would, certainly, if that evidence was read.

31,790. And with reference to plantations in Kildonan Strath, are you aware that they were merely fringes planted along the railway by the Railway Coy., and not by the Duke of Sutherland?—I understood they were fringes planted along the railway for protection from snow.

31,791. And that in a great many cases they were burnt by sparks from the passing engines?—Just so. But the specimens that I saw showed clearly that the land was fit for growing timber.

31,792. Provided, no doubt, that they were planted in sufficient areas?—Just so.

31,793. Are you aware that on the most exposed parts of Sutherlandshire, viz., on the coast of the Pentland Firth, we have examples of trees growing wherever they are planted? You have heard, perhaps, that there is a considerable number of trees at Tongue, on the north coast?—I believe I have.

31,794. And also at Lochinver on the west coast?—I have not heard of that.

31,795. But from such knowledge as you possess you would not be prepared to admit that Sutherland is not a favourable subject for planting?—I would not; from

Tain.

Donald Robertson.

what I have seen of Sutherland I would consider it a good subject for tree planting.

31,796. Would you be surprised to know that the Duke of Sutherland's foresters hold opinions very like yours with regard to the duty of planting?—I would not be a bit surprised.

31,797. *Mr George Malcolm*, Secretary, Highland Property Defence Association.—Do you consider that larch timber is, on the whole, most valuable for estate purposes?—For general estate purposes I do not think larch is the most valuable; I would consider Scots fir and spruce equally valuable for ordinary building purposes.

31,798. I think you stated that the larch disease which so extensively prevails is, in your opinion, due to the use of home-grown seed instead of imported seed?—I gave my opinion regarding that, based, as I stated, upon the second generation of larch timber being affected with rot or *roy*, as it is known locally, whereas the older timber throughout Scotland that I have seen cut—trees of from 80 to 120 years old—invariably falls sound.

31,799. Then, in this extensive scheme of plantation which you have sketched, would you propose to go abroad for the seed and use no home-grown seed at all?—I would not quite go that length. What I try to do at present is to plant half from home-grown larch, and half from foreign seed.

31,800. But you consider it inadvisable to use too much home-grown seed, even if you can get it from native quarters?—I have only given you my opinion, derived from my own observation; I consider that it is risky to use too much home-grown larch.

31,801. So that larch plantations, if these were gone into, would not really be reproductive? the seed obtained from them would not be used extensively again for replanting?—I would not go to the length of saying that; my opinion may be entirely wrong.

31,802. What are the usual seasons for planting larch and Scots fir? would it be October in autumn, and March and April in spring?—You begin to plant as soon as your plants are ripe. There is a danger, if your plants have not properly ripened their season's growth, of the tops dying down.

31,803. But, as a matter of fact, these are the most usual seasons for planting?—In October, November and December, whenever you can have open weather throughout the winter, you could plant on to the months of March and April. I have planted in the first ten days of May, and very successfully too.

31,804. These would be the times of the year when you would require to engage extra labour to carry on your operations?—These would be the months.

31,805. And are not these precisely the times when the crofters would be most engaged with their agricultural operations,—the harvest time and the seed time?—Of course, the month of October in many cases would be harvest time; but in November, December, January and February I do not see that the crofters would do very much on their crofts.

31,806. I am talking, you know, of the times when planting is most extensively gone into, which you have stated to be October and November, and March and April. Are not these the very times when crofters are mostly concerned with their crofts?—I do not find it so. I have no difficulty in getting a good many crofters' sons to come to work at planting during the time that we are planting.

31,807. Then you have stated that large extents of certain deer forests might be profitably planted, and used to better advantage in that way than they are at present. Have you considered what the effect of doing that would be upon the remainder of the deer forest? would that be an advantage to the deer forest as it remained, or would it be a disadvantage?—In many cases it would be a disadvantage for a considerable number of years, but, eventually, when you allowed the deer in, it would be a decided advantage, I think, to the deer forest.

31,808. You appear to be a very intelligent and well-informed wood forester, but you have never had anything specially to do with deer forests, I think?—No, except that I have stalked a deer occasionally.

31,809. But you would not be inclined to put your opinion on a question of that kind against the opinion of a professional deer-forester?—Not so far as the working of a deer forest was concerned; but when it came to be a question of whether the land was to be of more advantage to the community under timber or under deer, I should certainly claim to be as good an authority.

Tain.

Donald Robertson

31,810. I am not objecting to the planting of the land as such; my question had reference to what the effect would be on the deer forest for many years afterwards, at any rate?—It would no doubt cut away a considerable portion of the grazing of a deer forest.

31,811. It would take away from the wintering of the deer?—A considerable portion. There is a great deal of the wintering of deer that is rather boggy land, and where rushes grow, which, in many cases, would not be suitable for timber growing.

JOHN LAING, Timber Merchant, Nairn (50)—*examined.*

John Lain

31,812. *The Chairman.*—You have come here, I understand, to give evidence as to growing timber?—No, to give evidence as to the sums paid for working timber.

31,813. Have you a statement in writing?—Yes.

31,814. Read it, please.—

Note showing expense of working a Lot of Wood at Cairnfield, Banffshire.

Number of trees in lot,			4700			
Price paid for the wood,				£590	0	0
Expense of erecting sawmill,	£14	7	7			
Engineman's wages,	24	15	0			
Woodcutter's wages,	45	19	7			
Carters' wages,	171	0	0			
Sawmillers' wages,	157	0	0			
Sundry small accounts,	16	5	0			
Railway carriage,	223	15	0			
Freight of a ship, and shore dues,	49	0	0			
				702	2	2
				£1292	2	2

Time taken to do the work, 8 months
Extent of the clean cut, about 26 acres.

31,815. *Mr Forsyth.*—What kind of wood was this?—Mostly Scots fir.

31,816. Was there much larch in it?—Not very much; a few trees.

31,817. Do you give the price of £590 for it as it stood on the ground?—Yes.

31,818. Was the carriage unusually difficult or very long?—No, it was very easy.

31,819. Did you work it on the place with a sawmill?—Yes.

31,820. How far had you to take it to your carriage?—About two miles to the railway station.

31,821. Can you give me any idea of the acreage on which it grew? How many acres did it cover?—About 26 acres.

31,822. Then you found you were giving fair value, on the whole, for standing wood?—It was bought by competition; the proprietor took offers for it.

31,823. I do not wish to ask you absolutely as to your profit, but you did not find that a losing bargain, did you?—No, not quite.

31,824. It may be assumed that it was a fair value for the wood,—a fair competition value?—Yes, it was sold by competition.

31,825. In what shape did you manufacture the Scots fir: what was it for?—Herring barrel staves, and wood for boxes, and what was fit for railway sleepers went into railway sleepers.

31,826. Do you buy much Scots fir for railway sleepers?—Yes, a considerable quantity.

31,827. Do you ever work up Scots fir for building purposes?—No, very seldom, it is never asked for.

31,828. Is there any demand for it if it could be

used at a price slightly below that of foreign timber,—I mean the best Scots fir?—Oh, there would be a demand for it, I believe, locally.

31,829. But not a general demand?—No, there is no great demand for it.

31,830. Is it supposed to be less durable than foreign wood?—No, I don't think it is less durable, but it cannot be got at the very minute it is wanted.

31,831. It is not in stock, and it is not seasoned?—That is the real reason.

31,832. *Mr Gordon.*—Would this wood of 26 acres be a fair average class of wood?—No, it was rather under the average.

31,833. What would be the cubical contents of the trees, on an average?—Perhaps something like 7 feet.

31,834. And what would you consider a fair average of the contents of Scots firwood?—Do you mean the growing wood, or a wood just to be cut down?

31,835. You have bought a good deal of Scotch wood in your time?—Yes.

31,836. What is the average size of the wood in the trees you have been in the habit of buying?—When it is a clean cut, usually from 12 to 15 feet.

31,837. And the price you generally give is 4d. to 6d., according to the quality of the wood sold?—A good deal depends on where it is growing, apart from the quality.

31,838. Suppose you were within two miles of a railway station?—About 4d. a foot.

31,839. So that, taking the tree at 15 cubic feet, would give 5s. for the tree?—Yes.

31,840. And taking it at 12 feet would give 4s.?—Yes.

31,841. How many trees do you generally have on an acre?—The number varies very much.

31,842. About 60, or 70, or 80?—Oh, more than that; 150. But I have seen them as thin as 60, and not any bigger. But they were just thinned out before then.

31,843. May I ask you what part of Banffshire this wood was in?—In the parish of Enzie.

31,844. And you do not find that in that part of Banffshire you get very good wood, if you go far from Fochabers, until you get to Cullen House?—There is very good wood about Cairnfield.

31,845. But few trees on it?—Few now that they are cut away.

31,846. Are you acquainted with Aberdeenshire, the Buchan district?—No, not the Buchan district.

31,847. There is pretty good timber up Deeside, and even up Donside, but my experience is that in Aberdeenshire generally there is no hard wood at all, except a few trees in the neighbourhood of mansion houses?—There is wood about Fyvie.

31,848. Some old fir?—Yes.

31,849. But not generally throughout the country,—Fyvie is not in Buchan, you know?—Possibly not, but the wood could not be there if it was not planted.

31,850. I am afraid it was not planted, because it does not grow well. You are not acquainted with this part of the country very well, are you?—Not so well acquainted as a native, but I know it fairly well.

31,851. If you were offered a fir wood in the centre of Sutherlandshire, where you had 20 miles to go to the nearest seaboard and 20 miles to the nearest Railway station, and the trees were 15 cubic feet each on an average, what would you be willing to give for the fir?—It would depend upon the turnpike road whether it was good or not.

31,852. Would the carriage of that wood not cost more than its value, if you had to carry it 20 miles?—No, it would not.

31,853. What would you get a ton carried for?—It would depend on the turnpike road. The top of Strathdon is as far away from Alford as that; it is 50 miles to Cockbridge, and Alford is 23.

31,854. From where?—From Aberdeen.

31,855. Did you buy wood at Cockbridge?—No, but there was any amount of wood taken down from that.

31,856. And carried down to Alford?—Yes.

31,857. Do you happen to know what price they get per cubic foot there, those who buy it?—No, I don't know what price they paid.

31,858. What price per ton do you generally pay, if you are carrying ten miles?—Well, you happened to mention Culmony; I have driven wood from there to Nairn at 6s. a ton.

31,859. What kind of wood,—birch or fir?—Fir.

31,860. And how many cubic feet are there in a ton?—That would depend on how dry the wood was.

31,861. Did you manufacture it?—Manufactured it on the ground.

31,862. And carried it down afterwards? That is ten miles; let us assume that if you were to drive it 20 miles it would cost 12s a ton. Now, would that not in itself be equal to a large portion of the value of the wood?—Yes, it would be a proportion.

31,863. A large proportion?—Yes, it would be a large proportion, but it would not double for double the distance.

31,864. I am afraid it would; it would take two days for each load to do the 20 miles. That would be a fair load for a horse to do in a day; and then you must keep in view that at Culmony you are going down hill to Nairn?—Yes, for part of the way.

31,865. On the whole, the road is down hill?—The last eight miles are easier than the first two.

31,866. As I said already, I have no wish to throw any discouragement upon the growing of wood, because I myself believe thoroughly in the beneficial effect of growing wood, whether used as an ornament merely to the country, or for purposes of shelter, or grown as timber; but at the same time I don't think that wood can possibly be grown to realise the profits that Mr Robertson indicated, or anything like it. And I think this Commission would scarcely be justified in accepting that without making some slight comment upon it.

31,867. *Mr Sutherland.*—You mentioned in reply to a question already put to you that foreign timber was preferred for house building purposes, but that was not because of the difference between the quality of the timbers, as from the fact that home-grown timber cannot be got when it is wanted?—That is so.

31,868. And does that arise from the fact that it is not possible to supply in large quantities the home timber?—It is not quite that, but it is the way in which wood is sold in small quantities, and it will not pay any firm of timber merchants to erect sawmills to dress up home-grown timber into wood suitable for flooring, sarking, roofing, or anything that kind.

31,869. Then, why do landlords sell timber only in such small lots?—Because they have not more to sell.

31,870. It is done on too small a scale?—Yes, that is the thing.

31,871. Whereas in foreign countries they can afford to cut down a great number of trees at a time, and keep it stored ready?—Yes, and the wood is floated down to great centres; and the sawmills remain there, I suppose, for half a generation without being shifted.

31,872. Without trouble or cost, except the cost of first putttng them up, and their maintenance?—Yes.

31,873. But there is nothing, is there, in the nature of the home timber itself to prevent its being used for house building purposes?—Nothing for house building, but for finishing it would not be so suitable.

31,874. But quite suitable for the main operations of house building, the joists, and flooring?—Our common larch would last out three roofs of Norwegian or Swedish white wood.

31,875. So it is superior to the foreign timber for such purposes, is it?—Larch is.

31,876. And home-grown pine, how does it do?—It would be just about equal to the other; perhaps not any better, but certainly not worse.

31,877. And the reason why foreign timber is more largely used in house-building is that home timber is not available, through the want of a sufficient quantity of it being in the market at one time?—Yes, nobody keeps it in stock.

31,878. Then, with regard to the carriage of timber, you stated, I think, that in certain cases you manufactured it upon the ground?—Yes

Tain.

John Laing.

31,879. Does not that considerably lessen the price of carriage, preliminary carriage?—Well, no one would buy it till it was manufactured.

31,880. You would have to manufacture it somewhere?—Somewhere.

31,881. So that when you talk about the carriage of the timber it is not the carriage of the logs but the carriage after it is made into battens?—Cut and dried into suitable sizes.

31,882. So that by the cutting away of superfluous portions you decrease its weight a good deal?—Yes, I employ a great deal of labour in that operation.

31,883. You heard the evidence of Mr Robertson, the previous witness?—Yes.

31,884. Do you give a general concurrence in that evidence?—I have never studied the question from his point of view, so I could not say.

31,885. But would the evidence he gives, no doubt from his point of view, account for a great deal of the difficulty of the timber trade, the point that planting was carried on only in small quantities?—Yes, of course, that accounts for it; we cannot compete with foreign wood through having to buy wood in small quantities, and always shifting about.

31,886. Are you then of opinion that the amount of timber grown in this country could be very largely increased?—Yes, I have no doubt that it could be very largely increased if it were planted.

31,887. And you are of opinion that where a fair chance has been given for timber to grow in this country it is grown; are you of that opinion?—I cannot say as to that; I never go but where the article is ready made. I don't go near the thing as forest.

31,888. But you surely must have seen them: you take a general interest in the matter?—I see them, most of them, from the railway.

31,889. Have you seen any place where the experiment was made and where it failed? Do you remember one at the present moment?—No, I cannot say that I did; I paid no attention to that.

31,890. But you know a great number of places where it has been tried and has succeeded, don't you? It has succeeded in every place where you went? You naturally do not go to wood until it has succeeded?—No, I never go near them; I cannot speak on that point.

31,891. Tree planting has, at all events, succeeded in every place where you have carried on your operations?—It is bound to be so, because I could not cut unless they grew.

31,892. *The Chairman.*—Were your dealings as a timber merchant more largely in foreign wood or in home-grown wood?—Entirely confined to home-grown wood.

31,893. Then, are the purposes for which the home-grown wood is sawn the commoner purposes, or is it also used for the finer purposes?—The very commonest purposes.

31,894. Such purposes as you have mentioned already, staves and boxes and sleepers?—Yes, that is the principal outlet.

31,895. Can you say that you sell any considerable quantity of Scotch-grown wood for the finer purposes for which foreign wood is mainly used?—Never sell any for the finer purposes.

John Campbell.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Wood Merchant, Inverness, (38)—*examined.*

31,896. *The Chairman.*—I see you have a statement in your hand?—Yes.

31,897. Just read it?—The amount of labour connected with the manufacture and transit of timber depends a good deal on the situation of the plantations. In very remote places far from rail and water transit it might take all the timber was worth to defray the working expenses. But when the timber is from two to four miles from a harbour or railway station, on fairly good ground for haulage, the expenses for work-

Tain.

John Campbell.

ing Scots fir and spruce would be something like the following:—

	£	s.	d.	
Throwing and dressing,		2	0	per 100 cub. ft.
Carting into sawmill,		5	0	„ „
Sawing the same, including hire of machinery,		10	0	„ „
Cartage to harbour or rail,		4	6	„ „
Railway and shipping,	1	5	0	„ „
	£2	6	6	

This is at 3000 to 5000 cubic feet per acre.

In the case of hard wood the labour bill would generally be about treble the amount indicated above; and in some cases, such as bobbin wood ornaments and toys, a much higher rate, probably six times the cost for the same baulk in fir, spruce, and larch.

During last summer I cut and peeled a little over 4000 cubic feet of oak; for this labour I paid the following sums:—

Cutting and peeling and curing bark,	£120
Dressing trees,	7
Haulage of timber to loading places,	50
Loading,	6
Freight, including firewood,	70
Cross-cutting firewood,	12
	£265
The first cost of the wood was,	£140

I am sending this timber away round, consequently there is no charge for manufacturing, as this is done by the purchaser. There were 300 trees in the lot, so they could stand on about four acres of ground. Last year I bought 9500 fir prop poles, the thinnings of a young plantation in this district, for which I paid the following sums in labour:—

Cutting and dressing,	£27	0	0
Peeling and casing,	31	0	0
Dragging in lots in the wood,	30	0	0
Cartage to station,	81	5	0
Loading at station,	20	0	0
	£189	5	0
First cost of wood,	£27	10	0
Railway carriage,	£182	0	0

These thinnings were cut off about 50 acres of wood, and a good crop left on the ground. The wood was about 35 years old.

In some places there is a large trade done by utilising the refuse from hard wood in making acetic acid, charcoal, and several other chemicals, and a great deal of labour is required in the manufacture of these.

31,898. Are your dealings confined to Scotch wood?—Yes, entirely.

31,899. And for what purpose do you sell wood?—For railway sleepers, and colliery wood, and for boat wood and bobbin wood.

31,900. And for staves, perhaps?—And staves.

31,901. And plain deal boxes?—Yes.

31,902. You have no dealings in foreign wood?—None whatever.

31,903. Did you hear the evidence given by the previous witness, Mr Laing?—Yes.

31,904. And do you concur generally in his evidence?—Yes.

Charles R. Manners.

CHARLES R. MANNERS, C.E., Factor for Lord Wimborne (54)*—*examined.*

31,905. *The Chairman.*—You are factor for Lord Wimborne?—I am.

31,906. For how long have you been factor?—Since

* See pages 480–481, Questions 20,582–20,587.

the date when he purchased the estate of Achnashellach in 1871.

31,907. Are you factor on any other estate?—For Lord Lovelace, on the Bendamph estate.

31,908. How long have you been factor on that estate?—Since his purchase: I am also factor for Mr Pirie of Leckmeln in Lochbroom, and now for Mr Dalgleish of Coulin, which was formerly part of the Achnashellach estate.

31,909. There was a statement prepared by you and submitted to us by Mr Duncan Shaw of Inverness, while we were in the Lochcarron district?—Yes.

31,910. I think that statement was read at the time. Is it the same statement which you now produce?—Yes.

31,911. I don't know that we need trouble you to read it again: we could not take the statement at the Lochcarron sitting as evidence without having you present in order to answer any questions which might be put, but we shall hold the statement as read.

The following is the Statement referred to:—

Achnashellach Estate.

Statement as to the deer forest, &c., of Achnashellach, Coulin, Glencarron, and Glen Uaig, in the parishes of Lochcarron and Contin, and county of Ross, as possessed by Lord Wimborne.

This estate was purchased in four separate lots, and at different dates, viz.:—

Achnashellach in	1871,	extent about	18,911 acres.
Coulin	,, 1872,	,,	14,606 ,,
Glencarron	,, 1874,	,,	8,523 ,,
Glen Uaig	,, 1875,	,,	7,538 ,,
		Total about	49,578 ,,

From a survey of Achnashellach, made in 1868, there appears to have been a total of about 129 acres of arable, a considerable portion being scheduled as then out of cultivation. Of this arable, 43½ acres are on the crofter's holding at Coulags, and 33¾ acres on the crofter's holding at Balnacra, leaving a balance of 51¾ acres as within the area of the forest. This is now used as follows:—

Garden and grounds,	about	4½ acres.
Hay park,	,,	24 .
Keeper's park at Craig,	,,	6½ .
Thrown into open pasture,	,,	16¾ .
Total,		51¾ .

The great bulk of the land thrown into open pasture, and a portion of the hay park, in fact the greater part of the low-lying grounds between the county road and the river, is very subject to flood, rendering it quite unsafe for cultivation. The sub-soil is open gravel through which the river water freely percolates, giving a cold and wet root bed. The climate is naturally wet; the glen is narrow, and confined on the north and south by high hills, and altogether the land is not fit or capable of being cultivated to advantage.

On the Coulin section of the estate there appears to have been some 22 acres at one time under plough. About 3 acres of this is now cultivated by the keeper and gardener, and the remainder is enclosed as a hay park for the joint use of the proprietor and his estate servants, and is indispensable for the keep of their ponies and cattle.

On the Glencarron section there does not appear to have been any arable, except what is within the Loan Park, extending to about 6 acres. It is at an elevation of about 525 feet above sea-level, and is used by, and necessary for, the stalker at Glencarron.

On the Glen Uaig or Gleann-Fhiodhaig section, which is in the parish of Contin, there does not appear to have been any land cultivated as arable, nor indeed is there any suitable for that purpose.

From the foregoing statement it will be seen that out of an area of about 47,500 acres (excluding the lands held by the Balnacra and Coulags crofters), only some 80 acres appear to have been cultivated, and of this about 63 acres are at present fenced and either cultivated or preserved as hay parks, being necessary for the maintenance of the cattle and ponies belonging to the proprietor or his servants.

The area under deer forest and plantations, &c., may be divided into zones of elevation as under:—

Below 500 feet elevation, about	2,490 acres.
Between 500 feet and 800 feet, about	5,740 ,,
Between 800 feet and 1000 feet, about	5,810 ,,
Above 1000 feet, about	33,420 ,,

It will thus be seen that the percentage of ground at a moderately low elevation is very small, and I believe it to be absolutely essential to the forest for the wintering of deer, as well as for the grazing of cattle and ponies belonging to the proprietor or sporting tenant and the estate servants.

If the deer were confined to the high grounds alone they would be starved in the winter, and many of them would die. The forest would be in detached pieces, and quite ruined; so that the large percentage of the land, that above the 1000 feet level, would be practically useless and valueless.

Under the present system as a deer forest, regular employment is given to the following estate servants:—

	Married.	*Single.*
Gardeners,	2	3
Gamekeepers,	5	2
Housemaids,	—	2
	7	7

In addition to the above, almost constant employment is given to a carpenter.

A couple of men extra are generally employed in the gardens for from six to eight months per annum; and six to eight gillies are also employed, generally with their ponies, for about ten weeks in the autumn.

Frequent labour is also employed during every year in various estate works, and very considerable sums are thus spent annually in repairs and general upkeep, as well as in new works.

I cannot give any data as to the actual amounts expended previous to the purchases by Lord Wimborne; but in the erection of Achnashellach, Coulin, and Glencarron, houses and offices, with roads, plantations, &c., it must have been very considerable, and at a low estimate cannot have been less than some £30,000 or £35,000. Since the purchase of Achnashellach by Lord Wimborne in 1872, to the end of 1892 inclusive, a period of twenty-one years, there has been spent, under the head of Tradesmen's Accounts, a sum of £15,723, and under the head of Labour £16,408, giving an average annual outlay as follows:—

Tradesmen, such as builders, carpenters, plumbers, nurserymen, &c., but exclusive of butchers, grocers, and such like,	£748
Labour wages, including road and such contract, but excluding estate servants,	£781

It might be said that now that all the houses, &c., are complete, and the roads and other improvements finished, the outlays have ceased, and the forest does no more good in circulating money through the district. Such, however, is not the case, and I now give the average annual expenditure by the proprietor for the last seven years, during which time the forest has been let; and which expenditure is for repairs and general upkeep of the estate.

Tradesmen's accounts as before,	£266
Labour wages, including the upkeep of roads and paths,	327
Wages of gamekeepers and gardeners,	418
Poor and school rates,	358
County rates,	141
Income tax,	149
Giving an annual average expenditure under ordinary circumstances of	£1659

Tain.

Charles R. Manners.

This is exclusive of wages paid by the sporting tenant for gillies, hire of ponies, coals, oats, hay, and other items necessary for the maintenance of their establishments; and I am assured that during the occupancy of Mr Bass his bills under this head may be put at from £600 to £800 a year, all paid to local tradesmen. During the years the forest was in the proprietor's hands, the average wage paid for gillies was £61, and I do not think it would be any less, and possibly more, during the time it was let.

The amount paid, as above, for labour, keepers' and gardeners' wages, poor and school rates, amounting to upwards of £1100 per annum, may be said to be almost entirely expended in the district; whilst the tradesmen's accounts and the county rates, amounting to £407 per annum, are almost entirely spent in and north of Inverness.

I venture to say that under no system of crofting would any such sums as above be annually paid in wages or tradesmen's accounts, and the expenditure of these moneys in the district must be of great benefit to the crofters and others in the district. Exclusive of large sums invested in the purchase of these properties as a sporting estate, I have shown that no less a sum than from £60,000 to £65,000 has been spent in building houses, road-making, and other works; by far the greater portion of which would certainly never have been expended had it not been for sport.

I may perhaps here mention that a sum of £1617 has been expended by Lord Wimborne in building new cottages, offices, and fencing, for the crofters at Balnacra and Coulags, for which no interest is charged, and that their present gross rental amounts to £60 per annum.

The total rental of the parish of Lochcarron, per Valuation Roll for year 1891–1892, was £7301, 12s. 4d., and of this the portion due to sport was £4118. Of this sum the estates of Achnashellach, &c., paid rates upon a rental of £2979, excluding the crofters' rents, or upwards of one-third of the whole parish assessment; and it must be obvious that the destruction of this forest, or anything done materially to injure it, would have the effect of greatly raising the rates in the parish, as well as of reducing the amount of money expended in labour and other wages, tradesmen's accounts, &c.

The crofters of Balnacra and Coulags hold about 2,000 acres between them, and of this some 77 acres are scheduled in the survey of 1868 as arable or arable out of cultivation. The total gross rental paid by the two places is now £60 per annum, being at the rate of about 7d. per acre over head. At the same rate the whole estate, as in the hands of the proprietor, would give a rental of £1385, as against £3579 as a forest. This is, however, based upon too high an estimate of the average and proportionate value per acre. The proportion of arable to pasture in the case of the Balnacra and Coulags holdings is about 77 in 2000; whilst in the case of the forest it is about 80 in 47,500.

On the two holdings of Balnacra and Coulags there are at least 60 acres now under plough, and averaging this at least 10s. per acre would reduce the rent of the pasture to about 3½d. per acre.

If then we take the whole portion of the forest, &c., which is below the 1000 feet elevation (14,040 acres), and taking into consideration the small proportion of arable to pasture within this area, and, on the other hand, allowing for the superior quality of portions of the pasture, we estimate the average value at 6d. per acre overhead, we get a gross rental for this land of £351. The lands above 1000 feet elevation would be practically valueless as deer forest, or for any other purpose, if deprived of the lower grounds for feeding and wintering, but I will assume that for the shooting-lodges, fishings, and shooting generally over the whole estate, a nett rental could be got of, say, £900 a year. We should then have a total assessable rental of £1251, as against £3579 as let under deer forest for the past seven years.

In the above estimate I have made no allowance for interest on cost of buildings, fencing, &c., which would be necessary if converted into crofter holdings, and which would amount to a very considerable deduction from the gross rental, if provided by the proprietor.

Tain.

Charles R. Manners.

In the foregoing statement I have treated Coulin as being a part of the same estate, and such it has been since the date of purchase by Lord Wimborne until the term of Whitsunday, 1893.

It has now been sold to Mr Wm. Ogilvie Dalgleish, who commenced extensive improvements even before getting full possession. These improvements consist chiefly in new cottages for estate servants, additions and alterations to the house and offices, draining, fencing, and planting, road-making, &c., and will before completion involve an outlay of several thousands of pounds, a large portion of which will be spent in labour wages, and on builders' and other tradesmen's accounts. Up to the present time some £5100 has been paid on these works, and of this about £1448 has been expended on draining, planting, and other works employing entirely unskilled labour.

(Signed) C. R. Manners,
Factor for Estates.

31,912. I understand you have another statement to submit?—I have another short statement with reference to the Bendamph estate, if your lordship will allow me to read it.

31,913. We have not been in the district at all, and we do not propose to hold sittings there just at present; if we took that statement now it would have to be subject to your having to come before us there if we so desire.—I am prepared with it now, because that estate happens to lie between Achnashellach and Coulin and the Shieldaig forest of Mr Murray with which you have already dealt. It lies in between, and I thought, possibly, this might be a favourable opportunity of grouping the whole together: but, of course, if you decide otherwise, I have no objection.

31,914. *Mr Sutherland.*—You will readily appreciate the convenience of our having an opportunity of asking any questions of you after seeing the ground?—It is all the same to me, and I shall be glad to attend at any future time.

31,915. *The Chairman.*—If it is quite convenient to you, we would rather take that statement when we are dealing with the Bendamph estate?—Very good.

Alexander Ross.

Alexander Ross, Ochto Falls, Strathoykel (49)—*examined.*

31,916. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter under the Act?—Not under the Act.

31,917. Do you hold under lease?—Yes.

31,918. For a term of years?—For one year only, from year to year: I am a yearly tenant.

31,919. You are a yearly tenant, but not under the Act?—Not under the Act.

31,920. Did you settle with your landlord for your rent?—Yes, but I was not under the Act. I only came there four years ago, and did not get the privileges of the Act.

31,921. You were not a crofter at the passing of the Act?—No.

31,922. Have you a written statement?—Yes.

31,923. Kindly read it.—*Estate of Balnagown.* Proprietor, Sir Charles W. A. F. Ross, Bart. Invercassley sheep farm, parish of Creich, on the above-mentioned estate, consists of very good arable and pasture, from the Cassley along the Sutherland side of the Oykell river until we reach Kinlochailsh, viz., Invercassley, Tutim, Turnaig, Caplich, Gallachy, Slugach, and Kinlochailsh, with very wide and valuable moorland pasture stretching onward for miles. At a meeting held at the Schoolhouse, Strathoykell, on Saturday 29th ulto., it was unanimously concluded that the aforesaid farm contained ample arable and pasture land for 21 crofters.

Parish of Kincardine, Ross-shire, *Estate of Inveroykell*, proprietor C. M. Gaskell., Esq., consists of a good number of acres of arable land, with a wide stretch of

hill pasture. *Estate of Sir C. Ross, Bart.*—Next is Langwell sheep farm, consisting of a number of acres of beautiful flat, arable land, with good hill pasture. Still further on, along the Ross-shire side of the Oykell river, are Amat, Loubcroy, Craggie, Aelag, and Strateskie, all on the Balnagown estate, consisting of beautiful arable land and hill pasture, all of which is under sheep. Returning back to Amat aforesaid, we follow up the Einig river, all good hill pasture, until Letters is reached, where there is plenty of arable, formerly occupied by crofters, and now under sheep. Crossing the Duag we come to *Drumvaich* (proprietor Lord Tarbat), formerly occupied by the crofters, but now turned into a deer forest. Still further on is *Corriemulzie* (property of Mr Ross, Pitcalnie), consisting of good arable and pasture, but now turned into a deer forest. At the said meeting it was unanimously concluded that the said places contained ample ground, arable and pasture, for 29 crofters, making in all ample scope for 50 to 60 crofters.

(Signed) ALEXANDER ROSS.

31,924. You mentioned land in the parish of Creich which you say would be suitable for occupation by 21 crofters?—Yes, and for double that number; but we wish to give ample room to each.

31,925. What is the extent of that land, can you tell me?—I could hardly mention the number of acres.

31,926. How many acres arable would you give to each croft?—It would depend upon how the hill pasture was to be divided. Some would, perhaps, live with very little arable land, if they got enough of hill pasture: it would depend also a good deal on the climate. I should say if every man low down had 30 acres of arable land, along with pasture, that would be sufficient.

31,927. With corresponding hill pasture?—Yes.

31,928. Do you say that that would form a self-subsisting holding?—Oh, yes.

31,929. And do you think a man with such a holding there could get on without outside assistance or outside labour?—Yes.

31,930. Is the land you mentioned as suitable for arable land, old arable land?—Yes, it is all old arable.

31,931. And what is it used for at present?—Sheep farming; it is the Invercassley farm. All the Balnagown estate is used for sheep farming.

31,932. You were appointed a delegate, I think, at a meeting?—Yes.

31,933. Was any one else appointed along with you?—One James Murray of Doune.

31,934. And you are here to represent the views of the meeting, as well as your own?—Yes.

31,935. Now, is there a keen desire among those you represent to obtain new holdings?—Yes.

31,936. And is it your opinion that there is need for such holdings?—Oh, yes, great need.

31,937. Is the crofting area you represent through that meeting congested?—Yes.

31,938. What are the names of the townships you represent?—Innis-nan-damh, Obe, Doune, and Brae, in Strathoykel.

31,939. Is each of these townships congested?—Yes.

31,940. Is any one of them worse than the others?—Well, there are from 2 to 16 acres of arable land.

31,941. For each holding?—For each holding; they range from 2 to 16 acres.

31,942. What would you say is the average?—I daresay about 8 acres would be the average.

31,943. What is the size of your own holding?—My own holding is all pasture: I have no arable land at all; it is about 12 acres pasture. But I am not on the Balnagown estate, I am on Strathoykel, the property of the British Linen Coy.

31,944. You are on an estate in the hands of the British Linen Coy.?—Yes.

31,945. What is the name of the estate?—Strathkyle.

31,946. And the profits, such as they are, which you make from your holding, are entirely from stock?—Yes.

31,947. What stock do you keep?—I keep two cows and a pony. I summer the cows on the place, but winter them where I can find wintering. I work with the pony all summer wherever I can. Tain.

31,948. Where do you keep the pony?—Wherever I am working; I buy keep for him when at home. Alexander Ross.

31,949. You mean that you have to work in order to live?—I have to work in order to live.

31,950. That is to say, outside your holding as well as inside your holding?—Yes; the holding would not keep me.

31,951. Has it ever kept you in any year?—No.

31,952. What sort of labour do you get generally?—Wherever I can get a day's work with the pony I take it, all over the country: I take carting work or anything I can get.

31,953. Anything you can do with the aid of the pony?—Yes. I have been with gentry sometimes in the harvest, and I do whatever I can get to do.

31,954. Do any of the crofters whom you are here to represent live by their holdings, or have the whole of them to labour elsewhere?—There may be two or even three that make a kind of living off their croft, but all the rest have to work for their living elsewhere.

31,955. Can you mention to us the two or three who you think may be able to live by their holdings?—One Kenneth Macleod; he is one man I can speak of.

31,956. And the others?—One John Ross, Obe; but he is hardly making a living off it: he is not a very able man, and he has to stick to the holding.

31,957. He lives by his holding as well as he can?—He lives by it after a fashion.

31,958. Any one else?—None else.

31,959. I think you also mentioned Wester Langwell farm?—Yes.

31,960. Who is the tenant of it?—Mr John Ross, Postmaster, Ardgay.

31,961. And do you say that there is a stretch of land there that we ought to consider?—Yes.

31,962. Is that old arable land?—Yes.

31,963. What is the extent of it on the farm?—I could not state the exact area.

31,964. Now, when you speak of that land, you exclude, I hope, land under rotation of crop?—Yes.

31,965. And is the land, in your opinion, suitable for new holdings?—Yes.

31,966. Is there adjacent hill pasture that would serve for the occupants of such holdings?—Yes.

31,967. On what estate?—On Sir Charles Ross's estate.

31,968. The farm is also, I suppose, on his estate?—Yes.

31,969. You also mentioned Amat and Loubcroy: is there land there?—Yes.

31,970. Is it a farm?—It is under sheep, a sheep farm.

31,971. What is the name of the farm?—Sir Charles Ross has the farm in his own hands.

31,972. Has it been in the hands of the proprietor for some time?—Yes.

31,973. What is the name of it?—Loubcroy farm.

31,974. All under sheep?—All under sheep.

31,975. You mentioned land on the Einig river?—Yes.

31,976. Particularly near the township of Letters?—Yes.

31,977. Is the land on a farm at present?—Yes, a sheep farm.

31,978. What is the name of that farm?—The same farm of Loubcroy, in the occupancy of Sir Charles Ross.

31,979. Is it called the Forest farm?—Yes, it was called the Forest farm at one time, but the forest has been cut off it, and now we call it Loubcroy. But, perhaps, it may still be called the Forest farm by others.

31,980. Do you know what is now called the Forest farm?—Yes.

31,981. Is it a very large farm?—Yes, it is a large farm.

31,982. Do you know the size of it?—I could not mention the number of acres, but I know all the shepherds on it.

31,983. How many shepherds are on it?—Eleven steady, forbye winterers and hirers.

Tain.

Alexander Ross.

31,984. Eleven besides people who winter on the ground, and people who hire parts of the ground during the summer?—The eleven men are constant on the hill.

31,985. And the others you mentioned come and go from year to year?—Yes.

31,986. Are there many of these?—There are about four of them, I suppose, just now.

31,987. And whose sheep do they look after?—Sir Charles Ross of Balnagown's.

31,988. Do these men come down to the lowlands to winter?—Yes, the four extra men.

31,989. How many hirsels have the eleven shepherds?—Each man has a hirsel.

31,990. And what is the average number of sheep in the hirsel,—of course they differ?—They differ, of course, but I would take them to average 700.

31,991. That would make, in all, nearly 8000 sheep?—I cannot say exactly, but I am not very far off it.

31,992. It is there or there about?—Yes.

31,993. Well, we have had a look at the farm on coming to this quarter, and I think we were told that it extends to no less than 90,000 acres?—I believe it may be all that, though I cannot say definitely.

31,994. It is one of the very largest farms we have had occasion to consider. Then you mentioned Drumvaich?—Yes.

31,995. Is that forest land?—Yes.

31,996. What is the name of the forest?—Rhidorroch forest.

31,997. That is a forest belonging to the Earl of Cromarty?—Yes, to Lord Tarbat.

31,998. It extends up to Loch-Broom on the west?—Yes, but Drumvaich comes in at the junction of the Rappach water and the Dubhach as you go up Corriemulzie.

31,999. That is so; you are describing it quite accurately. Now, you say there is land there suitable for 50 to 60 crofters?—Yes.

32,000. Now, where exactly is the land?—I took both sides of the Oykell river all along.

32,001. You are taking the Oykell river up by Caplich and Craggie and Salachy?—Yes.

32,002. Do you go as far as Loch Ailsh?—Yes.

32,003. Do you also take the valley of Glen Einig?—Yes.

32,004. Up the Rappach water?—Yes, and then turning up the Dubhach to Corriemulzie, and following on to Coire-Mor.

32,005. Then, the land you are calling our attention to is in the valley of the Oykell and in Glen Earig and in Strathmulzie?—Yes.

32,006. Is all that land under forest?—No, not all; there is none of it under forest except Corriemulzie.

32,007. The land under forest is in Strathmulzie?—Yes, and Drumvaich.

32,008. The land you referred to is on both sides of that strath and of the river Rappach?—Yes.

32,009. Is that old arable land?—Yes.

32,010. And is it, in your opinion, land that would be suitable for a considerable number of self-sustaining holdings?—Yes.

32,011. You think it would accommodate in the way I am describing 50 to 60 crofters?—Yes.

32,012. With such a size of holding as you have already indicated?—Yes.

32,013. Do you think that if a crofter had such a holding in that district he would have any serious difficulty in paying his way during average seasons?—No, I don't think he would.

32,014. And would as many as the land would accommodate be ready to come forward for such holdings?—I think they would.

32,015. Would you yourself take such a holding?—Yes.

32,016. And look forward to working it to a profit?—Yes.

32,017. Partly by utilising the arable, and partly by the hill grazing?—Yes.

32,018. Is there an extent of grazing in the neighbourhood of the old arable sufficient to pasture the stock which the old arable would winter?—Yes, far more pasture than arable.

Tain.

Alexander Ross.

32,019. Do you know the total extent of the Corriemulzie forest?—I cannot give you the exact figure, but I think it is over 10,000 acres. I am told the number is 12,000.

32,020. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is the extent of the hill grazing of the crofters you represent? How far back does their grazing go?—I could not exactly tell the number of acres.

32,021. But could you tell us how far south it extends?—To the watershed on the top, between Strath Cuilionach and Strath Oykell.

32,022. Is it not Strath Carron?—Yes, Strath Carron.

32,023. Do you know the hill called Sithean on the watershed, between Strath Carron and Strath Oykell?—I know the whole of these hills.

32,024. That is the southern boundary of the grazings of the townships?—Yes.

32,025. And is it also the boundary between the two estates?—No, it is the same estate.

32,026. In these townships of Brae, Oape, Doune, and Innis-nan-Damh how many families are there altogether? How many are in Brae?—There are 16, if I am not mistaken, altogether in the whole of these townships.

32,027. You said you came to your present holding after the passing of the Crofters Act?—Yes.

32,028. And did not the proprietor allow you to become a crofter?—Well, I did not get the benefit of the Act, as I had not been there at the passing of the Act.

32,029. But have you asked the proprietor to allow you to become a crofter?—I have not asked him the privilege.

32,030. Would you prefer to have it?—Yes, I would.

32,031. May I ask you where you were before you came to Ochto?—I was a shepherd on Corriemulzie when I came up to Ochto Falls.

32,032. How long were you shepherd there?—Ten years.

32,033. Therefore you know very well all those places you have spoken about?—I am very well acquainted with the whole of the places.

32,034. Do you know any other person who lived there for ten years who is likely to give us evidence?—There is a keeper there who lived there far longer than that.

32,035. But you have lived there for ten years?—Yes.

32,036. And, therefore, know everything you have already told his lordship of your own personal knowledge and experience?—Yes.

32,037. You have had experience as a shepherd, you have had experience as a crofter, and you are perfectly satisfied that if you got a reasonable holding in any of these places you would have reasonable prospects of success?—Yes.

32,038. You think that there is sufficient land of old arable, or that could be made arable, that would enable you to winter and bring through stock sufficient for the holdings?—Yes.

32,039. And under such conditions do you think you would be better off than the people are now in Ochto?—I would be far better.

32,040. Now, was the amount of pasture and arable land that you gave in answer to the Chairman, the amount that would, in your opinion, enable the people to live in comfort in these places?—I have no doubt that more people could live on the land that I spoke about than the number I gave.

32,041. But you want to guard against every possibility of error?—Yes.

32,042. And have you, therefore, put your estimate rather low?—Yes, I am quite sure I made it low.

32,043. Was it Corriemulzie you lived at?—Yes.

32,044. Had you any crops there?—Yes, I had corn crop and potatoes and turnips.

32,045. Had you good crop there?—Yes, very good.

32,046. Did it ripen at all?—Oh, yes, it always ripens yonder. Some years owing to the wet season there might be a loss on the corn crop; but I have seen as good a crop there as ever I saw. I never saw the like of it in Strath Oykell.

32,047. It is better than you have in Strath Oykell?—Far better.

32,048. And were your crops ever destroyed by frost?—Never, there is no such thing as frost there.

32,049. You mean crop-destroying frost?—Yes, I mean frost that destroys the potatoes as is done in the lowlands sometimes.

32,050. You have heard that statement made, I suppose, by people who were never in Corriemulzie?—I knew that the potato crop was spoilt low down.

32,051. But you are of opinion that this place here is different, and you are talking not only of your opinion but of your experience?—Of my experience.

32,052. You think you raised better crops than you now raise in Strath-Oykell?—By far.

32,053. And you have given, I think, practical testimony to your belief when you state that you would be quite prepared to take a holding yourself, and would be very glad to take it?—Yes.

32,054. If you had had the opportunity of taking a holding in Corriemulzie, you would have gone there rather than to Ochto?—Yes, but if I got enough land in Ochto perhaps I might stay as I am. But I would prefer Corriemulzie to Ochto any day.

32,055. If you had the opportunity of going there?—Yes.

32,056. *Mr Gordon.*—Where were you born?—At Innis-nan-Damh, Strath-Oykell.

32,057. And how long have you been in that quarter of the country?—All my days.

32,058. Then you know the country quite well?—Oh, yes, I ought to know it.

32,059. Are you of opinion it would take 30 acres of old arable land to keep a man there?—I have no doubt less would do, with hill pasture along with it.

32,060. Now, you have mentioned a good many places which we have seen. Did you mention a place called Tuiteam?—Yes.

32,061. And Turnaig?—Yes.

32,062. And Caploch?—Yes.

32,063. And Craggie?—Yes.

32,064. And Loubcroy?—Yes.

32,065. The last two are upon the forest farm, and the first three are upon the Invercassley farm?—Yes.

32,066. Now, could you shortly tell us the extent of old arable upon these lands?—Well, I cannot give the acreage.

32,067. Could you give us it roughly?—I can hardly say.

32,068. You gave us the acreage of one place, that is Langwell, which we will come to bye-and-bye.—I have a kind of knowledge of that, but as for the other places I cannot say.

32,069. Would there be ten acres at Tutim?—Far more.

32,070. Upon the flat next the river?—Yes, and above Tutim house there is some old arable land.

32,071. And how much would there be at Turnaig?—There are two small haughs there: there will be 15 acres between them at any rate, say 30 for Turnaig.

32,072. That would be room for two crofters, you think?—Yes.

32,073. And how many would you put into Turnaig?—It is Turnaig I mean for the two.

32,074. But you would not put the two on the 15 acres?—There are 15 acres in each of the two haughs.

32,075. An upper and a lower?—Yes.

32,076. How many crofters do you think Caploch would hold?—Owing to the amount of low ground, arable land, that is on Caploch I would think two would be enough, for there is part of Caploch that the river overflows in some measure.

32,077. I am afraid there is part where the river would be troublesome?—Yes, and it can only be used for meadow hay.

32,078. So that you would only put one on Caploch perhaps?—I would put two on Caploch.

32,079. Well, what do you say to Craggie?—One would be enough for the arable land in Craggie, but there is too much pasture for one.

32,080. How far to the west does the pasture of Craggie go,—back to the Alltan-nan-cealgach?—It goes to the burn that is on this side of Alltan-nan-cealgach; it goes on two miles past Craggie, to a bridge called Ealag bridge.

32,081. Beyond the loch there?—Yes.

32,082. You say you would put two into Tutim, two into Turnaig, two into Caploch, and two into Craggie?—Yes.

32,083. And what about Loubcroy?—Two there also.

32,084. Well, then, I must take you a little farther up the river to a place called Craggan; do you know Craggan?—Yes.

32,085. Is there arable land there?—Yes.

32,086. What extent of arable land is at Craggan?—I should say about 15 acres.

32,087. Then you would require to reduce your number there to one?—Yes.

32,088. At Langwell you think there are 120 acres?—Yes, I am quite sure of it.

32,089. How many people would you put in there?—Four.

32,090. Would you not leave the laird a little bit around the lodge for hay ground?—Oh, of course, he would need to get his share, if he would be a decent man himself.

32,091. How many families would you put in Amat?—Two.

32,092. And how many in Letters?—Three.

32,093. Are there 30 acres of old arable land on Letters?—Oh, yes, and over it.

32,094. Now, what do you say as to Craigmore,—how many acres of old arable land are there?—We did not go that way.

32,095. You must come down that way if you go to Glen Eirig?—But Craigmore is not in Glen Eirig.

32,096. What do you call the shepherd's house there?—That is Craigmore; but we do not go over the height at all.

32,097. Do you want to leave Craigmore out?—Yes, I did not take Craigmore in.

32,098. You did not take in Lubachoinnich, or Glaschoill, or Croick?—No.

32,099. What other places do you mention?—Drumvaich again.

32,100. How many would you put there?—One.

32,101. And how many at Corriemulzie?—Four.

32,102. Would the gamekeeper's croft be one of them?—The gamekeeper would do with his wages.

32,103. You have given us one in Drumvaich, four in Corriemulzie, two in Tutim, two in Turnaig, two in Caploch, two in Craggie, one in Craggan, four in Langwell, four in Amat, and three in Letters, in all 25, which is nearly half your number.—But we did not go over half of the ground.

32,104. Where is the rest then?—We left Invercassley where we should begin.

32,105. Are you going to take the arable land that is under cultivation at Invercassley?—Oh, yes.

32,106. But I am afraid that is beyond our power?—Oh, we are going to sweep everything before us.

32,107. Taking your own estimate you have only 25 families?—Yes, but that was the way that we counted them.

32,108. There are at present on the ground 11 shepherds and four extra men, making 15; you propose to clear away 15 and put on 25, thus making room for only ten more people?—That is the way that we made it up; but there is ample space for what I said.

32,109. I am showing you how the facts stand according to your own statement?—Yes, but it is a very wide statement that I gave, as you will see when you go over the ground.

32,110. Well, I did go over the ground, and saw it all, therefore, I am quite able to speak about it. Now,

Tain.

Alexander Ross.

there is this other ground below that which you have left out, that is Glen Eirig?—Yes.

32,111. What do you say as to that country?—We went to Amat, did not we?

32,112. Yes, but Amat is in Strath Oykell, is it not?—Yes, at the end of Glen Eirig.

32,113. You require to cross over the hill to Glen Eirig?—No, Glen Eirig is on the Oykell river, going up from Oykell.

32,114. I beg your pardon, I should have said Glen Coulin.—That is across the hill, on the Strath Carron side.

32,115. At the top of Strath Carron?—Yes.

32,116. You cannot speak to that country?—I could speak to it, but I leave it to others to speak about.

32,117. Well, as far as we can make out, this is the state of matters; you propose to remove 15 men and put in 25 in their place?—I don't want to put away any man in that respect; I thought there was ample space for them all.

32,118. But we must provide somewhere for the shepherds if you displace them?—Oh, yes, of course.

32,119. Where would you put them?—I thought the shepherds would have as good a right as any.

32,120. If you leave them in possession you would only be able to add ten to their number, assuming your areas to be all correct?—But there would be plenty for us at my number, taking the shepherds too.

32,121. I presume there are shepherds' houses on most of these places?—Yes.

32,122. But there would be accommodation for only one crofter at each place I have mentioned?—Yes.

32,123. Therefore, you would require to provide a place, would you not, for each of the others?—Oh, yes.

32,124. Now, have you any idea, in your own mind, as to how these buildings could be put up? Would you be able to erect your buildings?—I would not be able on my own head to build for myself, but I know of men who would be able and would be willing to take the lodgings, and to build for themselves any day.

32,125. And you think the average number of sheep in each of these hirsels is about 700?—Yes, taking them on an average I think they will come to about that.

32,126. Do you think you will find men willing to take a half or a third of these 700 sheep, and to build the necessary houses?—Oh, I think so.

32,127. You believe there are people in your neighbourhood who would do so?—Yes; I don't say there are as many in my neighbourhood, those whom I represent, as would take up the whole of the ground, but I know there are plenty in other places that would be ready to go.

32,128. Do you happen to know what would be the average rent of these hirsels?—No.

32,129. Do you think these new tenants would be able to pay the same rent as the like of the Messrs Kennedy are paying, as the forest farm is entered at in the present Valuation Roll?—Oh, the rent would, of course, have to be considered afterwards. I think it would be a good thing for the country to have crofters on the ground, and I think it would pay the country fully as well as a big sheep farm.

32,130. I don't dispute that part of it; but the question is, would these crofters be able to pay as much rent as the ordinary tacksman, do you think?—I don't know if they would, after building and everything.

32,131. As a matter of fact, they would require to be moderately rented before they could be successful?—Of course, if they were to have buildings and everything before them as the sheep farmer has I have no doubt they could pay the rent as well as he does.

32,132. But the difficulty is that there are not buildings on the ground, and we must provide these buildings: so that whoever does provide the buildings the cost of doing so would be an extra tax upon the present rental: I must point that out to you?—Yes, of course.

32,133. You admit that?—Yes.

32,134. But still you think there are men in the country, in your neighbourhood, or otherwise, who would be willing to take a share of these grazings?—Yes.

32,135. To erect the necessary buildings?—Yes.

32,136. And to pay in cash the relative value of the stock effeiring to each of the new men?—Yes.

32,137. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to these townships that you represent, I find that the average amount of arable land they possess is very much less than you have stated?—Very likely it may be.

32,138. I am talking just now of the townships that you are here to represent.—The people of Brae, Oape, Doune, and Innis-nan-Damh?—Yes.

32,139. Their average amount of arable land is only about 7 acres each?—Very likely.

32,140. You were proposing to give how much arable land to each,—15 acres, was it?—30 acres.

32,141. So that if the people at the present moment subsist on 7 acres of arable land, you think if they got 30 they would be very much better off?—Yes, but you must keep in mind that it is not upon arable land that they subsist just now?—They have to work.

32,142. That would increase their chance of success very materially?—Oh, yes.

32,143. Do you know who built the houses on Oape and Brae and Doune and Innis-nan-Damh?—Sir Charles Ross built them partly.

32,144. What proportion was provided by the landlords, and what by the tenant?—The tenants did the carting. They have got new houses lately, most of them, of which Sir Charles paid for the mason work and carpenter work and slate.

32,145. He paid the mason work and the carpenter work: and did he provide the materials?—Oh, yes, he provided everything; they had nothing to do but the carting.

32,146. Was that the way in which the house you live in yourself was built?—No, the house that I live in is on a feu: the man I came in after was a feuar, who built the house at his own expense.

32,147. So that house cost the landlord nothing?—No.

32,148. And you are now paying rent for it?—No, I just pay so much for the grazing, and have the house along with the grazing. Of course, I pay so much for the house in a sense, but everything is taken in at the one rent.

32,149. But, as I understand what you have stated, the provision made by Sir Charles Ross is much above the average in liberality?—I believe it is; I am quite sure it is.

32,150. But the house you are living in cost him nothing?—It is not on Sir Charles Ross's estate that I live.

32,151. Those townships of Brae, Oape, Doune, and Innis-nan-damh, are they all on the Balnagown estate?—Yes.

32,152. But you are not on the Balnagown estate?—No.

32,153. Whose estate are you on?—The British Linen Coy. Bank's.

32,154. Is the British Linen Banking Coy. a landlord?—Yes.

32,155. How does that come about?—G. G. Mackay bought the estate, and in some way it came into the hands of the British Linen Coy. through him,—I don't know how it was.

32,156. And the bank is holding lands, and collecting rents, and performing the usual functions of a landlord?—Yes. I am told the estate is sold lately, but I cannot speak with certainty.

32,157. Has it got many tenants except you?—Oh, yes, there is a number of tenants down Strath Oykell.

32,158. *The Chairman.* — The proprietor, whose name is entered on the Valuation Roll, is Harry Cheyne, Esq., W.S., Edinburgh, as trustee of George Grant Mackay. The entry with regard to the forest farm is, Forest, tenant, Lady Ross, rent, £540; and the farm of Croick, tenant, Lady Ross, rental, £225, or a total rental of £765. That seems to be the state of the rental?—Yes

32,159. *Mr Anderson, factor for Balnagown.* — I should like to ask one or two questions, principally in reference to your desire to transplant the people. You appear particularly on behalf of the people of Strath Oykell, I think you said?—Yes.

32,160. How much pasture land have they, do you know?—I cannot exactly say, I think it is over 400 acres.

32,161. Hill pasture?—Yes.

32,162. Are you not aware that they have a common grazing of about 3000 acres of hill pasture?—I am not aware.

32,163. It is a fact, however; I think Mr Sutherland will bear me out in that. I should like to put a question or two in regard to the condition of the people there. You have referred to tenants having rather better houses than is customary with crofters, and you also mentioned particularly one tenant who you thought was a prosperous man, Kenneth Macleod. I suppose you knew his father?—Yes.

32,164. Did you ever hear a story about his leaving a good deal of money when he died?—Yes, I heard that.

32,165. How much did you hear that he left?—I did not hear the sum.

32,166. Did he do anything else but work his croft?—Yes.

32,167. What did he do?—I could tell you that, and how he made his money; but a man is not bound to tell everything here.

32,168. Have you ever heard this remark made, that the people frequently pay their rents with what they get from the wool?—I am not aware of that. I know what wool is sold, and what price is got for it, and I know they do not pay the fourth part of their rents with it.

32,169. You never heard it said that in good years George Anderson at Bonar had given them a sufficient amount of money for their clip, their season's clip, to enable them to pay their rents?—That might be so twenty years back when wool was selling at £1 a stone; but I am quite confident to-day that there are none on the Strath that could pay a third of their rent by means of the wool.

32,170. How many sheep would Kenneth Macleod have?—I could not say.

32,171. Is it about 100, do you think?—No,

32,172. Is it much short of that?—Oh, yes.

32,173. How many has George Ross, Oape?—Very few.

32,174. You do not mean to assert that there are too many people in Strath Oykell?—Yes.

32,175. But there are a good many families of elderly people without any children. My impression is that Strath Oykell, unlike other straths, is thinly peopled. Do you think it would be wise to make the people of Strath Oykell go to Tuitem and Caploch?—I think it would be more than wise for the half of them to go there to-morrow, if they got the chance.

32,176. You also say that the people wish to remove from their present holdings and to go elsewhere?—Yes.

32,177. Do you know John Ross's place at Loubcroy?—Yes.

32,178. Would you like to put people there?—Yes.

32,179. Did you see his crop there this year?—Yes.

32,180. Was not this a rather favourable year all over the Highlands?—Yes.

32,181. What like was his crop when he cut it?—It was very good.

32,182. Was it ripe?—No, for he did not give it time to ripen: if he had given it time it would have been ripe enough.

32,183. Does it ever ripen?—Yes.

32,184. Is it not the fact that at a good many of these places, particularly on the Cassley side, the crops are always cut in a green condition?—I have been on the Cassley side, and I have seen the crops there as ripe as ever I saw them in Strath Oykell, and as good a crop. I think I have never seen such a crop as in Dail-nan-Cliabh.

32,185. Is Da-nan-Cliabh very subject to flooding by the river?—Not where the crop is.

32,186. I thought it was just precisely where the crop is that the flooding took place?—It floods sometimes in the winter time if there is a snowstorm, and the ice breaks about that part.

32,187. Does it not flood very frequently?—Not at Dail-nan-Cliabh. Tain.

32,188. How would you account for that arable land having been allowed to go out of cultivation?—When the crofters were all evicted from it, of course it had to go out of cultivation then. Alexander Ross.

32,189. When were there crofters there?—Since about 80 years: I cannot give the exact date, but it is about 80 or 90 years since they were removed.

32,190. But if it was worth cultivating at all, would not the shepherds cultivate some of these places?—Of course the shepherds cultivate as much as they get leave to cultivate. There is so much set apart for each shepherd to cultivate, and he does that, but may not go beyond it.

32,191. That is not my opinion. My impression is that they cultivate just as much as they require for their immediate needs?—I was a shepherd myself.

32,192. I am speaking of Invercassley grounds?—Well, that is Invercassley.

32,193. In regard to Langwell, you said there was old arable land there?—Yes.

32,194. Where about is that? You do not refer to the farm that the postmaster at present occupies?—Yes, of course.

32,195. That is not old arable land in the strict sense of the word; it is arable land?—That is what I referred to.

32,196. Is the land you refer to there presently worked or cropped by the postmaster?—No.

32,197. It is not being cropped just now?—No.

32,198. Is it many years since it was cropped?—It is only twice that ever I saw one park of it cropped in my time.

32,199. Where about does it lie precisely?—It lies about three miles on this side of Oykell.

32,200. I think you said that, occasionally, you worked for sporting gentlemen?—I wrought for them sometimes.

32,201. If the crofters were transported from their present holdings to, say, Loubcroy, what effect would that have upon the shooting?—I don't think it would have any bad effect upon it; I think it would only benefit the shooting.

32,202. You believe the shooting would let. Would it be a loss to the people and a loss to the parish generally if the shooting was not let?—I don't think it would be any loss to the people. It might be a loss to one or two individuals; but, taking the people as a whole, it would not.

32,203. Is it not a fact that a vast number of the young men in such places as Strath Oykell and Strath Carron are employed in one shape or other by the sporting tenant in the season?—Five or six might be engaged for a month or so, but what is that?

32,204. *Mr Sutherland.*—I should like it made clear about the common pasture that these townships have. Is it the fact, according to your knowledge, that the townships of Innis-nan-Damh, Doune, Oape, Brae, Hillton, Easter Rhelonie, Wester Rhelonie, Bogroy, and a tenant on the Hill of Edderton, have all a common right to the 2300 acres of hill pasture?—No, none but the Strath Oykell tenants have it.

32,205. You were not aware, then, that the townships you represent had 2300 acres of hill pasture?—No, I thought they had not that.

32,206. But you do not doubt that it may be the case?—Oh, no; I do not doubt Mr Anderson, of course, as he knows about it.

JAMES MURRAY, Doune (25)—*examined.* James Murray.

32,207. *The Chairman.*—Have you a croft of your own, or do you live with your father?—My grandmother holds the croft, but I work it.

32,208. What rent does she pay?—The rent fixed by the Crofters Commission was £4, 8s.

32,209. What was the old rent?—£6.

32,210. I see widow Ross or Macleod entered as having a holding of 4 acres 3 roods 2 poles arable, no

Tain. James Murray.

outrun, and share in common pasture of 2300 acres. That common pasture is shared by the townships of Brae, Doune, Oape, and Innis-nan-Damh?—Yes.

32,211. Were you appointed as a delegate at the same meeting as Ross, Ochto Falls?—Yes.

32,212. Did you hear his evidence?—Yes.

32,213. And do you concur in it?—I do.

32,214. *Mr Gordon.*—You speak just of the same land that he spoke to?—Yes.

32,215. Have you anything to add to what he told us?—Not much.

32,216. Is there anything you would like to say?—I would like to say something about the deer forest. I have a personal knowledge of the deer forest of Drumvaich and Corriemulzie; I was gillie at Corriemulzie for the shooting party for the last four seasons, and I know the place very well. I consider it is very good arable and pasture land.

32,217. Do you agree with the evidence which Ross gave as to the availability of these places as places where self-sustaining holdings might be established, where crofters could live without going to labour elsewhere?—Yes.

32,218. Have you anything else to add?—No.

John Ross.

JOHN ROSS, Crofter, Syal, Strathcarron (29) —*examined.*

32,219. *The Chairman.*—Was your rent fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

32,220. What was the old rent?—£7, 10s.

32,221. And what is the new rent?—£6.

32,222. I see from the blue book there is a holding in name of John Ross and Widow Ann Maclean or Ross, containing 6 acres 3 roods arable, 8 acres 3 roods 15 poles outrun, and a share of 2500 acres common to the townships of Balchrick, Corvost, Fearann-nan caorach, Lon-na-meine, Cawderg, Wester Syal, Mid Syal, Syal and Cornhill.

32,223. Have you a written statement?—No.

32,224. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

32,225. At a meeting of what crofters?—The Kincardine Association. I am going to give evidence, as far as I can from memory, about the Braelangwell sheep farm occupied by Mr Anderson, Bonar.

32,226. What is it you wish to say about it?—I wish to say that about the year 1806 it was cleared of crofters, who were packed into Strathcarron, where they live now.

32,227. Do you know how many crofters were cleared off?—No, I cannot say.

32,228. Is your information derived from old people?—Yes.

32,229. Are these alive, or people who are now dead?—One of them is alive, who has the old tack or lease that he had in 1806.

32,230. You mean the document itself?—Yes.

32,231. Have you brought it with you?—No.

32,231A. Well, I wish you had. They held Braelangwell as a township under an old lease, did they?—Yes.

32,232. Which is still existing?—Yes.

32,233. In whose possession is it?—Finlay Munro, Donmain.

32,234. Will you send the document in to the Secretary?—If I get it; or I will send a copy.

32,235. The Secretary asks me to say that if you will send in the principal he will return it without any loss of time?—Yes.*

32,236. That land is under sheep now?—Yes.

32,237. Is there a considerable tract of ground there suitable for occupation by crofters?—I heard it said that there were about 130 acres of arable land. Tain. John Ross.

32,238. Who told you that?—The people said so; and by good hill pasture, with a part of the hill pasture of Strathcarron attached to it in 1878, taken off the Strath people,—the best portion of the hill.

32,239. Do you know what extent was taken off?—No, I could not say.

32,240. What is done with it now?—It is added to the Braelangwell sheep farm.

32,241. And is under sheep at present?—Yes.

32,242. Is Braelangwell sheep farm in the hands of the proprietor?—No.

32,243. Who is the tenant?—Mr Anderson, South Bonar.

32,244. Does he hold it under lease, do you know?—I suppose so, because we approached the estate more than once to get the sheep farm of Braelangwell attached to Strathcarron, and we were always told that it was under lease.

32,245. How many times did you apply for it?—It was once that we applied by petition for it.

32,246. When was that?—I cannot recollect, but about ten years ago I should think.

32,247. And the answer given was that it was under lease?—Yes.

32,248. Was it for extension of grazing you applied?—Yes.

32,249. Then, are the crofters whom you represent in need of more land?—Yes.

32,250. For extension of grazing, or for new holdings, or for both?—For both.

32,251. Are the townships you represent overcrowded?—Yes.

32,252. And would some of the occupants of the holdings there be willing to leave them if they got larger holdings elsewhere?—I believe they would.

32,253. And would those who remain be willing to take up the vacated crofts?—Yes.

32,254. Now, do you think such a holding as you have in view could be cultivated to a profit?—I believe so.

32,255. Would those who take the new holdings be able to enter upon them, and carry them on without assistance?—I cannot say.

32,256. Are you desirous of leaving your holding?—If I got a holding that would keep me from having to march the country for work I would leave it to-morrow.

32,257. You have a holding of 752 acres altogether?—About 6 arable.

32,258. Six arable and 8¾ outrun, and a share of the hill?—Yes.

32,259. Are you able to live by the holding?—No.

32,260. You say you have to walk the country for work; is that for labouring work?—No; I am a mason to trade.

32,261. You go to get mason work?—Yes.

32,262. And do you live mainly by the croft, or mainly by the mason work?—I live mainly by my trade.

32,263. Then, of course, if you got a holding which was self-sustaining, you would have to give up the mason work, and devote your time exclusively to your croft?—Yes.

32,264. But you were brought up a mason, I suppose?—Yes.

32,265. What stock have you got?—Two cows and a horse.

32,266. Any sheep?—Fifteen ewes.

32,267. Do you ask our attention to any other lands than have been mentioned already?—No, I confine myself to the sheep farm of Braelangwell; there are other delegates for other places.

32,268. *Mr Sutherland.*—Could you tell us the boundaries of the Braelangwell farm?—On the west it is bounded by Littlejohn's property.

32,269. Could you give us any natural feature that forms the boundary,—the eastern boundary is the *Allt Domhainn*, is it not?—Yes.

32,270. What is the western boundary of it?—(*Mr*

* On 22nd January 1894 Ross wrote the Secretary as follows with reference to the lease:—"On enquiry I find that I was 'misinformed as to the existence of an old lease relative to 'Braelangwell at the time it was cleared of crofters. But the 'Strathcarron people held the part of their common which was 'added to the Braelangwell sheep farm in 1878, under a 19 'years' lease, which expired that year. But on the renewal of 'our leases the best part of our common was added to the Brae-'langwell sheep farm. Therefore I wish my evidence from 'question 32,229 to question 32,235 to be cancelled."

Anderson.—You will see it all from the plan which I produced).

32,271. What do you think Braelangwell farm is best fitted for; is it for an extension of the existing grazings of the people on the north side of Strathcarron, or for new holdings?—I think it would be more suitable for new holdings.

32,272. How many holdings do you think it would be suitable for?—Five or six, I should think.

32,273. Then, could you give us a general idea how the land farther up the glen than the boundary of Braelangwell farm on the same side is occupied?—As a sheep farm.

32,274. What is the name of the sheep farm?—Strath Cuilionach.

32,275. What is the extent of it?—I cannot say.

32,276. It is as large as or larger than Braelangwell?—Three times as large as Braelangwell.

32,277. Is it part of the forest farm?—I think the Strath is between three and four miles long, with an average breadth of three quarters of a mile.

32,278. But, at the present time, it is part of the farm known as the Forest farm?—Yes.

32,279. Is the land in Braelangwell of the same character as the land on the south side of the river that the people have got?—It is if anything better.

32,280. How many people do you say were in the farm?—I could not say.

32,281. You have not heard how many?—No.

32,282. And it is presently occupied by Mr Anderson?—Yes.

32,283. Has he any other farms except this one?—Yes, he has a good number.

32,284. Has he more farms than one?—He has other three or four.

32,285. Which of these farms does he reside on?—He resides on none.

32,286. Is not that the Mr Anderson who lives down at Bonarbridge?—Yes.

32,287. What are the other farms he has got?—Kincardine, and Badanvoon and Braelangwell, and a bit farm at Bonar; and I believe he has another farm in Sutherlandshire, but I am not sure of that.

32,288. Who held the farm before he became the tenant?—Mr John Forsyth, late factor for the Balnagown estate.

32,289. Did he hold it when he was factor?—Yes.

32,290. He was at one time factor on the Balnagown estate?—Yes.

32,291. But has now ceased to be?—Yes.

32,292. Is there any other land that you particularly call our attention to besides the Braelangwell farm?—Only Strath Cuilionach.

32,293. What do you say with regard to Strath Cuilionach?—I have not very much knowledge about Strath Cuilionach, only that they were cleared away a long time ago—about the beginning of this century or the end of last century—I am not able to give the exact date.

32,294. Now, with regard to Strathcarron itself, are the tenants there leaseholders or crofters mostly?—They are all crofters.

32,295. Have they built many new houses since the passing of the Act?—They are about starting now. They have not built any yet, but I think they are in process of starting three or four in the Strath.

32,296. Is it the intention of the people to build better houses on account of the security of tenure?—Yes.

32,297. Supposing you got such a holding as you desire, you, being a mason, would be in exceptionally good circumstances to build a house?—Yes.

32,298. And there are a number of other people who could contribute to the building of the houses themselves?—Oh, I believe they could do a little.

32,299. Have you any fear in your own mind that if they got the opportunity of forming holdings on this good land there would be insurmountable difficulties in the way of putting up houses and steadings?—I don't suppose there would.

32,300. Have they within your memory in Strath Carron improved their houses and steadings?—Some of them.

32,301. Is the tendency towards improving them and making them better?—I think so. I know there is a great cry for land, because, if a croft becomes vacant there are a number of applicants. Tain. John Ross.

32,302. You know, as a matter of fact, that whenever a croft becomes vacant there are a number of applicants?—Yes.

32,303. And that a great number of people are always disappointed when they cannot get it?—Yes.

32,304. *Mr Anderson, factor for Balnagown.*—When you speak of Mr Anderson's farm, do you refer to the whole of the farm, or to the part that you say the Strath Carron crofters were at one time deprived of?—I speak about the whole farm of Braelangwell

32,305. Is it not the case that some number of years ago,—I think about ten years ago,—the crofters were told that they might have part of the farm again if they liked on their own terms? I wish you would tell the Commissioners what you remember about that?—If you want to know I will just tell you the condition they were to get the farm upon. [*The Chairman.*—Do so, please]. They were to take over 1200 of Mr Anderson's sheep at valuation, *i.e*, £2000.

32,306. Yes, but what terms did the landlord propose?—These were the terms.

32,307. These were the terms between themselves and the outgoing tenant, what terms was the landlord disposed to give the farm upon?—If they would not give £2000 for the sheep they would not get the farm, these were the terms.

32,308. Was it not the case that apart altogether from the stock, with which the landlord had nothing to do, he was prepared practically to give the tenants the farm for nothing, or that part of it?—No, I remember it perfectly well: Mr Forsyth came round with two papers, one of £2000 and the other to be signed, that they would have nothing to do with it.

32,309. The matter fell through because you, the crofters, and the outgoing tenant could not agree as to the valuation of the sheep?—Yes, because they could not agree.

32,310. But as far as the landlord was concerned they might have had the place?—Yes, for £2000.

32,311. That would not have gone into the landlord's pocket at any rate?—It was the landlord's agent that was going about with the papers at anyrate.

32,312. You say that some of the crofters in Strath Carron would be prepared to leave their present holdings if they got a holding elsewhere. Would you be kind enough to mention them as I would like that recorded. Just mention their names. [*No answer*].

32,313. *The Chairman.*—You are asked to mention the names of any who would be willing to leave and take such holdings as we have been hearing of.—I cannot say, because I did not go through the crofters to see who were willing to leave or not.

32,314. But is it your belief that there are such persons?—Yes, because when any croft falls vacant in the strath there are any number of applicants for it.

32,315. There is a competition for every croft?—Yes.

32,316. *Mr Anderson.*—That refers to outsiders; but who among the people in the strath are prepared to leave their places and go elsewhere,—I don't care where it is, to a better place, or a worse place,—who do you imagine would be willing to give up their holdings and go elsewhere?—I would for one if I got a holding that would support me.

32,317. Any one else?—I did not go over the strath to see.

32,318. You are a mason to trade?—Yes.

32,319. And you get work pretty regularly, don't you?—Sometimes.

32,320. Would you prefer to discontinue being a mason and working altogether at your trade, and become altogether a crofter?—I would.

DONALD ROSE, Baddaroch (54)—*examined.* Donald Rose.

32,321. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

32,322. Was your rent fixed by the Crofters Commission?—No.

Tain. Donald Rose.

32,323. What rent do you pay?—£5.

32,324. Do you hold from year to year, or under lease?—Our lease was out last Martinmas, and we have no lease now at all. [*Mr Sutherland.* You said you were a crofter?—I am a leaseholder, we are leaseholders, but our lease has expired].

32,325. And now you hold from year to year?—Yes.

32,326. For what term did the lease run?—We had a lease for nineteen years.

32,327. And what was the rent under the lease?—At the beginning of the lease my rent was £10, and it was reduced by the proprietor to £5.

32,328. Are you paying £5 of rent since the lease expired?—Yes.

32,329. I think you are most interested in the lands which Mr Sutherland and myself went to see on Saturday?—Yes.

32,330. These are hill grazings?—Hill grazings, of which we were deprived nineteen years ago.

32,331. Were these the hill grazings you lost in 1874?—Yes.

32,332. Through some proceedings on the part of the late Mr George Grant Mackay?—Yes.

32,333. Now can you tell us what extent of grazing you lost then?—Over 2000 acres, including all the tenants in our district and the township pasture.

32,334. Can you give us any idea of the boundaries of that grazing?—Yes. [*Mr Gordon.*—Did they extend to the Balnagown march]?—On the east side by the Balnagown march, and on the west by the sheep farm of Ochto, or Inver Oykell as it is called now.

32,335. You had the farm of Ochto on the west?—Yes.

32,336. And you had the farm of Braelangwell on the south?—Yes, on the ridge.

32,337. The ridge was the boundary?—Yes, the watershed.

32,338. Then you had the Kyle of Sutherland on the east?—Yes.

32,339. And you yourselves were on the north?—Yes.

32,340. That was the ground which had been purchased by Mr Mackay from Novar?—Yes.

32,341. At the time of the purchase, was it under lease?—The lease was out at the time he purchased it from Novar.

32,342. Then, was it taken away by Mr Mackay shortly after his purchase?—Mr Mackay had it a long time: he had it four years ago, and then the British Linen Coy. got it as trustees.

32,343. When did he take it from you, was it in 1874?—Yes.

32,344. Now, at the time it was taken from you, was there any change made on your rents?—Yes.

32,345. They were reduced?—They were doubled and trebled, all the hill pasture was taken off us, and a lot of low ground as well.

32,346. Was that low ground near the road?—Near the Kyle of Sutherland.

32,347. And, as I understand, your main desire and that of those for whom you appear is to bring that land which you lost under our consideration now?—Yes.

32,348. You were appointed, I think, as a delegate?—Yes.

32,349. At a meeting of the crofters who had been interested in this pasture?—Yes.

32,350. What were the names of the townships represented at the meeting?—Cill-Mochalmaig, Ach-na-h-Annaid, and Baddaroch.

32,351. Did the loss of the ground as pasture cause a reduction in your stock?—Yes.

32,352. Both sheep and cattle?—Both sheep and cattle.

32,353. When you lost that pasture, did you get any other pasture in lieu of it?—No.

32,354. And have you since that time been without pasture?—Yes, for nineteen years.

32,355. Would it meet your views and the views of those you represent if that pasture were restored?—Very much.

32,356. It is more with a view to the restoration of that pasture than for new holdings that you are giving evidence before us?—Yes. Tain.

32,357. It is rather rough black pasture, but is it good summer feeding?—It is all good pasture for summer and winter. Donald Rose.

32,358. Is there a good deal of green interspersed with the heather?—Yes, but the sort of plants that are now growing on it are spoiling the low ground very much. At the tops there are no plants; they will not grow there; and they will not grow on the low ground, except some bushes.

32,359. I think you have stated verbally all that you say in this letter to us?—Yes.

32,360. So I think we need not read it over.

32,361. *Mr Sutherland.*—You mentioned the townships of Cill-Mochalmaig, Easter Ach-na-h-Annaid, and Baddaroch?—Yes.

32,362. But are not there other townships that were interested in the grazing as well?—Yes, but there is a delegate here to represent them, and I would rather not interfere with them.

32,363. What was the boundary farther up the river,—what was the boundary of the pasture that was taken from the townships?—The hills facing the district.

32,364. Can you give me the name of the western boundary of it?—Yes, Alltmore. Cill-Mochalmaig burn comes in a curve to the east end, Meall-Deargaidh.

32,365. Did it follow the Alltmore all the way?—No, there are five or six branches coming into the Alltmore.

32,366. Which of these did it go up?—By the fourth branch, in to the east corner, Meall Deargaidh; then it follows the watershed all the way till it joins with Rhelonie estate.

33,367. You made the very strange statement that when your pasture was taken away your rent was increased. Are you sure that was the fact?—I am sure it was more than doubly increased. In the Novar time I was paying £6.

32,368. You were paying £6 before your pasture was taken away?—Yes.

32,369. And what did you pay afterwards?—£10. I paid £10 for fifteen years, and I was beat to pay it; I could not pay it.

32,370. Then, you said some low ground was taken from you as well as the pasture. What low ground was that?—What we call the meadows at the waterside: it was joined to another and part taken off Barroch, about 100 acres: and we got about one and a half acres for these 100 acres that were taken off and joined to Achnagart. When we got the new proprietor he made new properties.

32,371. But the result to you was that your pasture was taken away and your rent was raised at the same time?—Yes, I lived in poverty, but we are alive yet, thanks to the Almighty.

32,372. Who is the present proprietor?—As far as I can know I think it is the British Linen Coy., and they are very nice with us,—I am not going to say a word against them. I heard that the estate was sold about four weeks ago, but I cannot say, for I am not going to interfere in such matters.

32,373. You know to whom you pay your rent?—We pay to the British Linen Coy. [*The Chairman.*—The British Linen Coy. have been very reasonable and forbearing?—They are very reasonable with us, and very gentlemanly.]

32,374. Have they reduced your rent?—No, they did not reduce our rent: I hope they will.

David Ross, Torroy (42)—*examined.* David R

32,375. *The Chairman.*—Were you appointed as a delegate at the same meeting as Donald Rose?—Yes.

32,376. And is your evidence to the same effect?—It is.

32,377. We may take you as concurring with the evidence he gave?—Yes, so far; only we were deprived of our hill grazing by the late Mr Hadwen, who bought the Rhelonie estate from the late G. G. Mackay.

32,378. Was your grazing just a part of the same block of grazing that Mr Rose has been referring to?—Adjoining it.

32,379. And Mr Mackay bought the land of which your pasture was a part from the late Mr Hadwen?—No; Mr Hadwen bought the estate of Rhelonie from Mr Mackay.

32,380. Through whom was it you lost your pasture?—Through the late Mr Hadwen.

32,381. He took it away from you shortly after the purchase?—Yes, as soon as the lease expired he fenced off the hill pasture. The tenants had the hill pasture before then from time immemorial.

32,382. In what year was that?—In 1875.

32,383. Was your rent raised or lowered, or left as it was?—Left as it was.

32,384. What rent do you pay?—We are under the Crofters Act; we pay £7, 10s. now.

32,385. That is your new rent, but what was your old rent?—£9, 1s. 6d.

32,386. Are you and those whom you represent anxious for restoration of that park?—Certainly.

32,387. It is more in that view you come before us than for new holdings?—Certainly.

32,388. What townships do you particularly represent?—Easter Rhelonie and Wester Rhelonie or Torroy, and Achnagart.

32,389. These are the townships immediately next the townships of Badandarrach and Cill-Mochalmaig and Ach-na-h-Annaid?—Yes.

32,390. And the pasture we have been dealing with stretches along immediately to the south of all these townships?—Yes.

32,391. *Mr Sutherland.*—Can you give us the eastern boundary of the pasture that was taken from you?—The march between Rhelonie and Inver House or Rhiantyre, the property of Mr Smith.

32,392. The fence that encloses the plantation, is that it?—That is so.

32,393. Then after that, what?—Just along to Hilltown again.

32,394. Following the fence, is it, as far as it goes?—There is a piece there belonging to Sheriff Simpson enclosed.

32,395. Is it in a straight line to Hilltown?—It goes in a bend, but part of that pasture belonged at one time to the Mains farm of Culrain.

32,396. Then it curves round somewhat?—Yes, and to the top of Shian to the watershed.

32,397. *The Chairman.*—Is any of the land that was taken from you now under wood?—The Croc-Chait, as it is called, is under plantation.

32,398. Was that part of your pasture?—It belonged to the Achnagart township.

32,399. Is there any great extent of it in wood?—I cannot give the exact area.

32,400. At any rate no part of your pasture has been put under wood?—No.

WILLIAM CAMPBELL, Crofter, Amat-na-tuath (66)—*examined.*

32,401. *The Chairman.*—Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes, I was.

32,402. At a meeting of what townships?—I was not present at the meeting, but I was appointed to show the ground to the Royal Commissioners,—not to attend any meeting, but just to show the Royal Commission the place where tenants were of old.

32,403. Just mention the place or places?—Glencalvie.

32,404. Tell us in your own words what you wish to say with regard to Glencalvie?—There were 17 families evicted in 1845, and three or four cottars.

32,405. Seventeen crofters and four cottars?—Yes, they had no place on the face of the earth to go to in the meantime but the churchyard.

32,406. Is that land under sheep now?—It is occupied as deer forest, but first and foremost it was made a sheep farm.

32,407. It is now the deer forest of Glencalvie?—Yes.

32,408. Were the crofters living in townships?—Yes.

32,409. What were the names of the townships?—The name of the township was Glencalvie.

32,410. Have you heard of Glen More?—No.

32,411. Was there one township, or more than one?—Only one.

32,412. And there were 17 crofters and four cottars in Glencalvie?—Yes. In all there were 23 crofters between both sides of the glen.

32,413. That land is now under deer, and you invite our attention to it for inspection, do you?—(*In Gaelic*). Yes, undoubtedly, the Royal Commission should go and see it.

32,414. Is it land that, in your opinion, would be suitable for cultivation by crofters now?—I know that by experience.

32,415. How many crofters would it accommodate?—It would accommodate six on the north side, and three on the south side.

32,416. And what size of holding would these have?—They would not have much of what you call arable, but the hill pasture is good.

32,417. Would they have such an extent of hill pasture as would enable them to live by their holdings?—(*In Gaelic*). Between arable land and hill ground they could make their living.

32,418. Could they live by the holding alone, without going elsewhere to labour?—They might, or they might not: it would depend on the price of stock.

32,419. Is there any other land you wish us to consider besides Glencalvie?—Yes, there is a bit of land they would like to get part of; it belongs to Sir Kenneth Matheson of Ardross. I live on that estate; not on Glencalvie, but on Sir Kenneth Matheson's estate.

32,420. What is the name of that land belonging to Sir Kenneth Matheson?—It is a Gaelic name, Muckernich.

32,421. What is the extent of it?—I could not actually say the number of acres.

32,422. Is it under sheep?—No, it is under deer at present.

32,423. What deer forest is that?—Glen Dibidal deer forest; it adjoins our march.

32,424. Then, is there any other land you wish to mention, or are these the only two places?—Well, I believe some members of the Royal Commission saw part of Strath Chuilionaich, and that belongs to Sir Charles Ross of Balnagown.

32,425. And is there land there?—Plenty.

32,426. *Mr Gordon.*—What part of Dibidal forest is it you referred to?—The back joins us at Sallachy: on the south side of Sallachy water.

32,427. Is that at Loch-na-Tuppah, or Carn-dubh?—Marching with Carn-dubh.

32,428. Is it upon the south side of your present pasture?—Yes.

32,429. Is it Cairn Sallachy?—No, it is Carn-dubh.

32,430. Does Amat-na-tuath belong to Sir Kenneth Matheson now?—Yes.

32,431. What is the name of your place?—Amat-na-tuath; you have been round there yourself.

32,432. Do you not have the grazings just now to the top of the hill, to the watershed?—Yes, we have the grazing to the water, on the north side of the water.

32,433. You go up past Cnoc-an-t-saic there?—We graze past Cnoc-an-t-saic, down to the water on the north side.

32,434. And the ground that you say you want or wish to get is the ground between your present pasture and the river Calvie?—Between Glencalvie and the road that leads from Ardross Castle to Dindy Lodge.

32,435. The road would be on the south side of the land you want to get?—Yes.

32,436. And is that ground at present occupied as a deer forest?—Yes.

32,437. Part of the Dibidal deer forest?—Yes.

32,438. Now, when you speak of Glen Chuilionaich, to what part of it do you refer?—The whole of it, from end to end.

Tain. — William Campbell.

32,439. That is from Craigmore down to Croick?—Yes.

32,440. There are apparently four hirsels there at present; Craigmore on the one side, Loub-nan-cuinneag on the other side, and Glaschoill and Croick, is that so?—Yes.

32,441. There is not much of that land that you could safely cultivate, is there?—The whole of the low ground could be cultivated, but in many cases the water might come over the low ground. But that could be checked.

32,442. Well, I would not like to dishearten you, but, I am afraid it would be a difficult matter to keep the water from overflowing?—These lands were cultivated in former days.

32,443. Is it not a fact that the whole of the green ground in Glencalvie is so flat as to be subject to flooding every time the river rises?—Oh, yes, no doubt, the water will come over it.

32,444. I would not go quite so far as you; I don't think it would go quite over the whole, but I think it would cover four-fifths of it?—It will come within half-a-mile of Rhelonie House, to the east end.

32,445. Would you propose to put crofters in Glencalvie with the object of their cultivating that green ground?—It would not be altogether the cultivation of the low ground, but the produce of the hill.

32,446. That means a sheep stock farm?—Yes.

32,447. How many people would you suppose could be put on it?—I am not prepared to give the Royal Commission any answer to that; if I had time I could soon tell, but I had no time to consider the matter over.

32,448. There are apparently four hirsels there at present: now, how many more people would you expect to keep in that glen?—It would keep double the quantity.

32,449. Well, assume that it would keep eight,—I believe it would, but you must recollect this, that in those four hirsels there are in all probability about 3000 sheep, so that each of your eight men would have to take over 375 sheep?—That would be little enough for them to live upon and pay their landlord.

32,450. Little enough if they paid the same rent as the tacksman. Now, do you think you could get eight men in your country who would have sufficient capital to do that, for you must also keep in view that there are no buildings there except the houses of the four shepherds; they would have to erect buildings for the extra four men?—Well, I cannot say in the present day, because the land is getting of less value than it was some years ago.

32,451. Yes, but it is very good ground: there is nothing to say against the land: but what we want to get at just now is whether you could get eight men in your locality, or in the strath about you, with sufficient capital to provide the buildings and to purchase these 375 sheep (I take the number at the statement made by a previous witness). The value of these sheep at the present time would possibly be not far from £600?—That is according to the market: we cannot set a figure on it.

32,451*a*. I am taking the market prices,—the prices that have generally ruled in this part of the country?—Some few years ago we were getting 14s. more for a sheep than we would get to-day.

32,452. I quite agree with you. I have heard of sheep being valued in your country at 70s. for the ewe and lamb, which at present prices would fetch something like 40s. or 50s. But putting it at 25s. per head on the average, would mean nearly £500?—Hardly; you may leave it at £1, 1s.

32,453. I won't be very particular. Suppose we take them at £1, 1s., that would be £400 for the sheep. How much would you allow for the buildings?—Surely to goodness if I was paying my landlord he would be obliged to give me a place to live in: I was not going to live in a tent outside. It is the case at the present day that landlords are putting up buildings for tenants. There may be something different under this new law, but I am ignorant of it.

32,454. There are four of your eight men who would have to pay £400 each for the sheep and who would occupy the present shepherds' houses: and there are other four who would have to pay £400, and to build houses for themselves?—Likely these poor men had as much right to get houses as those who might get the shepherds' houses.

Tain. — William Campbell.

32,455. Very likely, they might be the better men, but unfortunately they cannot, two of them, live in the one house. But do you suppose you could find people of sufficient wealth to take these places?—There is no doubt but the money could be raised.

32,456. You have no fear of it?—No.

32,457. You think if the lands were available you would find people of sufficient capital to take them?—I don't bind myself to take them, but I know throughout the country there are those who would chance it.

32,458. I am glad to hear it.

32,459. *Mr Sutherland.*—How many families did you say were in Glencalvie?—Seventeen crofters and four cottars.

32,460. You would not propose to put so many back now, would you?—No.

32,461. How many?—I think five in place of 17.

32,462. And you think there is sufficient arable and hill pasture to give reasonable sized holdings to five families?—Oh, I think so.

32,463. When was Glencalvie cleared of people?—In 1845.

32,464. Then, you remember that?—I was at the age of 20 when I was knocked out, and put into the churchyard.

32,465. Do I understand you to be one of the Glencalvie people at the time the Rosses were cleared out of Glencalvie?—Yes, and here is another.

32,466. What use was Glencalvie put to immediately after that?—It was made into a sheep farm. The sheep farmer had it for a number of years, and when he died it was given over to Sir Alexander Matheson of Ardross, who made it a deer forest, and it has been a deer forest since. Now, the present landlord is an English gentleman who bought it as a forest, and spent a lot of money since he got it three years ago. He is a splendid, first class neighbour, for we are neighbouring him.

32,467. He is a good neighbour to you?—He is a better neighbour than our landlord was, whether that was owing to the fault of the landlord or of his servants.

32,468. He is a good neighbour to you, and you are good neighbours to him?—Yes, we would like to be that.

32,469. So it is as broad as it is long. With regard to the stock that the Glencalvie people had when they were removed, was their stock taken over at a valuation?—Yes.

32,470. I mean the people who were cleared out of Glencalvie in 1845; was their stock taken over at a valuation?—It was.

32,471. By whom?—By Major Robertson, or his factor.

32,472. Was the stock of these people taken over from them when they were cleared from Glencalvie?—Yes, the whole stock.

32,473. The sheep?—The sheep only.

32,474. What happened to their sheep?—They were taken over by the incoming tenant.

32,475. He took over their stock?—Yes, he did.

32,476. And kept it there?—Kept it there. That was the stock he had first and foremost there.

32,477. Do you know how much he paid per head for them?—I cannot say.

32,478. Did you ever hear?—I heard it, but you see I was a young lad at the time, and cared very little about the affair.

32,479. Their houses, were they taken over at a valuation?—No, not a penny.

32,480. And their cattle stock?—The cattle stock they had to sell the best way they could.

32,481. Where were the people sent to mostly?—First and foremost they were sent to the churchyard.

32,482. Is that a figure of speech, or is it an actual fact?—Mr Murray in Tain here had the forest farm under sheep, and he had Croick and Torphin also. When we were turned off Mr Murray gave tarpaulins

for shelter to keep off the rain. The tarpaulins were put up beside the churchyard dykes; the people lived there, having fire outside at which they did their cooking.

32,483. What took them to the churchyard?—They had no other place on the face of God's earth to go to.

32,484. They went there because the churchyard was public property?—The churchyard was their own public property.

KENNETH MACRAE, Corrieblair, Edderton (50) —*examined.*

32,485. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No, I am a cottar.

32,486. Have you any land?—I have a small bit of croft and some pasture.

32,487. Do you pay a rent?—Yes.

32,488. What rent do you pay?—£3.

32,489. To whom do you pay that rent?—To the Dowager Lady Ross of Balnagown.

32,490. You are on the Balnagown estate?—Yes.

32,491. Do you ask our attention to any land in your neighbourhood?—I was appointed as a delegate for the purpose of directing attention to the Mains of Edderton farm, where I was born and brought up.—It being allowed out in waste land under sheep now.

32,492. You were appointed delegate at a meeting of the crofters of Mains of Edderton?—Yes.

32,493. Were you deprived of pasture?—Pasture and farm, some time ago.

32,494. When did that happen?—Well, I was born and brought up on the estate of Edderton, and I am now on the estate of Balnagown. What I referred to happened eight years ago.

32,495. What is it you wish to say?—Mains of Edderton being a good arable farm, and laid out under sheep about 240 or 250 acres.

32,496. What about it?—It would be better under crofters.

32,497. There is land there available for crofters?—Yes, where I was born and brought up.

32,498. Is that old arable land, or is it grazing you refer to?—It was old arable land at one time, but it is now grazing, under sheep.

32,499. Now, what extent of land is there on the Mains of Edderton suitable for cultivation by crofters?—About 140 acres, or so.

32,500. Where exactly is that land? Do you mean the whole farm?—Yes.

32,501. You do not include land that is under rotation of crop, I suppose?—No.

32,502. Just land under grazing?—Under grazing.

32,503. Are the crofters you represent in great need of land?—Oh, yes.

32,504. Do you know the size of the farm of Mains of Edderton?—About 160 acres.

32,505. One hundred and sixty acres and you want 240; do you mean 240 acres on the Balnagown estate?—No, but the Mains of Edderton farm—Macfie's farm.

32,506. Do you include part of Balnagown and part of Mr Macfie's farm?—No, the Mains of Edderton farm; there are 160 acres in it; and there are crofts outside the farm that crofters were evicted from. In addition to the 160 acres, there are about 90 acres in the farm from which crofters were removed.

32,507. What is the name of that land?—Carn-a'-chait, Larigs of Tain, Bogruadh.

32,508. These are old townships?—Yes. There were crofters there in my younger days.

32,509. You have indicated sufficiently the locality of the ground. Bogruadh is immediately south of the Mains of Edderton?—Yes.

32,510. And I think you said already that the land is suitable for cultivation now?—Yes.

32,511. Or a considerable portion of it?—The whole of it is.

32,512. Now, would you be able to take a holding in the land you are specifying?—If I got it for a fair rent.

32,513. But if you got it at a fair rent, could you stock it without assistance?—Yes, I made two farms there already. Tain.

32,514. Where were these?—One was Bogruadh, and the other was down below at Seafield. Part of Bogruadh, and the other I cultivated solely myself. Kenneth Macrae.

32,515. Were these lands that you reclaimed from the waste?—Yes, except a few acres.

32,516. Except a few acres arable which you got on entry?—Yes.

32,517. And how did you come to leave these?—Because the places were high rented. I was evicted.

32,518. And you gave them up?—Yes, I had to do so.

32,519-20. How many crofters are living at the Mains of Edderton?—There are none.

32,521. Well, how many crofters do you represent from the meeting?—About nine.

32,522. Where are these nine living at present?—They are back and fore on the Hill of Edderton.

32,523. And are all these crofters anxious to get more land?—Yes, they are.

32,524. *Mr Gordon.*—Is this farm of Edderton all under grass at present?—Well, except a garden that the proprietor and the gamekeeper and the shepherd have.

32,525. But the farm comprises almost all the estate, does it not?—No.

32,526. Are there more places upon the property?—Yes.

32,527. What is the name of them?—The Hill of Edderton.

32,528. That is crofters round to the south?—Yes.

32,529. But in connection with this farm of Mains of Edderton, is the mansion house there?—Yes.

32,530. And a good house for the tenant?—There is a steading.

32,531. And if the farm was put under crofters this steading would be practically useless?—Oh, yes, it would. It is useless already.

32,532. The present tenant of the farm does not reside on the farm?—No.

32,533. But suppose that the farm was let to another tenant, he might reside upon it, and cultivate the whole land, and get the good of the steading, is that not so?—Yes, that might be the case.

32,534. Well, would it not be a great sacrifice to divide the farm up into crofts?—It would be better in crofts than as it is, lying waste without yielding a crop.

32,535. But you do not say that land is waste because it is under sheep?—Crofters had it before.

32,536. There is nothing to prevent the farm being again cultivated and being used as an arable holding? It is not under sheep in the form of outlying arable land in a grazing farm or a deer forest, but simply arable land under grass, is that not so?—It is arable land under grass.

32,537. Are you one of the crofters upon Edderton Hill?—No.

32,538. There was an application made some years ago by the crofters for an extension of grazing there to the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

32,539. Did their proposal include this Larig of Tain, or was it confined to the hill?—To the Hill of Edderton.

32,540. It did not go down into the hollow?—[*Mr Watson.* It embraced the whole thing except the arable land.]

32,541. Your application is for the arable farm of the Mains of Edderton, which is principally under grass and pastured with sheep, is that so?—Yes.

32,542. *Mr Sutherland.*—How many families are on the Hill of Edderton?—About nine or ten.

32,543. How much pasture have they got each?—Very few acres, just right about the houses.

32,544. And have they hill pasture?—No hill pasture.

32,545. You stated that crofters had this land before, when was it?—About twenty years ago.

32,546. And it was taken away from them as recently as twenty years ago?—Yes.

32,547. And what was made of the land when it was taken away?—Under sheep.

32,548. It was not made into arable land?—No.

Tain. Kenneth Macrae.

32,549. It is not arable yet in fact?—It is not arable yet.

32,550. The people who are on the Hill of Edderton now, did they themselves make the arable patches that they live on?—Yes, I believe most of them reclaimed the land themselves.

32,551. This land that was taken away from the crofters was consolidated into the present farm of Mains of Edderton, is that the case?—Yes.

32,552. At present that farm is held by a tenant who does not reside there?—Who does not reside there.

32,553. And you also say that the land that was under crop at one time has recently been allowed to go out of crop and is now waste?—Out of crop and under sheep.

32,554. Is there any land cultivated at all on the farm of Mains of Edderton?—No.

32,555. Do you remember a time when it was cultivated?—Yes, and I did it myself.

32,556. So the result of taking the land from you has been that it has been put out of cultivation?—Put out of cultivation.

32,557. That is high farming, I suppose, do you think so?—High farming.

32,558. Then you think that this is a very good subject for giving these people extension of their grazings, is that so?—As good as any in Ross-shire.

32,559. And you are prepared to show us that land if we go there to see it?—Yes, I am.

32,560. *Mr George Macleay, Solicitor, Tain, Agent for Mr Macfie.*—Are you serious in saying that the crofters had this Mains farm twenty years ago? Is it not the case that two families, first the Macintyre family and then the Gillies family, occupied this as one farm for more than fifty years altogether?—You are wrong.

32,561. Well, correct me.—I am only fifty years old yet, and I was born on Mains of Edderton farm.

32,562. How long is it since Mr Scott was tenant of this Mains farm?—About half a dozen years.

32,563. Before then who was tenant?—Mr Macintyre.

32,564. Was not it Mr Catley?—Mr Catley.

32,565. Did he not occupy part of it as arable land himself?—Yes.

32,566. How many years had he it before he sold the place?—Three or four years after Mr Macintyre left.

32,567. Who had it before Mr Catley?—Mr Macintyre.

32,568. Had he the whole of this Mains farm?—Yes.

32,569. How many years had he it?—I daresay about ten or twelve years.

32,570. And who had it before him?—I had a part of it,—my father at least.

32,571. And who had the rest?—One Donald Mackenzie had a part of it, one Mr Gallie had another part of it.

32,572. Had not Mr Gallie the proper Mains farm for over thirty years?—He had 90 acres of it for nineteen years.

32,573. So that this Mains farm was arable for more than thirty years?—Yes, and more; perhaps seventy years.

32,574. Was it your father or you who had part of the Mains farm?—My father.

32,575. Did he get a better place at Seafield below there, from the landlord?—No, he did not.

32,576. He got a worse, did he?—He got a worse.

32,577. He got a bigger place?—No.

32,578. A smaller place?—A smaller place.

32,579. How then did he come to shift?—He was evicted from the Bogruadh.

32,580. And put down to Seafield?—Put down to Seafield.

32,581. And you succeeded him?—Yes.

32,582. And you told us that you gave it up yourself?—Yes.

32,583. What bit are you wanting then? Do you say you are able to take a bit if you got it? Is it not the case that your affairs became embarrassed?—Oh, it is that; but Novar's representatives were talking of getting Government money for planting trees, and would not it be as well to give money for crofting purposes as give it for plantations?

Tain. Kenneth Macrae.

32,584. You are aware that the Edderton crofters got a bit of the Hill of Edderton from the Crofters Commission, are you?—They had the offer, but I don't think they took it.

32,585. But you know they got the chance and would not take it?—They would not take it.

32,586. So the crofters of the Hill of Edderton now propose to remove from where they are at present?—Most of them might take more land where they are.

ROBERT ROSS, Cottar, Ardgay (42)—*examined.* Robert Ross.

32,587. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

32,588. A cottar?—Yes.

32,589. Do you pay a rent?—No, I do not pay a rent.

32,590. Do you live at Ardgay?—Yes.

32,591. Were you appointed as a delegate, or are you here in your own interest?—I have been appointed as a delegate.

32,592. At a public meeting?—Yes.

32,593. Where was the meeting held?—At Ardgay public school.

32,594. Have you any written statement?—No.

32,595. Do you wish to call our attention to any particular lands?—Yes, I do.

32,596. What lands do you desire to bring before us?—Glencalvie.

32,597. We have heard a good deal of evidence already about Glencalvie; did you hear it also?—I heard part of it; I was born there.

32,598. And do you agree with the evidence you heard?—Just with part of it. I do not agree with the whole of what I heard about it.

32,599. Were you evicted from Glencalvie?—Yes, twice. My father was evicted from Glencalvie in 1845, and he had no place to take refuge, but to put up his tent in the churchyard. After that he went back to Glencalvie, through the incoming tenant who occupied the place as a sheep farm.

32,600. He let your father back?—He let my father back to the house, and gave him the grazing of a cow, and there we remained for some years when Matheson, Ardross, put everything we had outside the door.

32,601. Was that Sir Alexander Matheson?—Yes.

32,602. And where did your father go when he was evicted by Sir Alexander Matheson?—He came down to Strath Carron.

32,603. And lived there a number of years?—Yes.

32,604. You think there is land in Glencalvie that we ought to consider?—Plenty land that will grow barley, corn, and potatoes as much as is put into it.

32,605. How many crofters did Sir Alexander Matheson evict altogether?—It was not Sir Alexander Matheson that evicted them, but his former tenant of the sheep farm. But it was Sir Alexander who evicted my father out of it at the latter end. There were 18 families evicted. They possessed about 30 cattle, 700 sheep, and 80 goats, with the produce of the land.

32,606. *Mr Sutherland.*—Have you any land?—Not an inch.

32,607. Do you know Glencalvie well?—Yes, I was born there.

32,608. Is it your opinion that there is land there suitable?—Plenty land suitable, but it does not suit the proprietors, because they make the whole land their own.

32,609. Would you take a holding in Glencalvie yourself if you got the opportunity?—Yes, to-morrow.

ALEXANDER ROSS, Crofter, Fendom, near Tain (60)—*examined.* Alexander Ross.

32,610. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

32,611. What rent do you pay?—The former rent was £7, 10s., but since the Crofters Commission came round I got a reduction of 3s. in the £, making it £6, 7s. 6d.

32,612. Have you got a statement to submit?—Yes.

32,613. I will read it for you to save time. There is a farm of Ballicherry, in the Parish of Tain, consisting of about 600 acres not under cultivation, which is desired for the formation of say five small holdings of 30 acres each of arable, and the following persons are willing and desirious to join in taking some:—(1) John Ross, carpenter, Tain; (2) K. Munro, Fendom; (3) Donald Graham, Tain; (4) William Ross, Fendom; (5) David Ross, Fendom; and erect houses, &c. This leaves about 450 acres over, and with regard to these 450 acres it is proposed to form a club farm with the above five tenants, and the following:—(1) myself; (2) Donald Ross, crofter, Fendom; (3) Hugh Munro, crofter, Fendom; (4) John Ross, crofter, Fendom; (5) Alexander Ross, crofter, Fendom; (6) William Munro, crofter, Fendom. These were formerly 11 occupiers on the farm of Ballicherry, and about 150 acres of it is old arable land suitable for small holdings. Formerly we had a direct road from our holdings in Fendom to the common grazings in the commonty of the Morrichmore near Tain, but now and for some years back we have been shut out by a gate at Ballicherry, and we have now to go a distance of three miles before we can reach our grazing. This farm is now held by Mr Young, late factor on the estate, who has besides it the following farms:— (1) Lochslin, rent £250; (2) Cadboll and Cadboll Mount, rent £620; (3) Ballicherry, rent £160; in all £1030. He keeps one shepherd on the place.

(Signed) ALEXANDER ROSS.

32,614. That is your statement?—Yes.

32,615. And in a word you ask us to consider this farm of Ballicherry, and to inspect it in view of the statement and claims put forward here?—Yes.

32,616. *Mr Gordon.*—Does this farm of Ballicherry include the pasture land between the old arable land and the sea?—It lies between the sea and our place. When I came to Fendom about 32 years ago I could go with my cattle and put them on the grazing of Morrichmore in half an hour; but I cannot do it to-day. The cattle that I took out of my byre would take three hours to reach the Morrichmore; I have to go by Tain.

32,617. You have one of the crofts lying between Ballicherry and Tain?—On the Fendom.

32,618. Is that old road leading from Tain or from South Balchagarty closed up now so that you cannot get to the pasture?—It goes to Tain, this fence, or very near Tain, and then I have to turn down to the Morrichmore, and there is another fence down at the bent which I cannot get through with my cattle; but when the old boundaries were in Ballicherry the old road went down by the bent. When they got new tenants there they put an iron gate before our faces and said "Stay you there."

32,619. If we go there will you show us exactly where you mean?—With pleasure.

32,620. Whose land is that?—Cadboll's.

WILLIAM ROSS, Pitmaduthie (42)—*examined.*

32,621. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No, I am not a crofter.

32,622. What are you?—I work at wire fencing, but I am a crofter's son.

32,623. Is your father alive?—No.

32,624. Were you appointed as a delegate?—I was asked by many of the inhabitants of the parish of Logie and Tain to-day to appear, to make known to this Commission that there is land both in the parish of Tain and in the parish of Logie once cultivated by tenants but now given over to sheep.

32,625. Where exactly is the land in the parish of Tain that you refer to?—First, Grantfield.

32,626. Who occupies Grantfield?—I don't think any tenant has Grantfield.

32,627. Is it a farm?—It was a farm.

32,628. And what is it now?—I cannot tell you what it is now: there is no tenant at all; it is out of cultivation. There is no tenant, except that it is let for wintering for sheep. Tain.

32,629. It is in the hands of the proprietor, I suppose?—I expect so. William Ross.

32,630. Who is the proprietor?—I cannot tell you; it was feued from the Burgh of Tain; I think it is Mr Scott, Solicitor, Inverness, who owns it, but I cannot tell you how many more; I think there are a good many more connected with it.

32,631. Then besides land in the parish of Tain, I think you mentioned Logie?—Yes, but that is not all in the parish of Tain.

32,632. Is there land in Logie?—Yes, there is the Glen of Scotsburn where there were once two tenants, but which is now under sheep.

32,633. Who is the proprietor there?—I think it will be the Dowager Lady Ross.

32,634. You think there is land there that we should inspect?—There is land there; there were two tenants living comfortably there and it is now under sheep along with the farm of Scotsburn.

32,635. It is added to the farm of Scotsburn?—Exactly.

32,636. Do you know who the tenant of Scotsburn is?—The Dowager Lady Ross; it is in her own hands.

32,637. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are there just these two places, Grantfield and Scotsburn, to which you wish to call our attention?—No, that is not all in the parish of Tain; there is Kingscauseway also.

32,638. Do you say there is land there too?—There were four or five tenants there, and all that land is now under sheep which was once arable, as could be seen.

32,639. Any other place where you think there is suitable land?—In the parish of Logie there is Badnagaun, above Scotsburn, where there were two tenants.

32,640. Any other place?—No.

32,641. Were the small holders put out of there, and the holdings consolidated?—Yes.

32,642. Into one?—Yes.

[ADJOURNED.]

THIRTY-FOURTH SITTING.

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

PORT-ELLEN, ISLAY, ARGYLLSHIRE, March 28, 1894.

Present:—

ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P. (*Acting as Chairman.*)
JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
JOHN MACLEOD, Esq.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

JOHN CAMPBELL, Cottar, Oa (52).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.) John Campbell.

32,643. *Mr Sutherland.*—You are a cottar from Oa?—Yes.

32,644. Were you elected at a meeting to represent the people of Oa here?—I was.

32,645. How many were present at the meeting?—There were not many at the meeting.

32,646. Were the bulk of the people of the place present?—There were not many, but they selected me because I was better acquainted than the others there.

32,647. Do you know the object of our visit here?—Yes.

32,648. What do you think it is for?—To inquire about land, to see if there are lands that could be reclaimed or taken in.

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

John Campbell.

32,649. Have you any written statement?—No.

32,650. Could you tell us where there is such land as you have referred to?—Yes, plenty of it, where my father and my grandfather and other relatives were.

32,651. Where is that?—The first place I speak of is Giol in Oa.

32,652. Is that a large farm now?—It is now under sheep.

32,653. Can you tell us the size of that farm?—At one time there were nine tenants in Giol.

32,654. How many sheep are on this farm now?—The tenant of Giol has in addition Glenastle, a neighbouring piece of ground, where there were seven tenants.

32,655. Does that adjoin the farm?—Yes.

32,656. Do you think that would be suitable land for making into small holdings?—I think so; it would be as suitable now as it was before. It is not so good now, however, as it has gone under rushes.

32,657. At what time did the small tenants you refer to cease to be there?—It is about thirty-two years since they went to America.

32,658. Have you any information to give us as to the state these small tenants were in when they were there,—were they prosperous?—In these years the markets were not so good; the rents were high, and they were not very well off at that time.

32,659. Did they all go to America?—The majority of them did. Adjoining that is Grastle, also in the Oa district.

32,660. What can you tell us about Grastle?—Nothing, but that it is out the same as the rest: it is under sheep.

32,661. Could you give us any idea of the number of small tenants that were there formerly?—There were at least six in Grastle or Tockmal at one time.

32,662. It is within the farm of Giol?—It is let to the tenant of Kintraw.

32,663. Is that the farm round about Port Askaig?—Yes.

32,664. Is there any other place you have to call our attention to?—That is all that I am to speak about; but there are other delegates to follow me, who will speak to other districts of Oa.

32,665. Is it your opinion that, if an opportunity were given to people in the district of Oa to get small holdings there, they would avail themselves of it?—Yes, some would take land there: I for one would take land. I need land, for I have only a small piece, which is let to my brother. It is too small, and my name is not even in for it.

32,666. Do you know any other person in your neighbourhood who is in the same position?—There is another one, Archibald Macmillan, who is also wanting a piece.

32,667. *Mr Maccallum.*—As to the means of those who are thinking of getting land, do you think they would be able to stock the land if they got it?—I cannot say as to others, but I would endeavour to stock my own. If we get it at a reasonable rent, we can live on it.

32,668. Did you make an effort to get land from the proprietor?—Yes.

32,669. How were you met by him?—According to them, there was not a suitable place, and when there was a little place vacant, they gave it to another in the neighbourhood.

32,670. Are there many small holdings in Oa?—At Cill-Iain, where I am, there are only two, and there is one at Cill-Iain-mor. There is also a place marching with Bally-Chaitrigin.

32,671. When any small holding falls vacant, is there a good competition for it?—People speak about getting it, at any rate.

32,672. Have such holdings been advertised of late?—I don't know.

32,673. You say that the people who were at Glenastle went to America?—Yes, they all went to America.

32,674. Is the rent of the place now higher than what they paid for it?—They raised the rents when the markets went up, but the rents now are not higher than they were at the time the tenants were there.

32,675. When they were re-let immediately after the people left, were the rents raised?—Well, they got them down afterwards.

32,676. The big farmers have got their rents reduced now?—Yes.

32,677. Are the rents lower now than the rents that were paid by the small tenants?—I cannot say; they did not tell me how the rents are.

32,678. Have the people from that district made application to the County Council for small holdings?—Yes, they have.

32,679. And do you know what reply they got?—That there was no land which could be reclaimed that was worth reclaiming.

32,680. Do you think that has been the reply of the County Council? What did the County Council give as their answer to the applications that were sent in?—That they had not completed their inquiries.

32,681. Do you know the number of applications from Oa?—I cannot tell.

32,682. Can you give any idea of the number of people there who would wish to have a small holding?—I am not sure; but a great many people are speaking about it.

32,683. What is the present position of these people; are they cottars?—They are cottars.

32,684. And what is their occupation?—Labourers.

32,685. Are they accustomed to farm work?—Yes, to some extent.

32,686. And what size of holding do they look for?—Some would take more and some would take less, according to their ability.

32,687. Do you know the general size that they have been applying for?—They want about a *Cota-Ban* or two.

32,688. Can you tell us what acreage there is in a *Cota-Ban*?—No, I cannot.

32,689. What capacity would it represent for stock-keeping?—Two *Cota-Bans* would yield a crop of twenty stacks.

32,690. *The Secretary.*—A *Cota-Ban* or Groat Land is a measure of value, not a measure of extent. I see that according to an old authority, Macdonald's work on the agriculture of the Hebrides, dated 1811, one tenant who held a Groat Land, or, as it is called in Islay, *Cota-Ban*, had right to keep four horses and from seven to ten cows. The rent of a *Cota-Ban* at the beginning of the century was from £8, 10s. to £10.

32,691. *Mr Sutherland.*—Would they be able to pay a fair rent for that?—I cannot say a fixed rent: these years it would require to be cheaper, perhaps, than in coming years.

32,692. Why do you say it should be cheaper in these years?—The land is getting into waste, and cannot be tilled at present; it is going under rushes and wild growth.

32,693. And at first there would be some difficulty in getting it into such a state of cultivation as it was in when the tenants were there?—Yes, it would be much more difficult now than before; it would require to be drained and improved, and it would require a fence also, in time.

32,694. And would the applicants undertake to carry on these improvements themselves, without Government aid?—I cannot say about that.

32,695. You can speak for yourself?—I could take land on these conditions, with perhaps a little help also.

32,696. Would you be able to get that help without applying to the Government?—We would require a little help.

32,697. Would you be able to find the money yourself without Government advancing it?—I could take a groat land, I think, without any aid.

32,698. What rent would you pay for that extent of land?—According to the condition of the ground just now, it would be worth just half the rent it used to pay.

32,699. That is until it would be brought into a

better condition than it is just now?—Yes; half rent till the ground would be improved.

32,700. What was the old rent?—£24 at one time.

32,701. That used to be the rent for a groat land?—The ground was drained and improved, and then the rent was increased accordingly, to some tenants.

32,702. If the parish of Oa were let to small tenants, do you think they would be able to pay as good a rent as is now paid by the large farmers?—I think they could do that.

32,703. Were farm-houses built for the large farmers by the proprietor?—I don't remember about that; there are simply thatched houses there at present.

32,704. But I refer to the big farm-houses: by whom were they built?—I don't remember about the building of these houses.

32,705. Are you not aware that these were built by the proprietor for the tenants before they entered?—I cannot say: perhaps someone else present might be able to say.

32,706. Is it the usual custom that farm-houses are built by the proprietor for large farmers?—The tenants themselves kept up these buildings.

32,707. But the building of them was done by the proprietor, was it not?—I don't know about that.

32,708. *Mr Forsyth.*—If you had one of these groat holdings that you speak of, would you use it for cattle alone, or would you keep sheep?—I would raise cattle on it—six or seven milk cows.

32,709. In the event of your getting one of these groat holdings, would you have part of your stock in the form of sheep?—We would have some sheep.

32,710. But principally cattle?—Yes, mostly cattle.

32,711. Would such a holding have a large acreage of rough pasture or outrun, or would it be mostly arable and green land?—There is land that could be tilled, and there is land also suitable for grazing purposes.

32,712. Can you give any idea of the average size in acres of a holding of this kind?—My knowledge about acres is rather limited; but about 30 or 40 acres arable I think would be sufficient, with pasture in proportion.

32,713. What rent do you think you could manage to pay for such a holding?—I cannot say till the land is laid out for the purpose.

32,714. But if you had it at a fair rent you could put a full stock on it, and build and fence with a little help: is that your position?—We would like some aid in building the houses.

32,715. How would you propose to get that help?—From the Government, if possible and practicable, paying interest thereon.

32,716. Do you think there are many who would undertake such a considerable holding as that with a good chance of succeeding?—I cannot say that there are many, but there are a good many who talk of the thing.

32,717. Is there any wish here for small holdings, such as would give a man a certain amount of land and leave him time to work at another employment?—Yes, there are some that would take crofts on these conditions.

31,718. *Mr Munro.*—Are you aware that the proprietor builds the houses of the present large tenants of these farms?—I don't know about that.

32,719. Were the tenants who left thirty-two years ago forcibly evicted, or did they go of their own free will?—Some left voluntarily, owing to the poor markets.

32,720. And were any of them evicted with force?—Yes, on the south side of the parish.

32,721. Were these tenants fairly prosperous thirty-two years ago?—Yes, they were prosperous, but the markets were behind, as they are in these times; and potatoes failed, and so forth.

32,722. If these farms were divided amongst a similar class of tenants to-day, is it your opinion that they would succeed?—Yes, I think they would: the ground is good.

32,723. How would they cultivate these little holdings to-day?—Ploughing, cutting off the rushes, and so forth.

32,724. Would they produce any crops?—It would not be very good the first year, or the first two years, perhaps; it would require to be manured.

32,725. What sort of green crops do they grow?—Oats.

32,726. No barley?—Barley also, and potatoes and turnips; any kind of agricultural produce.

32,727. Do you think now that a proportion of them could take these small holdings without Government assistance?—I cannot say about that: I don't know. Perhaps a few might.

32,728. What would be the size of the stacks you spoke about?—They would be rather small.

32,729. How many quarters of grain would be in each of these stacks?—7 bags, with 6 bushels, on some of the stacks.

32,730. *Mr Greig, law agent for the proprietor of Kildalton.*—Were any tenants evicted from the estate?—On one side of the parish they were evicted, and on the other side they left voluntarily.

32,731. What side were they evicted on?—Strimnishmore.

32,732. What is the name of the place where they were not evicted?—A place called Giol; they left it voluntarily, I understand.

32,733. Give us the name of one person who was evicted forcibly?—Archibald Campbell from Strimnish, and Duncan Macnab from the same place.

32,734. *Mr Sutherland.*—Would you show us the land considered to be suitable for the purpose, if we go there?—Yes, I will do that.

NEIL MACEWAN, crofter, Oa (59).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

32,735. *Mr Sutherland.*—You are a crofter, I understand?—Yes.

32,736. What is the size of your croft?—I cannot tell the number of acres.

32,737. Did you apply to the Crofters Commission to have a fair rent fixed?—Yes.

32,738. What was your old rent before the Commission came?—£20.

32,739. And what did the Commission make it?—They made a reduction of £4, 10s.

32,740. Were you elected at a meeting to give evidence before us to-day?—Yes, I was elected for that purpose.

32,741. Are there many crofters in Oa?—No, there are not many.

32,742. How many?—Seven.

32,743. Do they on an average pay more or less rent than you?—In one township, Cragabus, we pay the same rent.

32,744. Therefore the holdings will be practically the same size?—Yes.

32,745. Have you sheep and cattle both?—Yes, we have both cattle and sheep.

32,746. Do you hold your pasture land in common?—Yes, we have moorland in common, besides the arable grounds.

32,747. How many sheep have you got?—We have about twenty, and perhaps more in some cases.

32,748. What crops do you grow?—Oats, potatoes, turnips.

32,749. Are these of a good quality?—Yes, they are a good quality.

32,750. Does your corn ripen regularly, or do you suffer from late harvests sometimes?—Yes, it does ripen.

32,751. And do you grow potatoes of good quality?—According to the weather and the season; one year is better than another.

32,752. Is there plenty land in large holdings round about where you are, that is as good as the land you have?—Yes, part of it is, and part is not.

32,753. Would the crofters in Oa take more land if they got it? Do they complain of the smallness of their holdings?—I think there are some who have enough.

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

Neil Macewan.

32,754. And are you here rather in the interests of those who have got no land at all than of the crofters?—I am not here for the crofters nor for the cottars: I just want to give evidence about the land in the place.

32,755. Is there a desire on the part of the crofters of Oa to have more land?—I do not hear that there is.

32,756. Did you hear the evidence that was given by Mr Campbell?—Yes.

32,757. You heard him speak of land which he thought was suitable for the purpose of our inquiry on the farms of Giol, Glenastle, and Grastle?—Yes, I heard that.

32,758. Do you agree with that evidence?—I do not say anything against that evidence.

32,759. Do you know any land additional to what Mr Campbell spoke of that would be suitable?—There is none in that part of Oa except what Mr Campbell mentioned.

32,760. Is there any other place outside of Oa?—I do not want to refer to other places in the neighbourhood.

32,761. Are there other witnesses who in your opinion are better qualified to give us information regarding those places?—There is a man, Archibald Campbell, here who might come forward.

32,762. May we take you to agree generally with Mr Campbell's evidence?—Yes, I agree with all he said.

32,763. *Mr Forsyth.*—How many cows have you?—Five just now.

32,764. Have you any horses?—Yes, three.

32,765. Do you find that you are able to make a fair living out of your croft without doing other work?—We cannot get much other labour to do outside the croft.

32,766. Would you have time for other labour if you had the chance?—In parts and seasons of the year we would have time for it.

32,767. Then your croft not taking all your time, would you desire a larger holding that would occupy all your time?—Yes, a holding like that would be more suitable.

32,768. You would prefer a larger holding, taking all your time to a croft, with a chance of labour if you could get such?—Yes, we would prefer the larger holding without extra labour.

32,769. But as it stands you can make a fair living now with the croft as it is?—We do take out all that we can from it.

32,770. But still that enables you to make something of a living?—Yes, a sort of livelihood, but it is not very good.

32,771. *Mr Munro.*—Are you aware whether the proprietors of the island generally are favourable to an increase of small holdings?—I cannot say as to that.

32,772. In answer to Mr Sutherland, you stated that you produced good grain crops. To be a little more specific, what would be the weight per bushel of the oats you produce on your holding?—Sometimes 40 lbs., and in other years under that.

32,773. Have you any idea what quantity of meal your 8 bushels of oats would produce?—At 40 lbs. two bags of corn would yield 280 lbs. of meal, that is out of 12 bushels.

32,774. *Mr Macleod.*—What is the name of your township?—Cragabus.

32,775. Do you crop the arable portion of your holding in rotation? Do you lay it out in grass?—Yes, we till it in rotation.

32,776. Is it a five or a six-year rotation?—One year between each crop.

32,777. *Mr Maccallum.*—Did the crofters of your township fall into arrears before the Crofters Commission came to fix the rents?—Yes, they did.

32,778. To what extent?—Some had £20 of arrears, others had not so much, and some none at all.

32,779. Did the crofters get a reduction of rent from the proprietors without the intervention of the Commission?—Yes, they did. The landlord reduced the rents at one time.

32,780. When did they last get a reduction from the proprietor?—I cannot give the exact date.

32,781. What was the rent before it was reduced?—It was £20, and we got it reduced £3.

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

Neil Macewan.

32,782. But it was £20 when the Commission came?—Yes.

32,783. Was it reduced from £23 to £20 by the proprietor?—Yes.

32,784. Are you able to sell grain from your holding?—Yes, we sell a little of either oats or meal.

32,785. And do you make your own meal?—Yes.

32,786. Sufficient for the family the whole year?—No, it does not yield so much as that.

32,787. In your recollection was there more cultivation in Oa than there is now?—Yes, I have remembrance of such times.

32,788. Can you tell us the number of cottars in Oa?—There are three cottars altogether: I don't know of any more.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL, carter, Port-Ellen (60). (Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

Archibald Campbell.

32,789. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you hold any land yourself?—I have not any just now.

32,790. Have you any written statement to submit to us?—No.

32,791. What do you wish particularly to bring before us?—I used to have land and to till land twenty-three years ago.

32,792. How did you cease to have land?—We were forced to stop it.

32,793. Where were you at the time?—In a place called Lurabus first.

32,794. Where is Lurabus?—On the south side of the promontory of the Oa.

32,795. In whose occupation is that now?—A gentleman farmer, Mr Gemmell, has it now.

32,796. What is the name of the farm?—Lurabus.

32,797. Is it near Giol?—Near the lighthouse, on the opposite side of the promontory.

32,798. What land had you there?—Two groat lands.

32,799. How many were in Lurabus besides you?—Four other crofters besides me.

32,800. What became of the others?—They left.

32,801. Do you know where they went to?—To America. One of them is down at Oa just now.

32,802. At the time you left, were the holdings consolidated or made into one large holding?—Yes, when we left they were made into one large farm.

32,803. How long ago is that?—Thirty-two or thirty-three years ago.

32,804. Have you been in Port-Ellen ever since?—Yes.

32,805. Were those tenants of whom you were one in comfortable circumstances there?—Yes, in pretty fair circumstances.

32,806. Were they in better circumstances than you are to-day?—Yes, we were much better off in these times, when we had the land.

32,807. And if you got an opportunity under reasonable conditions of taking a holding of that size again, would you take it?—I have no means just now to take it.

32,808. But if you had means would you change your present life for that?—Yes, I would.

32,809. Where do you get employment now chiefly?—At all kinds of work, carting, &c.: I keep my cart going as much as I can.

32,810. Do you get employment about the distilleries?—Yes.

32,811. Do you get more work from distilleries than from any other source?—Yes.

32,812. Were you elected to represent any person but yourself here?—A meeting was held, and I was elected to come here and give evidence.

32,813. So you speak as a representative not only of yourself but of others?—I speak for myself.

32,814. What is your opinion regarding the desire of others? Are there many persons except yourself who you think would be glad to take small holdings, if they got an opportunity, in Port-Ellen?—Yes, there are some.

32,815. You are aware that there are two ways of getting land that have been recognised,—first a small holding and second an allotment. Do you understand the difference between these?—Yes.

32,816. Which, in your opinion, would be more suitable for those people in Port-Ellen who would like some land?—I would take a small holding myself.

32,817. That means leaving your present place and going to live on the holding: do you understand that?—Yes, I would leave my present work and go there.

32,818. And on the other hand, an allotment is meant to provide a small piece of land to one who has none now, and who would still continue to live in his present home?—I would take an allotment along with my present work.

32,819. Which would you prefer for yourself?—It would be no use for me to be in the village unless I got work on the holding.

32,820. Would it not be a benefit, in your opinion, to people who are living in Port-Ellen to have a small allotment of an acre or two acres upon which they could raise potatoes?—Yes, I think that would be an advantage to them.

32,821. Do you think there are other people who would prefer to leave Port-Ellen altogether if they got a small holding, and live on such a holding?—So they say, some of them.

32,822. Do you know in this neighbourhood any land which would be suitable for making into such small holdings?—There is plenty of land, but they will not give it.

32,823. But you know that there is such land?—Yes, I know there is such land.

32,824. Can you tell us any place where we would find such land?—I don't want to tell that, or to take anything to do with that.

32,825. But don't you want to give us all the information in your power? Where is there land held in large farms that would be suitable for the purposes to which we have been referring, of small holdings and allotments?—In Oa, in Kildalton. The south side of the Oa is suitable for that purpose.

32,826. Let us take the case of allotments. The land for allotments would require to be near Port-Ellen?—Yes.

32,827. And there could be land, now held as large holdings, further out than that, which would be suitable for small holdings?—Yes.

32,828. Take then first the land that would be suited for allotments, which would require to be near Port-Ellen; do you know of any such land?—The land about Port-Ellen is under lease, occupied by others.

32,829. We are not talking about leases, we are talking about information as to where that land is in large holdings. Never mind the leases, but tell us where the land is?—I don't know about that.

32,830. You heard the answers that were given by Mr Macewan about the crops that were yielded by the holdings. Does that agree with your experience when you had a holding?—Yes, I agree with most or all that Mr Macewan said about the crops the land would give.

32,831. On that point you corroborate his evidence?—Yes.

32,832. And also with regard to the stock?—Yes.

32,833. What rent did you pay when you had a holding?—I paid £29.

32,834. Was that larger or smaller than the holding that Mr Macewan now has?—The holding I had was twice the size of Neil Macewan's.

32,835. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Can you tell us the number of householders in Port-Ellen?—I cannot say, but it could be ascertained.

32,836. Can you give us a rough idea?—It is not easy for me to answer that question.

32,837. Do you know the number of those who have cow's grazing?—There are not many in the village who have grazings. We pay rent for each cow's grazing.

32,838. How many have got cows?—Nearly all the householders in the village have one cow.

32,839. And have they land from which they can get wintering for the cows?—We buy fodder in winter: we buy everything for them.

32,840. Have you land for cultivation at all?—I have no land whatever, but I could cultivate if I had.

32,841. Are there others in the same position?—There are some.

32,842. Are you aware that fifty persons applied to the County Council for allotments and small holdings from Port-Ellen?—I don't know the number that made application.

32,843. Are you aware that a large number did apply?—I know that a large number did.

32,844. Are those who applied entirely without land, do you know?—Yes, all are of that description.

32,845. Can you tell us how the land in the neighbourhood of Port-Ellen is occupied?—Partly arable and partly grazing.

32,846. Is it in the occupation of working people?—The people that have the land have as much land as to keep them going, around the village.

32,847. Is it the case that the land is let in grazing parks from year to year?—Yes.

32,848. And who are the people that take them—what, generally speaking, is their occupation?—Merchants and butchers and blacksmiths, distillers, hotel-keepers, and large families.

32,849. They are let to those who are in comfortable circumstances?—These people have the privilege of getting such land.

32,850. And is it impossible for a working man to get an allotment?—I don't know about that.

32,851. Do you think a working man would be able to compete with the merchants and butchers and others who presently take the grazings?—If they would get it at a fair rent.

32,852. Just now it is let at a high rent on account of the competition by the well-to-do people?—Yes.

32,853. Do you think the land in the neighbourhood of Port-Ellen is let at a higher rate than would be suitable for working people?—Supposing the land was cultivated, it would not yield produce that would average the rent that is paid for it now.

32,854. And those who occupy these parks do not depend at all on the produce of the land?—That is so; merchants and butchers and blacksmiths do not depend upon these grazings.

32,855. Do you know what the County Council did with regard to the applications that were sent in?—I don't know about that.

32,856. Are you aware that they refused to put the Small Holdings and the Allotments Acts into operation in this country?—I don't know about that.

32,857. Was there any answer at all sent to the fifty applicants from Port-Ellen?—If there was, I did not hear about it.

32,858. You were not aware that the County Council resolved that it was unfair to impose upon them the extra cost of carrying out the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts?—I heard a rumour about the reason why the holdings were refused to applicants.

32,859. And is it your opinion that allotments, such as are contemplated under the Act, would be very suitable for such a place as Port-Ellen?—Yes, I think so.

32,860. *Mr Macleod.*—You said that there were five tenants at Lurabost including yourself. Were they all paying a rent equal to yours?—Yes, they paid a rent similar to mine.

32,861. How long had you a holding there?—My people were there for generations untold.

32,862. Were there more people at Lurabost at one time than those five tenants?—Yes, there were more people.

32,863. What became of them?—Most of them left for America.

32,864. You and those who were left got their holdings?—Yes, their land was added to the land we had.

32,865. Can you tell me what year that was in?—It was about fifty-one or fifty-two years ago; in the year 1843, I think.

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

Archibald Campbell.

32,866. When did you leave Lurabost?—Thirty-one years ago.

32,867. But you told me there were more tenants in Lurabost at one time than five, and that they went to America, and you and the others who were left got the land that they had given up. Now you say you left in 1863 at the same time as they left. Is it the case that there had been more than five families in Lurabost with land?—Yes.

32,868. How long since? Do you remember it?—I cannot say how many years.

32,869. Was it long before you left?—Yes, a long time before I left.

32,870. But you remember them?—Yes.

32,871. What would the holdings be rented at in these days; how many holdings were there then?—Eleven altogether, including the five.

32,872. There were six who went to America, and the five who were left got their holdings?—Yes, their land was added to ours.

32,873. Did those tenants go away of their own free will or were they evicted?—Some left voluntarily, and one went away against his will—was evicted, in fact.

32,874. What was the reason for his being evicted?—His cattle used to stray on other farms about.

32,875. Then did those who went to America leave because the places were not paying them?—I don't know about that; it paid some and it did not pay others.

32,876. But there must have been some reason why a number of families went all the way from Islay to America; was not there some general reason for them all going at the same time?—I cannot tell the reason.

32,877. Do you mean to tell me seriously that six families in a small township made up their minds to go to America, and that you were living in the township and cannot remember what the reason was?—I don't know the reason.

32,878. Don't you think it would be fairer to say that you do not want to tell the reason?—I don't know the reason.

32,879. You state positively that you don't know the reason?—Yes, I state positively that I don't know the reason.

32,880. Can you tell me whether the holdings that they left were sufficient to keep the five families that were there occupied all the year round? Were they sufficiently large?—Yes, they were.

32,881. Then why did you leave your holding there?—We had to leave.

32,882. You were removed from there?—Yes.

32,883. Was there any reason for it?—No.

32,884. But you were all removed at the same time?—Yes, we all left at the same time.

32,885. Did you leave, or were you removed or evicted?—We left voluntarily and went to Ballychatrigan. [*Mr Sutherland.*—The translation should rather be, 'We left and went to Ballychatrigan.']

32,886. Did you get as good a holding there as you had at Lurabost?—Yes, it was as good.

32,887. Then why did you leave Ballychatrigan?—We had to leave to make room for sheep, and go to strange places.

32,888. How many years were you in Ballychatrigan?—Four years.

32,889. Did the other four tenants who were in Lurabost get places in Ballychatrigan also?—No.

32,890. Did they get any place anywhere?—Two of them got a place in Ballychatrigan.

32,891. And the other two?—The other two went to America.

32,892. Then, when you were removed from Ballychatrigan did you go of your own free will?—We had to go.

32,893. You did not go of your own free will?—No, it was not of our own free will.

32,894. Where did you go to?—Strimnish.

32,895. Did you get a holding at Strimnish as good as you had?—We got a holding in Strimnish as good as in Ballychatrigan.

32,896. What was the rent you were paying in Strimnish?—£29.

32,897. And how long were you there?—Four years.

32,898. Why did you leave Strimnish?—We were not allowed to stop.

32,899. You were again removed from Strimnish?—Yes.

32,900. Why?—They wanted the land for sheep.

32,901. What was done with the holding that you left at Lurabost? Was it put under sheep too?—Yes.

32,902. And the second holding was also put under sheep?—Yes.

32,903. And when you were put out of Strimnish where did you go?—We came to Port-Ellen.

32,904. There was no provision made for you when you were put out of Strimnish?—I had nothing; I had to go to some place.

32,905. Did any of the other tenants that were with you in the other places come to Port-Ellen, or what became of them?—One went to America and one went to Mull.

32,906. When you left your last holding at Strimnish what did you do with your stock: did you sell it off?—We sold it.

32,907. What stock did you sell when you left Strimnish?—Nine or ten cows.

32,908. Any followers?—Yes.

32,909. As many, or more?—Sometimes few and sometimes many.

32,910. How many horses had you?—Three horses.

32,911. How many sheep?—Forty sheep.

32,912. Can you remember how much the whole of that stock realised when you sold it?—I cannot tell that; I kept some of them to come to the village here.

32,913. How did you propose to keep them at the village?—We paid rent to other parties for the grazing.

32,914. Was it a good time to dispose of stock? Did you get fair prices for them?—It was not a very good time.

32,915. Did you get any compensation for any improvements you had made on the holdings you had in any of the places?—We got nothing as a compensation.

32,916. You got nothing for the houses?—No, we got nothing for the houses.

32,917. Who put up the houses that you had in Lurabost?—My forefathers.

32,918. When you went to the second holding had you to put up a house there?—The walls of the house were up but we thatched them.

32,919. Were there tenants put out at Ballychatrigan to make room for you?—They left, anyway.

32,920. When you got to the third holding had you to put up buildings again?—We had to build or put up houses then.

32,921. Did you get any assistance from the proprietor?—We got wood from the proprietor.

32,922. You will perhaps know the parish of Kildalton, in general, well: you have known it for a good many years now?—Yes, I know it well.

32,923. Are there more people in the parish now than there were when you remember it first?—There are not so many in Oa: I don't know so much about the Kildalton part.

32,924. How do you think their condition compares with what it was when you knew the people first? Are they better off now than they were then, on the whole?—I don't know, but I would prefer being in the Oa to my present position.

32,925. Do you think there are a good few in the same way as yourself?—I cannot say as to that.

32,926. You remember Port-Ellen when you were a boy?—Yes.

32,927. Has it grown very much?—Yes, it has.

32,928. Do you think the people of Port-Ellen are better off to-day than in Oa?—I cannot tell about that.

32,929. But you can quite see this, that if you want to get a holding again in the Oa, it would be necessary for you to make it clear that you would be better in the Oa than you would be in Port-Ellen. Now, if you say that you cannot tell, then there is no reason for altering the present state of things?—We don't know what our condition would be if we got a holding in the Oa. I

did not lack any since I came to Port-Ellen, but I had great trouble in getting my livelihood.

32,930. Your opinion seems to be that you would probably have been better in the Oa than in Port-Ellen?—If my future position in the Oa would be as good as before, I would go there.

32,931. And do you think it would be as good in the Oa?—Yes, I think it would.

32,932. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did I understand you to say, that if you got an opportunity of taking a holding in Oa, something like the size of the holding you had before, you would go there yourself?—I am getting too old now, and I have no children to go with me: they are all away from home.

32,933. Were you one of the fifty who applied to the County Council to put the Allotments or Small Holdings Acts into operation in this district?—Yes, I was.

32,934. Who was it that took the lead in the matter? Was there any particular person who got up the petition to the County Council?—The late Mr Campbell, minister of Kildalton.

32,935. So you cannot tell whether he had any communication from the County Council or not?—No. [*Rev. Mr Maclean, interpreter.*—It was after his death that the County Council refused the application.]

32,936. When you applied to the County Council, was it your wish to have an allotment near the town for growing potatoes, and winter fodder for a cow, or was it for the purpose of getting a larger holding?—I was wishing five or six acres to cultivate along with my present work.

32,937. How is the land let near the town now? You say there are a number of grazing parks?—Everybody can see that.

32,938. Are they put up to auction every year, or how are they let?—The people put in offers for them.

32,939. And those who give the highest offer get the parks?—Yes.

32,940. Now, do the poorer people in Port-Ellen consider the method of letting the parks a grievance?—I don't know about that.

32,941. Are they quite satisfied with the present method of letting these parks, or do they think there might be a better method?—Yes, they are satisfied.

32,942. Are there any allotments in the neighbourhood of Port-Ellen? Have any of the towns-people land that they can crop?—Yes, there are some who have four acres.

32,943. Is that let from year to year, or how?—At a yearly rent.

32,944. But everything is let at a yearly rent. Is it always the same people who have the same piece of land, or does the tenant change?—The same people always have it.

32,945. What is the rent of that land per acre?—I don't know about that.

32,946. Do you know what the parks are let at per acre?—I don't know about that.

32,947. *Mr Munro.*—Were you and the other tenants in arrear of rent at the times you were evicted from your several holdings?—I had not any arrears.

32,948. Do you know if the other tenants were in arrear?—Some of the others were not.

32,949. Do I understand you to mean that some were?—Some of the others had.

32,950. Had that anything to do with the eviction?—I don't know about that.

32,951. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is it your opinion that the parks about Port-Ellen here should be subdivided into smaller lots and let to working people?—Yes, I would like a piece myself, and a piece to another man.

32,952. You think that that would be a great benefit to the working people of Port-Ellen?—Yes, it would.

ANGUS MACNAB, carter, Port-Ellen (60).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

32,953. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you also a carter in Port-Ellen?—Yes.

32,954. Had you ever any connection with land before?—Yes, I had. Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

32,955. Where had you experience of land?—Down in Cragabus.

32,956. That is where Mr Macewan also was?—Yes. Angus Macnab.

32,957. Had you a holding in Cragabus formerly?—Yes.

32,958. What rent did you pay?—Between £15 and £16.

32,959. What stock had you?—Sometimes seven and sometimes eight cows.

32,960. How many horses?—Two.

32,961. And sheep?—About twenty sheep: sometimes more.

32,962. When did you leave that place?—About thirty years ago.

32,963. The same time as Campbell left?—I left a year before Archibald Campbell.

32,964. How many tenants are in Cragabus now?—Five crofters.

32,965. Why did you leave Cragabus?—My father died, and Mr Ramsay, the proprietor, would not allow the son to succeed the father in the holding.

32,966. Were you served with a summons in the usual way to leave the holding?—We got no summons, but Mr Scott, the factor, spoke to us, and I had to sign a paper before leaving.

32,967. And did you come to Port-Ellen then?—Yes.

32,968. Have you been in Port-Ellen ever since?—Yes.

32,969. Would you take a small holding yourself if you got it on reasonable conditions?—Yes, I would.

32,970. Could you direct us to a place where we would see land fitted in your opinion for such a holding?—I would like some ground near the village along with my present work.

32,971. Then you would like an allotment?—Yes.

32,972. Is there land in this neighbourhood that is now held as a large holding that would be suitable in your opinion for making into allotments?—There are large parks about the village, let.

32,973. Would you take such an allotment if you got it?—Yes.

32,974. And do you know any other person who, in your opinion, would take them too?—A good many talk about the matter: I don't know what they would do if they got the chance.

32,975. Supposing they got the opportunity, are you of opinion that they would take it?—Yes.

32,976. You have no doubt about that, have you?—No.

32,977. You have heard the evidence that was given to us by Mr Campbell?—Yes.

32,978. May I take it that you in a general way agree with the evidence?—Yes, I corroborate the evidence given by Archibald Campbell.

32,979. *Mr Macleod.*—Why would not Mr Ramsay give you the holding? Was there any reason assigned?—The reason I got was, that the son would not be allowed to succeed the father in the holding.

32,980. And who got your father's holding?—A man, William Maccuaig, got the holding.

32,981. Was he the neighbouring crofter?—Yes, a neighbouring crofter.

32,982. How many crofters were in Cragabus at that time?—Nine.

32,983. Is it under crofters now, or is it a large farm?—Part of it is let to a tenant of the farm, and the other part is under crofters.

32,984. How many crofters will there be there now?—Four crofters and a larger tenant.

32,985. What rent do the crofters pay?—The rents were reduced.

32,986. What do they pay now?—They were reduced to £15 or £14, 10s.

32,987. So that the holdings in Cragabus at the present time, are just about the same size as your father's holding?—Yes.

32,988. Can you tell me how many years ago this is that you speak about?—About thirty years.

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

Angus Macnab.

32,989. Has the method of cultivation been greatly improved since then? Are the crofters now following a better method of cultivation than they were thirty years ago?—Not much better.

32,990. You think the method of cultivation that they had then was as good as it is now for the land; there were as good crops being got?—Part of the crops were as good in my time.

32,991. What part of them do you think is better now?—The potato is now cultivated better than it was then, in some years.

32,992. What is the difference in the cultivation?—It depends much upon the weather and the year and such circumstances.

32,993. That is what I want to discover. What was the old method of planting potatoes?—The same method as to-day.

32,994. How do they plant potatoes to-day in Islay?—They make drills, and manure them.

32,995. But they did not drill and manure thirty years ago?—Yes.

32,996. You said there was a difference between the methods of thirty years ago and those of to-day: what is the difference?—The weather and the season make the difference.

32,997. It is the season that makes the difference, not the method of cultivation?—Yes.

32,998. Can you speak to any other land besides Cragabus?—I know about the Oa in general and can give information about it.

32,999. Are there any places that have not been mentioned by the other witnesses that you think would be suitable for crofter holdings?—Evidence was already given about the other places that I know of.

33,000. There is no other place that you would like to mention?—I don't know of any other place.

33,001. You said that personally you would like to have an allotment near the village which you could work along with your present employment. That is very natural in your case, but are there any others who would be inclined to take a holding outside Port-Ellen and depend entirely upon their holding?—There is a general talk about it.

33,002. But nothing definite?—Two or three I heard saying that they would take it.

33,003. Did those two or three have any means? Would they be able to stock places, suppose they got them at a reasonable rent?—Yes, a few have means for that purpose.

33,004. When you left your father's holding at Cragabus, did you get any compensation from the proprietor for the building, or for any other improvements?—No, nothing. The houses belonged to the landlord, and we paid rent for them.

33,005. The proprietor built the houses, did he?—I cannot say: they are of long standing.

33,006. Your father got the house when he came there?—Yes.

33,007. Where did he come from?—He had land in Lurabost.

33,008. You disposed of your stock when you left Cragabus?—Yes.

33,009. To advantage or to disadvantage?—The price of stock was not good that year.

33,010. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You believe that there is among the working people in this village a general desire to get allotments of one to five acres?—Yes.

33,011. What is your own opinion as to whether the desire is real, and whether the need is real?—They have no land for raising potatoes or any other crop.

33,012. You have every reason, have you not, to believe that they are really desirous of getting the land and that they would be benefited by getting the land?—Yes, they would be better, I think.

33,013. Then, with regard to the demand there is for allotments, would it be possible to make some scheme by which that demand could be met? Is there land about here that could be so sub-divided as to meet the demand that exists?—The land about the place is in parks just now.

33,014. But you say that the lands which the villagers originally had were consolidated into larger parks?—Yes, that is the case now.

33,015. So that the villagers originally had the land better divided among them than now?—Yes, it was divided in lots for the householders.

33,016. And a process of consolidation of these small holdings went on to form these large parks that are now existing?—Yes, that was the case.

33,017. And these parks now, instead of being held by the working people, are held by well-to-do people, is that the case?—Yes, the richer people.

33,018. And it is the desire of the people now that the parks should be sub-divided and let to the villagers as originally was the case?—That is what I hear said.

33,019. Are these parks held in connection with the distillery?—No, not the whole.

33,020. But have the distillers got any of the parks?—Yes.

33,021. How do they use these parks? What have they got on them? [*Mr Reid, factor.*—The distillery has no park.]

33,022. Do you hold to what you say, that some of the parks are let to the distillers?—They are let to other people by the proprietor.

33,023. Are the distillers tenants of some of the parks?—They belong to the estate. [*Mr Watson.*—The distillery also belongs to the estate.]

33,024. It appears that the proprietors are also distillers?—Yes.

33,025. You have told us that it would be possible to meet the demand for allotments by having these parks sub-divided. Now, do you think that there is also a demand for holdings larger than these again by people who would be willing to leave Port-Ellen and go to other parts of the parish?—If they would not get houses along with the holdings they could not make much of them.

33,026. And you think they are not prepared to build houses on the holdings which they are asking for?—A good many of them would not be able to build houses.

33,027. Even if the land were available for being let in small holdings?—A good many of those who asked it or who would like to have it could not build houses.

33,028. In the evictions that took place in Islay generally the people had to leave their houses and go elsewhere. Did they not provide themselves with houses after being evicted?—Houses were already built in places that people went to.

33,029. Do you know how the houses in Port-Ellen were built; were they built by the proprietor, or by the people who were put out of their lands?—Every man built the house for himself on feu.

33,030. Why would they not be just as able to build houses on small holdings if the land were available?—I would require to work my holding at Oa, and would not have time to build a house.

33,031. Don't you think that if they got such an encouragement as land at a fair rent, and the privilege of building houses for themselves, they would get help, say from their friends, to build these houses; and would it not be quite as feasible a thing as to build a house on the feu such as was given in Port-Ellen?—If they got help from friends they would be able to build houses.

33,032. And do you think it likely that if these holdings were available they would get help from friends?—Some have friends for that purpose, others have not.

33,033. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are all the houses in Port-Ellen built upon feus?—As far as I know, that is the case.

33,034. What length of feu is common?—Three times nineteen years, or fifty-seven years. [*Mr Greig.*—A feu is a perpetual thing as every one knows; a lease is quite a different thing from a feu.]

33,035. *Mr Munro.*—On the expiry of your building lease, are you aware that the house you have built becomes the property of the proprietor, or are there

any conditions in your building lease that allow you compensation for your building?—Yes, I know that when the lease is out the house would become the property of the proprietor. [*Mr Greig.*—He has no lease at all.]

33,036. Then you are subject to removal at any time?—I am a tenant myself.

JAMES ANDERSON, fisherman, Port-Ellen (59)—*examined.*

33,037. *Mr Sutherland.*—You are a fisherman in Port-Ellen?—Yes.

33,038. Are there many fishermen in Port-Ellen?—Yes, there are a few.

33,039. How many boats are there?—About seven boats.

33,040. What is the average length of keel of your boats?—24 to 28 feet.

33,041. What is the fishing mostly?—Flounder, cod, lobster, and herring.

33,042. Have you to go far out for herring?—We get them away on the north side here.

33,043. Do you go as far as the north of Jura?—Yes, up to Colonsay.

33,044. How many families will be interested in these seven boats? Are they held in shares, or do they belong to the skippers?—They belong to the skippers. Twenty-two families are interested in them.

33,045. And what do you do for assistance for the working of the boats? Is it done by your own families, or do you hire men?—Some have their own families and others go in shares.

33,046. Is there any desire on the part of the fishermen of Port-Ellen to have small pieces of land?—Yes.

33,047. Had you any talk among yourselves? Do you know the opinions of the other fishermen, generally, on the subject?—Yes.

33,048. Are your houses in the same category as those we have been hearing about just now?—Yes, just the same.

33,049. And you would like, would you, to have small allotments in connection with your holdings?—Yes.

33,050. What size do you think of?—Three or four acres.

33,051. Just the land we see in the neighbourhood of Port-Ellen?—Oh, there is land outside of it.

33,052. How far would you think it convenient to go in your case?—About eight miles from here.

33,053. Would you go eight miles?—Yes.

33,054. So that any land that could be found within a circle of eight miles of Port-Ellen would, in your opinion, be suitable for allotments for the people of Port-Ellen?—Yes.

33,055. The nearer the better, I suppose?—Well, we have got no harbours here about the town for our boats.

33,056. You have in your mind that not having a good harbour here you could select a good harbour elsewhere?—Yes.

33,057. And transfer there bodily?—Yes.

33,058. Have you any particular place in your mind?—Yes.

33,059. What is the place?—Ardmore.

33,060. Where is that?—On the east side, north of the mansion house.

33,061. Is there a good harbour at Ardmore?—Yes.

33,062. And it is on the present line of the steamer route?—Yes.

33,063. What are your objections to the harbour at Port-Ellen?—We cannot get our boats hauled up.

33,064. Would it be necessary if you had a good pier to haul up the boats?—Yes, but we are not allowed to haul them up on the quay.

33,065. But could not they lie in the dock?—Yes, if there was a dock made for them.

33,066. And if a dock were made in the harbour at Port-Ellen, would that meet you?—Yes.

33,067. But you want to go to Ardmore because there is a natural shelter there?—Yes.

33,068. Have ever any representations been made in any quarter to provide you with a sufficient harbour where you could let your boats lie? Have any steps been taken by the fishermen or others interested?—No, never.

33,069. You are aware that it is possible now for the County Council to get grants for the purpose of enlarging harbours and improving them, under a recent Act of Parliament, do you know that?—We heard of it.

33,070. You did not ever make any application under it?—No.

33,071. Is there any other reason why you would want to be transferred to this place, Ardmore, apart from the fact of the harbour?—No other reason.

33,072. Supposing you were to remain in Port-Ellen, do you still see it possible for allotments to be got in this neighbourhood? Is there land here that would suit you?—It was allotments formerly.

33,073. I was just going to ask about that? Do you remember that?—Yes.

33,074. And is it the case that the former allotments were consolidated and made into these large parks?—Yes.

33,075. Which are now let as accommodation land to merchants and butchers and others?—Yes.

33,076. You quite agree with that evidence?—Oh, yes.

33,077. Is there anything else you wish to bring under our notice?—Nothing.

33,078. Is it your opinion that the fishermen, if they got opportunities to take allotments, would take them?—Yes, I believe most of them would.

33,079. You will have some spare time, of course, ashore during certain seasons of the year?—Yes, we have plenty spare time.

33,080. And when the weather is too stormy to permit of your boats going out?—Yes.

33,081. Do such storms occur here often?—Very often.

33,082. Which is the most unsafe point of the compass for your harbour?—The south-west wind.

33,083. Have you ever heard any calculation made of the amount of money that would make your harbour safe?—No.

33,084. How often does Mr Macbrayne's steamer call at Port-Ellen?—Four times weekly.

33,085. Cannot that steamer moor at the harbour and remain there if the weather is rough?—No.

33,086. And do they exact dues from Mr Macbrayne for his steamer?—They do.

33,087. Do they exact dues for your boats?—No.

33,088. Under whose control is the present harbour?—The trustees.

33,089. The trustees of the estate?—Yes.

33,090. Is it a private harbour?—No, it is a public harbour. [*Mr Greig.*—Under a private Act of Parliament.]

33,091. And do you know if the trustees have ever made any efforts to enlarge the harbour, or to make it safe?—They put an addition to the quay; it was only a small pier formerly.

33,092. How much money do you think would be necessary to make it a good harbour?—It would take a few thousand pounds.

33,093. Have you taken into account that the material is very easily got here?—Yes, there are plenty of stones and quarries.

33,094. You would just quarry it off the quay and make piers of it?—Yes.

33,095. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you find the fishing pay fairly well here?—At times.

33,096. But very uncertain, like most fishing?—Very uncertain.

33,097. You have no wish to give up the sea altogether?—Not at all.

33,098. But you want what is called the fishermen's holding?—Yes.

33,099. To keep one cow?—Yes.

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

James Anderson.

33,100. If you had three or four acres you would keep a cow?—Yes.

33,101. And you would want a bit of grazing too?—Yes.

33,102. And you would do with it here, in Port-Ellen, if you could get it?—Yes.

33,103. But if not you would prefer to go away to another harbour where you could get it, say at Ardmore?—Yes.

33,104. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You say that the harbour at Ardmore is a natural one, and that around that harbour you have land suitable for small holdings?—Yes.

33,105. *Mr Munro.*—Where do you find a market for your fish?—Manchester, Billingsgate, and Birmingham.

33,106. Do you think it possible to prosecute the fishing successfully and pay proper attention to a small holding as well?—We have spare time enough for it.

33,107. But do you think you could do justice to both?—Oh, yes.

33,108. *Mr Macleod.*—How is Ardmore held at the present time, is it a large farm?—Yes.

33,109. A sheep farm?—Yes.

33,110. Were there small tenants there before?—There were small crofters at one time.

33,111. And it is presently held by a large tenant?—Yes.

33,112. Can you give any idea of the extent of land that there is there?—No, I could not.

33,113. There is no pier of any kind, I presume, there at present?—There is a small pier.

33,114. Would it require to be extended?—Yes.

33,115. Do the other fishermen in Port-Ellen agree with the view that you have been expressing about Ardmore?—They were speaking about it.

33,116. It has been a favourite scheme for some time with the fishermen, has it?—Yes.

33,117. *Mr Greig, law agent for Kildalton Estate.*—When were there crofters at Ardmore?—Say about sixty or seventy years ago.

33,118. Where were they situated?—At Ardmainish.

33,119. That is not Ardmore?—It is into Ardmore farm now.

Peter Reid.

PETER REID, factor on Kildalton Estate (36)—*examined.*

33,120. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you desirous of giving evidence, Mr Reid?—Yes, I should like to make a short statement in connection with the farms which have been mentioned. But first, as regards the deer park. Some deer are kept in the policies about Kildalton House, and are confined to what is called the 'deer park.' The total area of land to which deer have access is under 1500 acres, and this consists principally of brushwood and waste land, quite unsuitable for cultivation. The only farms let solely for grazing purposes, which are at all suitable for division into small holdings, are situated in the Oa, and consist of the following lands:—

Lurabus:—

Green pasture,	271 acres
Rough „	518
	789 acres

Ballychatrigan and Strimnishmore:—

Green pasture,	425 acres
Rough „	1060
	1485 acres

Giol and Glenastle:—

Green pasture,	550 acres
Rough „	2060
	2610 acres

Tockmal and Grastle:—

Green pasture,	137 acres
Rough „	850
	987 acres

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

Peter Reid.

You have already had some evidence as to the old 'groat' lands. In olden times the whole of the island was divided into quarter lands, and these again subdivided into groat lands, twopenny lands, and penny lands. These lands were of equal value at the time, although not of equal area. The farms above mentioned contained the following divisions:—

Lurabus,	6 groats
Ballychatrigan,	8 „
Strimnishmore,	6 „
Giol,	6 „
Upper and Lower Glenastle,	6 „
Tockmal and Grastle,	5 „

As to the present rents, Lurabus being let with Cornabus and Tockmal, and Grastle with Kintraw, we do not know exactly the present rent of each of these holdings separately. The rent of Giol and Glenastle, according to the lease, is £325, which would represent a rent of £27 per groat land; a reduction of rent, however, has been made, and it is now £275. The rent of Ballychatrigan is £250, which makes the combined rents £525, or slightly more than £20 per groat land. No money has been expended on these farms, but, notwithstanding this, the rents are fully 20 per cent. higher than those fixed by the Crofters Commission for the adjoining crofts, viz.,—the Cragabus holdings which yield £15, 10s. per groat land. From this it appears that land under grass, even in the present day, is more profitable than when cropped. As is well known land has lately gone out of cultivation in one of the most fertile parts of Scotland, East Lothian, so that it is little wonder that some parts of the West Highlands should also go out of cultivation.

To convert these farms into crofts would entail a large outlay on the part of someone, without any adequate return. If the proprietor were to put up houses and reclaim land, surely he might expect some little interest on his outlay; if the tenant did it it would involve considerable expenditure of capital on his part. He might do it with very little actual money expenditure, but he could not do it without labour expenditure, which is equivalent to money. He could not do it at all without horse labour.

Ballychatrigan and Strimnishmore, having a southern exposure and being on the whole much better land than Giol and Glenastle, may be taken as the most suitable for crofter holdings. In Cragabus a groat land consisted as nearly as possible of 23 acres arable and 75 outrun; while on Ballychatrigan and Strimnishmore there are 30 acres green pasture and 75 acres rough pasture to the groat land, so that even if these lands were of equal value the areas come very near,—each has 75 acres outrun, but Ballychatrigan has 30 acres green pasture as compared with the 23 acres of Cragabus.

A groat land was supposed to carry six cows and their followers, and probably also a few sheep. The evidence brought forward to-day seemed to show about 20 sheep. In addition to this the crofters in Cragabus keep two horses, and we may assume that the supposed crofters in Ballychratigan would keep the same stock. In 1871, according to one witness to-day, there were four horses kept, and seven to ten cows; and it must be remembered that the horses of that time were very small and that the ploughs were wooden ploughs. They used four or more probably eight horses to a plough.

In order to make a groat land in Ballychatrigan of equal value to a crofter's holding of a groat land, as presently held in Cragabus, the following expenditure would require to be made.

The 30 acres (or at least portions of it) would

require to be drained and made capable of cultivation, a very moderate estimate for which would be £200
The fencing might cost say . . . 50
The erection of the dwelling-house, byre, barn, stable, and house for young cattle could not very well be done under . . 160

£410

This estimate is only for thatched houses, which are not considered satisfactory, but the expense of putting up a slated roof would be very much greater. The class of work which would be done for the above sum would not justify the advance of money under any of the existing Land Improvement Acts, but interest at the rate of 4½ per cent. may be considered very reasonable. A lower rate of interest might be taken if the roofs were slated and the buildings more substantial. At 4½ this would add £18, 10s. to the rent, or in other words make the rent without putting any value on the land £3, 19s. higher than what is considered a 'fair rent' per groat land just now.

Another point to be considered is the amount to be paid for the sheep stock over and above their real market value in virtue of their being bred on the ground. This so called 'tenant right' is a serious question affecting the conversion of grazing land into small holdings. The sheep on all grazing farms have to be taken over at valuation, and in the event of the stock on Ballychatrigan and Strimnishmore having to be sold off, a loss of at least £500 would be incurred, or fully £35 per groat land.

In short, to convert the farm of Ballychatrigan and Strimnishmore into holdings of a size which is strongly advocated by many people, even by the witnesses here to-day, would involve an expenditure of over £6000, with the result that a reduction of about 15 per cent. on the present rent would require to be made in order to allow the tenants to occupy the land on the same terms as those whose rents have been fixed by the Crofters Commission.

I don't suppose it is of any consequence to advert to the question of how the people were removed, but I don't think we can admit that there were any evictions, and I think there is no need, unless it is wished to call forward witnesses to show that there were no evictions, at least in the ordinary sense of the word.

33,121. The only interest is whether from your point of view you desire the question to be gone into. But it has been suggested that, seeing you have given us a number of statistics and figures, it might perhaps suit your convenience to attend for cross-examination on the statement at Port-Charlotte, where we are to have a meeting on Monday. Is that on the estate of Kildalton?—No, this is the only sitting that you will have on this estate. I might read extracts to show that the great majority of those who left Oa went entirely of their own free will; and Mr Ramsay himself told me that he had a good cry over the head of a number of them going. He went and visited them afterwards, and reported that they were in a prosperous condition.

33,122. *Mr Munro.*—Do you deny that any of them were forcibly evicted?—I deny that any were forcibly evicted. The two cases that have been mentioned occurred about ten years afterwards, and these may have been removed against their will. I deny that there were any evictions; they may have got letters of removal, but I deny that there were any evictions in the sense of evictions.

33,123. *Mr Macleod.*—What you mean by eviction is forcible removal?—Forcible removal. No doubt there would be pressure brought to bear upon these two that were referred to, because I see they were in Ballychatrigan and Strimnishmore seven years after the others removed.

33,124. *Mr Munro.*—So you persuaded them to go?—I know nothing about it.

33,125. *Mr Macleod.*—You cannot speak directly from personal experience?—No, but I can speak from evidence. [*Mr Greig.*—It took place before our day.] I don't think it is of any consequence at all.

33,126. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to the statement you read, I take it you limited yourself to enumerating the difficulties there are in the way of sub-dividing large holdings?—Decidedly, that is the whole object.

33,127. I suppose it is incontestable that the large holdings which now exist were made out of smaller holdings?—Those that I have referred to were at one time under small holdings.

33,128. And new settlements of smaller holdings were formed somewhere else?—There appears to have been the removal, but I cannot speak of any other matter.

33,129. Have there not, as a matter of fact, been shiftings of the population in the island of Islay from certain places to certain other places?—I don't think there have been any unless those that you have heard of. I do not know of any except in the case of that one man, Mr Campbell.

33,130. But you know the former population of Islay, and the population at the present day?—They emigrated. There were about 400 people emigrated in 1863.

33,131. How old is Port-Ellen?—Fully sixty years.

33,132. Well, if we go back to sixty years ago, there was then no Port-Ellen?—I am not prepared to say that.

33,133. It would not, at all events, be anything like the Port-Ellen of to-day?—Decidedly not.

33,134. Is the difference in the population there due to the natural increase of the people, or is it due to people coming from other parts of Islay?—I don't know, the houses were built on ground leased from the late Mr Campbell of Islay.

33,135. But we had evidence from two or three witnesses here to-day who say they held such land at one time and cultivated it; you say there is no reason to doubt that evidence?—Not that they held small portions of land.

33,136. And you think also that it is a very reasonable conclusion for us to come to that it was a general policy all over the island, in operation for a long time?—I do not think so; personally I have had no application for the land.

33,137. But the County Council has, is that not so? you are not prepared to deny that?—Certainly not.

33,138. I understand there were 50 applications from Port-Ellen alone. Is not that an indication that there is a desire to get land?—There were 50 from the parish of Kildalton.

33,139. Principally in the neighbourhood of Port-Ellen?—I don't think any one would seek to deny that there is such a desire.

33,140. Can you account for their applying to the County Council and not to you?—No, unless they thought they would get the land cheaper from the County Council.

33,141. Or they might think that was the only way to get it at all?—Perhaps they were under the impression that they might get it cheaper.

33,142. Is it not reasonable for us to suppose that they thought it was no use to apply to you, in view of the teaching of past experience?—But if they had no past experience?

33,143. With regard to your estimate of the cost of putting up the necessary buildings, it seemed to me to be rather high. Don't you think so yourself?—I don't think so.

33,144. I have no doubt you gave the estimate based on your own experience?—Not from our own experience; it would cost us a great deal more.

33,145. You used to pay more?—It would cost us considerably more.

33,146. That is a point I would like to ask you about. Why should it cost you, who manage these large estates, more to put up the necessary buildings, &c. than to the man who actually occupies the land, for we have frequently had it in evidence that that is the case?—I think every one who has the management of estates is perfectly well acquainted with the facts. A man does not work nearly so well for another as he does for himself.

33,147. And then there is the question of fees, I suppose, to be added,—fees to professional men, which a man who does his own work would not require to pay?—That would not enter into the case.

33,148. Supposing you were making an arrangement with a tenant, the legality of which you were not perfectly certain about, would not you be likely to appeal to a professional man for legal advice, or are you a lawyer yourself?—If I were not certain about it I would apply to a lawyer.

33,149. And very often a man working for himself does not trouble himself about that?—That was not taken into consideration at any rate.

33,150. But you admit that there is a difference, and I think your explanation of it is a reasonable one, that a man would work very much better when he knew it was for himself than when working for another?—He would probably work overtime.

33,151. Have you any experience of any place where it was attempted to give larger holdings, and where the difficulties were found to be insuperable; have you ever heard of any such?—In the north of Scotland I have had experience of small holdings.

33,152. Where was your experience in the north of Scotland?—In Banffshire.

33,153. And did they not succeed there?—No, they were not successful.

33,154. When were these carried out?—Some fifteen years ago. They were not successful from a pecuniary point of view at any rate.

33,155. Were they done on a large scale?—No, they were on too small a scale.

33,156. You mean that the holdings were too small?—Yes.

33,157. Was it near a populous place?—Near fishing villages. The mistake made was that the holdings were only £5.

33,158. Can you give us an idea of the area rather than the price; the rent would be high no doubt in the neighbourhood of fishing villages?—The land was very poor.

33,159. Poorer than Islay perhaps?—Poorer than some parts of Islay.

33,160. You gave us some interesting information about the division of the land; and I think you gave us to understand that the basis of the valuation was not area but value?—That was the case with the old groat land; it was of uniform value.

33,161. Do you know anything about this historically, when the valuation was done?—It was done at a time prior to any record having been taken of it.

33,162. Was it, in your opinion, done scientifically? was it a good valuation?—It must have been, because in Cragabus we find that the old divisions are held at the present day.

33,163. Is that because they were found to represent the fact?—To represent equal values.

33,164. And do they still hold these values comparatively with one another?—In Cragabus they do, but I have no knowledge of any other township.

33,165. I can easily foresee this, and probably you can also, that for instance a groat land, or whatever equal division was made in Port-Ellen, would not hold now?—No, because there have been improvements and alterations on some more than others, and there have been alterations on the marches. But I refer to the division into groat lands in Oa, because that is a part of the estate where there have been practically no improvements made.

33,166. Don't you see then how that circumstance would affect the comparison you made between the rents fixed by the Crofters Commission and the rents paid by the large farmers?—But on the large farms I spoke of there has been no money expended on improvements; there is not a steading on them.

33,167. No money expended since the reign of William the Lion, when the 'groat lands' were fixed?—No money expended since the crofters left.

33,168. And no farm steading erected?—No.

33,169. In other words you took down the old farm steading and did not find it necessary to put up others?—There has been no steading erected, because the land is under sheep.

33,170. The land that was before under cultivation is now under grazing and there is no necessity to erect steadings?—They are simply under sheep at present. I am just pointing out the difficulty of converting them into small holdings. There is no doubt that the land is there, and if there is any land suitable for small holdings that is suitable.

33,171. The only difficulty, or at least the greatest difficulty you foresee, is the putting up of new houses by people if they were put there, is not that so?—The difficulty that I see is that it would not be remunerative.

33,172. Perhaps not according to your method of calculation; but don't you see that we have experience and evidence to show that when the people were taken from good land and put down upon worse they actually erected houses, and why should they not now, if taken back to the better land, do the same thing? Are the conditions that were in operation all over the country thirty or forty or fifty or eighty years ago not in operation now?—Not quite. There are differences now.

33,173. Would the difference not make it easier for them to erect comfortable houses now than they were able to do earlier in the century?—I don't think so; their ideas of houses are no longer the same.

33,174. The standard is higher in fact?—The standard must be higher.

33,175. And that is a good thing?—Decidedly.

33,176. The people would now aim at better houses?—It is to be hoped so.

33,177. Certainly, we have no reason to doubt it.—But they cannot put up the houses which would be sufficient for the present day themselves. They might put up houses of the old class, knocking them up without much expenditure. I don't know of any very good houses put up without money.

33,178. Did not you hear to-day evidence from gentlemen who built houses in Port-Ellen; are they not good houses?—No. The houses that have fallen out now were not put up in the same style.

33,179. But as opportunity arises, and they put up houses, they are better every year, is that not so?—If they have the capital to do it.

33,180. If not they don't build houses at all?—That is where the difficulty comes in.

33,181. But if they built houses in Port-Ellen, why should they not, if they got security of tenure and other favourable conditions, build also in more favoured regions?—I merely pointed out that to do so they would expend money without an adequate return.

33,182. That would be a difficulty if it existed; but the people surely know their own business. You also referred to what is known in the north country as 'hefting' in taking over stock. Is that in operation in this country?—Yes.

33,183. And I think you called it by a name I never heard applied to it before,—'tenant-right'; did I take you up wrong?—I used the expression but not quite in the sense of 'hefting.' That there is a tenant-right there is no doubt; a tenant-right for getting a higher valuation for sheep than the market value.

33,184. I don't wish to misunderstand you, or to misrepresent you in any way; I thought it was rather a happy term to call it by.—I said the *so-called* tenant-right.

33,185. Has it then grown into such a custom here?—Yes.

33,186. Is there provision made for it in leases?—Yes.

33,187. What do you think regarding it; is it fictitious in any way?—I don't quite understand.

33,188. Does it really represent the value that is put upon it?—Not quite. But still it has grown, and when one tenant has paid a fictitious value for his stock on entering he naturally requires to get it on leaving.

33,189. But there is no legal sanction apart from custom for it? It is not in the leases or conveyances?—It is the practice, and it is in the estate regulations

that one tenant is bound to take over the stock from the other at valuation.

33,190. I think you said there is a small deer forest on the estate. How long has that forest been in existence?—I don't know.

33,191. It was before you came here?—Yes.

33,192. I was going to ask if there were sheep there before, and whether, when they were cleared off, there was any 'hefting'; but, of course, you cannot speak from personal knowledge?—No.

33,193. Can you give us any information about the harbour here?—Yes.

33,194. It is a harbour under a private Act of Parliament, is it?—Yes.

33,195. And under your management?—Yes.

33,196. Would you require additional powers before you could spend any money on it?—No.

33,197. There is already sufficient power?—We require the consent of the Lords of the Admiralty who have superseded the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. [*Mr Greig.*—I may say that the estate spent £3000 upon an addition to the quay within the last two or three years, without any assistance at all; and the original pier also was built by Mr Ramsay himself a number of years ago.]

33,198. That was, I suppose, for accommodation for breasting or lying alongside? It was not with the object of making it more sheltered, was it?—It was partly for that purpose also, but it was more for steam-boat traffic than for fishing accommodation.

33,199. Will you explain to us about the nature of the building leases here?—They were for sixty years, from 1834, and they all expire at Whitsunday next, or the great majority of them. But feus were offered to those who wished to take them some six of seven years ago, and a very large proportion availed themselves of this offer. The other houses now fall to the estate.

33,200. And is this offer for perpetual feus still open?—No, it was made by Mr Ramsay, but he is now dead.

33,201. Is it an entailed estate? [*Mr Greig.*—The trustee has lately obtained power to feu.]

33,202. *Mr Forsyth.*—I should like to ask you one or two questions with reference to your remarks as to the method of taking over sheep by valuation. You mean the ordinary sheep valuation common throughout Argyllshire?—Yes.

33,203. Do you claim that there is in that anything in the nature of a tenant-right? I have never before heard that advanced in this county.—There is the right of the tenant to get his stock taken over at valuation, and this has come to be a higher value than the market value, because it was impossible or very difficult to stock a farm afresh without great risk of mortality. The death-rate was so high that sheep which have been acclimatised to the ground are certainly far more valuable to an incoming tenant than sheep brought in. This is more especially the case where there are no fences.

33,204. I quite understand the principle of the valuation,—I am not unacquainted with it myself, but what I want to get at is as to this right. Is not the right merely a condition of the lease?—And the custom of the country.

33,205. In how far is it the custom of the country?—If there were no lease, and a tenant had got a sheep stock, he would be entitled to ask the proprietor to take it over at valuation.

33,206. Are you sure of that?—Quite sure.

33,207. Well, I beg to differ from you on that point.—I mean, of course, where there is a regular sheep stock kept.

33,208. I think it is an exceedingly doubtful legal point.—Possibly in Argyllshire generally, but I referred to Islay in particular.

33,209. I think you will find that he would not be entitled to it at all, except as a condition of a lease, and that it is simply a matter of ordinary bargain between proprietor and tenant. But your contention as to its being the custom of the country, I should like to take grave exception to?—It is certainly the case all throughout Islay.

33,210. Assuming that a man takes a large grazing without stock and puts a sheep stock upon it, would he at the end of his lease have any power to compel the landlord to take it over at valuation?—No, I don't think so, but he would if he proved he had taken a stock at valuation.

33,211. It seems to me that you have been going rather far in describing what may be a common case in this district as a 'tenant-right' in any proper sense of the term?—But wherever a tenant has taken over a sheep stock at valuation he is entitled to get it taken over at valuation by the incoming tenant.

33,212. You make that statement with great confidence, but I am by no means disposed to accept it.—Unfortunately, we are compelled to do it.

33,213. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—The chief difficulty, I think you say, in getting small holdings set up in this parish is the cost of the buildings and fences that would be required?—Yes.

33,214. You quite admit that there is suitable land, and that there are people who wish to acquire small holdings?—Yes.

33,215. Then, you say that when the small holdings were consolidated into the large farms in this parish, there was no outlay on the part of the proprietor?—On improving the land or building houses on the farms I referred to.

33,216. They took the land as it was left by the small tenants?—I cannot speak from personal experience. I make the statement that there has been nothing expended on reclamation of land, or on erection of steadings, but there may have been money spent by the proprietor in laying down arable ground into pasture.

33,217. But no fencing of any kind, or draining?—Practically none.

33,218. We do not know what 'practically none' may mean: the phrase may cover a good deal?—There are march fences. There is one farm with a march fence, and the others have none.

33,219. Were these fences put up by the tenants or by the proprietor?—Some by the proprietor and some by the tenants.

33,220. So there has been some outlay on the part of the proprietor?—On one march fence only: but that march fence applies also to the adjoining holdings which I referred to and with which I compared the farm.

33,221. The crofters got the benefit of that march fence?—Yes, as well as the large farms.

33,222. Then you must admit that the case here is an unusual one: that the usual thing is that steadings had to be put up, and fences erected for the large farmer?—I only speak of the farms I have enumerated.

33,223. You also raise the difficulty as to the valuation put upon the sheep stock: that the farmers are entitled to a higher price than the market value of the stock?—Yes.

33,224. Were the former tenants treated in that way? did they get for their sheep a higher price than the market value when they were evicted, or when they left?—Those who have entered during the last twenty or thirty years have had to pay a higher price for the sheep than the market value.

33,225. A question was put to one of the witnesses here to-day as to the stock that he had, and how he disposed of it, and he said he sold it. I understand from that that he did not get the fictitious value, but only the market value, when he disposed of the stock himself?—That is not a sheep farm: there is no such obligation in the case of a few sheep.

33,226. It only applies to big farmers and not to the small. Not only did the small tenants not get that fictitious value for their stock, but are you aware that they got anything for the houses they had built?—I don't know anything about it.

33,227. But you have no reason to doubt the statement that was made, to the effect that there was nothing paid for the houses?—I don't say there was.

33,228. So that the old tenants did not get the benefit you are now asking for the big farmers. Then I think you tried to make out that the tenants left

Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

Peter Reid.

their holdings against Mr Ramsay's will?—No, I merely repeated what he stated to me, that he had a good cry over the going away of some of them. He stated that he did not wish them to go.

33,229. Are you aware of any steps he took to induce them to stay?—No.

33,230. How could the tears be very genuine then?—I don't think that is very relevant to your inquiry.

33,231. You are not the judge of that, you know.—I merely made the statement.

33,232. But you wished it to have some force, did not you?—Merely that they were not forcibly evicted. I said that we did not consider it necessary to bring evidence on that point, because, so far as I understood, it did not at all affect the remit of the Commission.

33,233. But you made the statement in reply to evidence given to-day, and I only wanted to test the value of that statement, and of this cry.—I don't think it is very generous, at all events towards a person who is dead, to discuss such a matter.

33,234. *Mr Sutherland.*—But you introduced the matter yourself.

33,234*a*. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the former removal of people from their holdings, was it not the case that they had to go to make way for sheep?—I have got no personal knowledge of that, and I don't think I should be called upon to give evidence without personal knowledge.

33,235. But you have been making statements about it?—I made a quotation, and that quotation does not require to be put in as evidence.

33,236. These people, I take it, were not offered any reduction of rent?—As I say, I know nothing about it.

33,237. We were told that the rents were high and the markets low at the time when these people went, and you are not in a position to say that any reductions were offered to them, is that so?—I am not in a position to make any statement on the subject.

33,238. *Mr Sutherland.*—You decline to answer, is that it?—I don't know.

33,239. That is at your option?—Decidedly, because I don't know.

33,240. *Mr Macleod.*—You were making a comparison between the crofter holding where a Fair Rent has been fixed by the Crofters Commission and this farm or more than one farm. You say that the comparison was a fair one; you do not think there are any special circumstances in connection with those farms to make the comparison unfair?—I don't think so.

33,241. So far as your experience is concerned on the estate of Kildalton, the large farmers are paying a rent of 20 per cent. above what the small tenants are paying?—As the present rents stand.

33,242. Then do you consider that the rents of the large farms are too high now?—Very possibly they may be.

33,243. All that I am anxious about, and I have no doubt you are as anxious as I am, is to get at whether the comparison is a fair one. Are the large farmers complaining that their rents are still too high?—Nearly all the farmers are complaining that their rents are too high. It is very difficult to put a rent on that will satisfy the tenant.

33,244. But you said there has been a reduction on the large farms within recent years?—Yes.

33,245. How long is that since?—About seven years ago.

33,246. And was a reduction made on the crofter rents at the same time?—Yes, they were brought to the large farm rents, or very nearly so, at that time.

33,247. And that bears out what we heard to-day of a crofter's rent being reduced from £23 to £20 by the estate management, and then subsequently reduced to £15, 10s. by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

33,248. Is that a general case?—That is the case of Cragabus.

33,249. Does it refer to the whole of Cragabus?—Yes, to the whole of Cragabus alone. There is no comparison on any of the others.

33,250. Don't you think the large farmers might fairly claim that they were entitled to a further reduction of rent?—Well, supposing they did get the reduction of rent that the crofters got, that would be 20 per cent. off their present rents; it would allow nothing for interest on money expended on building or reclaiming the land.

33,251. Would you be prepared to say that the value as fixed by the Crofters Commission would be nearer what might be fairly considered the value as present prices stand of the large holdings?—It is rather difficult to know what is the value just now. Although I have had a good deal of experience of it I could not say what a holding was worth,—that is to say, that a man could make a living out of a holding. All I wanted to point out was that in order to make a living in a holding at Ballychratigan equal to the living that the Cragabus people are making out of their holdings, the rents would not require to be above the rents of the holdings in Cragabus, otherwise the people in Ballychatrigan would not be as comfortable as those who are at present in Cragabus.

33,252. But as I understood it you advanced as one reason against the formation of small holdings the fact which would naturally weigh very heavily with the estate management, that you were getting 20 per cent. more rent for the large farm than for the small holdings?—Yes.

33,253. Now, what I am anxious to know is this, whether 20 per cent. really represents the fair difference between what might be expected from small tenants and a large tenant?—I merely stated the facts of the case.

33,254. But the rent paid for the large farm was reduced seven years ago, and I want to know whether a rent fixed on the basis of the Crofters Commission rents now would not be nearer a fair rent than the rent fixed seven years ago?—I would not like to say.

33,255. There has been a considerable decrease in the value of produce and stock in that time?—I don't know that there has been any decrease; it has not improved however.

33,256. Now with regard to the buildings, no doubt if the responsibility were taken off the estate management in that matter it would remove a considerable number of your difficulties?—It was not the estate difficulties I was speaking about at all, but the difficulties of making a comfortable living.

33,257. For the tenant?—For the tenant.

33,258. But you could imagine a tenant being in possession of a certain amount of capital and being prepared to sink it along with his own labour in erecting the necessary buildings on his holding?—There is the question of the wisdom of his doing so.

33,259. But that is not what we are so much concerned about. If there was such a tenant, you do not see any reason why he should not be able to make a fair living out of it?—If he got a larger holding he would possibly do it.

33,260. A groat or two groats?—If he got more than two groats he would possibly do better.

33,261. I think you said you considered the manner in which the value of the groat lands was made could be looked upon as the basis of a fair comparison?—Fair so far as we are able to compare them.

33,262. So far as your experience goes it was a fair enough division that was made?—I think so.

33,263. The groat lands on that large farm you speak of compare very nearly with the groat lands of the crofters in the adjoining township?—Yes, that is where we have been able to compare them.

33,264. *Mr Munro.*—Have you many crofters on the Kildalton estate?—About thirty.

33,265. What is the condition of these crofters; are they fairly prosperous, or otherwise?—I think they are fairly prosperous.

33,266. Are they not in arrears of rent to any extent?—Not many of them.

33,267. Seeing that the present crofters are doing so well, is it not fair to infer that a further extension of the crofting system might be attended with advantages

to the parties taking the crofts?—I don't think it is an advantage unless the holdings are larger than at present. I don't think the crofters are so comfortable as a man earning a decent wage.

33,268. That is a matter of opinion from your point of view; but you yourself admit that the crofters are at present doing fairly well?—Yes.

33,269. Might not an extension of the system be also attended with equally beneficial results to the holders of the land?—If it were practicable. These crofters are fixed, they have the houses there and they have the land along with the houses; it is a going concern.

33,270. I am not speaking of depriving the present crofters of their holdings; I am speaking of extending the present system to the large sheep farms or deer forests, or any other available lands.—It is purely a matter of whether the people will be comfortable in them or not.

33,271. What would you consider a fair standard of comfort?—I would call it a fair standard of comfort if it could show that they were making from 15s. to 20s. per week, or equal to it, out of their holdings. In the case of any that I have gone into I fail to see how a man with a small holding can have equal to 15s. per week, or even 12s. per week of profit out of that holding, putting money value on the whole produce and allowing him a good wage for his labour.

33,272. Yes, but if they are able to pay you a fair rent and to live themselves, does not that infer some standard of comfort?—One of the crofters said to-day that he was just making a livelihood.

33,273. And don't you admit that that is a very good thing to do?—It might be better if they could make more than a bare livelihood.

33,274. How do the poor rates in this parish compare with others?—They are very high.

33,275. What are they in the parish of Kildalton?—1s. 4d.

33,276. Do you know how that compares with other parts of the island?—I think it is rather higher, but I cannot say accurately.

33,277. You stated, I think, that large farmers paid 20 per cent. higher than the crofters as fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

33,278. Are we to infer from that that the large farmers are too high rented, or the crofters too low rented?—I don't think large farmers would pay too high a rent; they would very soon let us know.

33,279. I think you said already that they were complaining of their rents?—They were complaining, but that is the only criterion that you have. The only test of the value of the land is what it will bring. I have got no other test.

33,280. Apart from the question of the general comfort of these small occupiers of land, do you not think it would be attended with considerable advantage to the island or the county generally to have the land occupied as much as possible by a class of small tenants who would cultivate the soil?—If they were prosperous, it no doubt would be: if they were active and had sufficient ground.

33,281. About these building leases which you say expire in sixty years. I think you mentioned that you had already taken possession of some of the houses?—We have taken possession of the ruinous ones; some were unfit for habitation.

33,282. Were they in ruins at the time the people were evicted from them?—I am not aware that there were any evictions.

33,283. They left voluntarily?—They left because the houses were coming down.

33,284. And they had no inducement to build them again?—They had not money to build them, in the case of a large number.

33,285. *Mr Sutherland.*—You said there were 30 crofters on the Kildalton estate?—Yes, about that.

33,286. We had some evidence here to-day about these holdings, the rental at any rate,—is that about the average size?—That is the average size in the Oa, but we have only got some seven crofters of that size. Others are very small.

33,287. What is about their rent?—From 25s. to £6. Port-Ellen, Islay, Argyllshire.

33,288. Where are those smaller crofts?—In the lots between this and Bridgend. It is land that was laid out in lots of 20 acres each. Peter Reid.

33,289. And are the smaller crofters in pretty good circumstances?—Not unless they get outside labour.

33,290. Not in such good circumstances as those who have a £30 holding?—No, they cannot possibly be.

33,291. What do you think is the plain deduction from that? Is it not that if they were made into the size of the £30 holdings they would be more comfortable?—They cannot produce on their holdings sufficient to maintain themselves and their families.

33,292. And if you gave them holdings of £30 they would be as comfortable as those who hold them now?—They ought to be.

33,293. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You referred to the fact that crofters said that they made a livelihood out of their crofts. Now would you be prepared to say that the large farmers are making a livelihood in these years out of their farms, or are they not living upon their capital?—I have just the same objection as before, that I don't care to speak about a thing that I don't know about personally.

33,294. There is a general idea that farmers are not occupying to profit just now?—That may be a general opinion, but I could not give that as evidence.

[ADJOURNED.]

THIRTY-FIFTH SITTING.

Port-Charlotte, Islay.

PORT CHARLOTTE, ISLAY.

April 2, 1894.

Present:—

ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P. (acting as *Chairman.*)
JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

DUGALD FERGUSON MACFADYEN, merchant, Port-Charlotte (27)—*examined.* Dugald Ferguson Macfadyen.

33,295. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I am a merchant at Port-Charlotte and Tayvuilin.

33,296. I presume that you know the object of our inquiry, which you may have seen stated on the bills?—Yes.

33,297. Have you a written statement to submit?—No, I have no written statement.

33,298. Do you know such land as would be suitable for the purposes for which we are sent to inquire?—Yes, I will enumerate certain parts of land or farms that were previously occupied by crofters and small tenants, and which are now out of cultivation. These are Cultoon, Grimsay, Sunderland, Foreland, Rockside, Ballymony, Gruinard Flats, Killinallan, Gortantuir, Mulbuie, and Mulnaroan at Sandaig. There are also parts of Ben Taitivill.

33,299. Are these all in one parish?—All in this parish of Kilchoman, except Killinallan and Gortantuir which are in the parish of Killarow.

33,300. Are all these farms used principally for pastoral purposes now?—Principally.

33,301. Is there any cultivation on any of them?—There is a little cultivation on Killinallan farm.

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Dugald Ferguson Maciadyen.

33,302. And what do you say with regard to the others?—The others are out for pasture alone, so far as I am aware.

33,303. With little or no cultivation?—Little or no cultivation whatever.

33,304. And these were before in the occupation of small occupiers?—Yes.

33,305. How long ago was that?—I am not very sure, but there were fifteen crofters in Killinallan besides the large farmer about forty years ago.

33,306. Are there traces of the old small cultivation still to be seen on all these farms?—Yes, on most of them, indeed on almost all. There are other witnesses to follow me who will be able to speak to such facts with more minuteness than I can. Then there are a number of other farms (I don't know whether or not it is right to draw your attention to them) which were previously occupied by small tenants but are now occupied by large tenants.

33,307. But are they cultivated now?—Some parts are, and other parts are not.

33,308. The uncultivated parts being held as part of large farms?—Yes.

33,309. In longer than the ordinary rotation?—Yes, I believe it is so in some cases.

33,310. Is it more than a long rotation of five or seven years?—Yes, I consider it is in some cases.

33,311. But those other farms you have mentioned, with the exception of Killinallan, are all out for grazing purposes?—Yes.

33,312. What have you got to say with regard to the desire on the part of the people to take small holdings if they had the opportunity?—The desire to acquire small holdings has been very wide-spread in this parish. The people have been exceedingly desirous of getting small holdings: in fact, I sent in applications to the County Council for over 100 individuals who wished small holdings.

33,313. You are a County Councillor?—Yes.

33,314. Then you know very well the distinction between a small holding and an allotment as defined in the Acts?—Oh, yes.

33,315. For small holdings you say there were over a hundred applicants from this district?—Yes, from this district, Kilchoman, alone.

33,316. And you were unable to give effect to these wishes, I presume?—No, we happened to be in a minority in the Council.

33,317. But even apart from that, I presume, you would find the procedure cumbrous? The difficulty would be to get these small holdings under the present arrangements.—Yes, that is so.

33,318. Then there is the question of the ability of the people to take such holdings, what have you got to say with regard to that?—Well, there were a few of whose ability one could not say very much, but the majority of these people were quite able to take over small holdings if they got them.

33,319. Now, on these farms you have referred to as being nearly or altogether out of cultivation, are there farm steadings on them?—There are some.

33,320. Are there any of these farms without steadings?—I believe you cannot altogether say they are without them, but there are some which you cannot say have them either, because they are simply old ruins.

33,321. They are not working farm-steadings, are they?—No.

33,322. Could you give us an indication of the farms that have not got good steadings?—Yes; there is Cultoon where there is simply one house for the accommodation of the cattle and a shepherd's house.

33,323. Could you give us information to enable us to identify it on the map?—It is above Kilcheran [Cill-Chiarain]. Grimsay is right up on the flat above there, and on it there are only the remains of the old houses. In Sunderland there is a very large farm-steading and a very large farm, but there is a large part of that farm that has not been cultivated for years and years past.

33,324. And Foreland, what about it?—At Foreland there is really no farm-steading: there is a mansion house.

33,325. And on Rockside?—There is a large farm-steading.

33,326. And on Ballymony?—There is a steading there also, but not large in comparison with the size of the farm. At Gruinard Flats there are only the remains of the building. I cannot remember the name of the farm there, but probably some one else will be able to give it.

33,327. Then, with regard to Gortantuir, how does it stand for offices?—I don't think there is much of a farm-steading there.

33,328. And Mulbuie?—That is taken in along with another farm.

33,329. Along with what farm?—With Aoridh farm.

33,330. And what do you say as to Mulnarcan?—I have not seen it.

33,331. Is that in the south end of the island?—It is over at Sandaig.

33,332. Your opinion is that these people who applied to the County Council of Argyll for small holdings, or at least some of them, would be able to take small holdings and work them?—I believe there would have been about forty of them who would have been only too glad to take them if they had got the opportunity.

33,333. And if any means were obtained of getting some aid from the outside a larger number would be able to take small holdings?—Yes, a great many more would have taken advantage of it.

33,334. Has there been any application for allotments under the Allotments Act?—None, as far as I am aware.

33,335. So the desire in Islay seems to be rather for small holdings?—Yes.

33,336. You, of course, will have very good opportunities from your position as a County Councillor of knowing the opinions of the people on this matter?—Yes, I think I understand their desire very well.

33,337. And did this question of the desire of the people for land emerge during the election for the County Council?—Yes, the desire for land was the main issue at the elections.

33,338. And was it pressed upon you generally by the people from all sides?—From all sides. In fact, I attribute my return to it.

33,339. Supposing the small holdings,—this is a general opinion I am asking of you,—supposing these small holdings were obtained, do you think it would increase the comfort of the people and tend to their general welfare?—I consider it would increase their comfort very much if they got small holdings at a fair rent.

33,340. You are always, of course, assuming that there would be a fair rent?—That there would be a fair rent fixed.

33,341. Are you of opinion that from the very commencement they would be able to pay a Fair Rent?—Yes, I quite believe they would. That is more especially the case in those farms that I have mentioned, because there the land is very suitable for cultivation.

33,342. Do you suffer here at all from late harvests?—Sometimes; not very often.

33,343. Are you acquainted to any extent with the conditions in the Outer Hebrides?—No, I cannot say that I am.

33,344. But are you aware whether the harvest is earlier here than it is in the other islands?—I understand it is somewhat earlier here.

33,345. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You gave us a list of farms that you thought suitable for small holdings. Can you tell us the names of the old townships on these farms?—No, I am afraid I cannot go into that.

33,346. Or the extent of arable land on these farms that is now let out of cultivation,—say on Sunderland which you describe as a large farm?—I could not give any idea; but I believe that even with the ground that is presently under cultivation a dozen small tenants might be placed upon it extra.

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Dugald Ferguson Macfadyen.

33,347. What size of holdings would these have?—I would consider they might run from 40 to 50 acres arable.

33,348. And a sufficiency of grazing ground in addition?—Yes.

33,349. Is that the sort of holding that the people generally desire?—Yes, that is what they would like.

33,350. Now, could you go over the other farms in the same way and tell us the number you think could be accommodated on each?—On Kiltulm I believe four might be accommodated very comfortably.

33,351. Would they have about the same acreage that you mentioned?—Yes, I am taking that as about the average. There might be more or less in some instances, but that is as near as I can go.

33,352. Grimsay was the next farm you mentioned?—I believe there might be room there for about six; in fact, I understand there used to be seven or eight crofters there before.

33,353. Then Foreland?—Foreland I included with Sunderland in giving my estimate of about a dozen.

33,354. They are held by the same tenant, are they?—Yes.

33,355. Next comes Rockside?—As to Rockside I cannot exactly state the number which it could accommodate in addition to the large farmer, because I have not been very much over that farm.

33,356. What size of farm is it?—It is a very large farm, somewhat similar to Sunderland.

33,357. Can you give us approximately the number of holdings that could be made?—Well, I should say not quite so many as in Sunderland, but very near it; say about ten.

33,358. And in Ballymony how many?—I should say there might be eight.

33,359. Then I think you mentioned Gruinard Flats?—I believe the remains on that place point to two small holdings. At Mulbuie there would be one; and at Mulnaroan there were ten crofters before.

33,360. But how many small holdings of the size you suggest could be placed there?—I cannot say, for I only saw Mulnaroan in passing.

33,361. And Gortantaoid?—I cannot say, but I understand there are any amount of indications down there that will show. And there used to be fifteen crofters in Killinallan.

33,362. Then what about Ben Tartigal?—I would think there might be other two there.

33,363. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you calculating about holdings of 40 or 50 acres arable each?—Yes.

33,364. Then you consider there is this large amount of arable land available in these large farms?—Yes.

33,365. Sufficient to make so many holdings of 40 or 50 acres arable a-piece?—Yes.

33,366. Were the old holdings anything like that size?—I could not say.

33,367. They were probably very much smaller?—Probably.

33,368. *Mr Maccallum.*—And you think there are people in the parish who would be able to take such holdings?—Yes, from the applications that have been already sent in, and from the general desire of the people to have holdings I believe they would be only too glad to do so if they had the opportunity.

33,369. And do you think a sufficient number could be got who would be able to stock these holdings?—Yes, I think so.

33,370. Is there a desire for a smaller holding than such as we have been speaking of?—There is a desire for smaller holdings in the vicinity of villages such as this, where the people have dwelling-houses of their own already. They would like, if possible, to have land in connection with their houses which they could work along with them. But again there are a number who would be willing to leave. There is one place I find I have omitted, Carn; and there are also Gearrach and Oalistadh.

33,371. Are these large farms?—These are farms that were under cultivation at one time, but are not now.

33,372. Are they now separate farms?—Yes, separate farms. They are held by farmers who do not reside on them, but merely keep shepherds there.

33,373. Can you give us any idea of the old population?—In Gearrach there were at one time seven tenants, in Oalistadh eight, and in Carn six. At Toronay also there were formerly five tenants.

33,374. Do you think these farms would accommodate the same number of tenants now comfortably?—Well, not according to the numbers which I have been giving in the case of the others.

33,375. Are you well acquainted with these farms?—Yes. I have been over them pretty often. They are close to the village here, and there is a strong feeling in the village that these are the kind of places that would suit them for small holdings to be held in conjunction with the land which they already have.

33,376. These four, I understand you to say, are in the neighbourhood of this village?—Yes.

33,377. Then do you think it would suit better to divide these into smaller lots than we have been speaking about?—Yes, in order to give the villagers some additions to the ground which they already hold.

33,378. What extent of land is held by the villagers just now?—Some have 6 acres, some 8, some 10, and I think three or four have perhaps 20 or 30 acres. But they have no grazing.

33,379. You mean at Port-Charlotte?—Yes. The want of grazing is a great drawback. They have to pay extra for the grazing of their cattle, and are under an obligement to get it.

33,380. Have the people in Port-Charlotte made application for land?—Yes. There were, I think, over forty who made application in reply to the County Clerk's letter; these were from the village alone.

33,381. What sort of holding did these look for?—Some wished an additional lot of 8 acres, some 10, some 12, some 4. One or two went up to 15 or 20 acres.

33,382. And you think it is possible to accommodate these people from the land in the neighbourhood here?—In the district here, quite possible.

33,383. Would they be willing to pay as high a rent for it as is paid for the land just now?—They are quite willing to pay a fair rent, such as may be fixed by a competent arbiter: that is the view they take of it. They are desirous of having the land, but they are also desirous of having a fair rent.

33,384. Why do these people not apply in the first instance,—or am I wrong in supposing that they did not apply in the first instance—to the proprietor for the land?—I could not say: some may have applied, some may not. Although I have applied myself I have not got it yet.

33,385. Did you apply yourself before you went to the County Council?—Yes. I asked before I went to the County Council.

33,386. And you were not able to get it?—Because there is no land in the district except what is held in connection with large farms, and I understand these are under lease.

33,387. And there would be a difficulty in giving it?—Yes.

33,388. Because the land round about Port-Charlotte is under lease?—Yes. I cannot state that positively, of course, but that is my understanding.

33,389. Then do you think that there is a desire on the part of the proprietor to meet the demand on the part of the small tenants?—Well, there has been a desire expressed by Mr Morrison to meet the demand,—that is with regard to the County Council's small holdings work; but at the same time I consider that the places offered and the conditions imposed were simply another way of shoving it by.

33,390. They were willing to give land on certain conditions?—On certain conditions that it was impossible for the people to comply with.

33,391. What were these conditions?—There was one farm, Lossit, offered, and another Ardnave, also one in the Flats of Gruinard: they were to be given at so many years' purchase, and with compensation over and above to the outgoing tenants: and if all these things

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Dugald Ferguson Macfadyen.

had been complied with the price to be paid by the County Council would have been simply ridiculous, and then to tax the people over and above that was quite out of the question.

33,392. The proprietors are willing to give the land only under what you consider unreasonable conditions?—Yes.

33,393. And what the County Council consider unreasonable conditions?—Yes.

33,394. Then is it your experience that the proprietors of the county generally are willing to meet the demand which is so obvious throughout the county for small holdings?—No, it has not been my experience, but rather the opposite.

33,395. Was there a committee appointed by the County Council for putting the Small Holdings Act into force?—There was; I was a member of it.

33,396. And did that committee report in favour of putting the Act into force?—Yes, they did.

33,397. How was their report dealt with by the County Council?—When it came up for final issue it was knocked on the head by a number of landlords, factors, and large farmers; the direct representatives of the working people went for it, but were overruled.

33,398. There was a motion for adopting the report, which was to the effect that the Act ought to be put into force?—Yes.

33,399. That motion was lost, you say, by the votes of proprietors, factors, and large farmers?—Yes.

33,400. Did any proprietor on the County Council vote for putting the Act into force?—Not that I am aware of.

33,401. Are you aware that the ten proprietors voted against putting the Act into force, or giving it a trial?—No. I cannot say as to that, for I was not present at the last meeting when the matter was discussed.

33,402. But did not you get a copy of the minutes?—Yes.

33,403. Did you notice that three factors of the Duke of Argyll voted against it?—Yes, and I also observed that Mr Forsyth voted against it as well.

33,404. Then all the proprietors on the County Council voted against giving this Act a trial?—Yes.

33,405. But at the same time you think there is a strong desire on the part of the people to get land?—Oh, yes.

33,406. And that there is in this district from which so many applications went very suitable land?—Very suitable land.

33,407. Which can only be got under very unreasonable conditions?—Very unreasonable conditions. The people in this village have never had an opportunity of getting the land, because to expect a number of people to leave their dwellings and go to Lossit and take the land there I consider quite unreasonable.

33,408. There was no offer of land near where the people are?—None whatever.

33,409. And no attempt to meet the demand for land that comes from the village of Port-Charlotte?—None whatever.

33,410. *Mr Forsyth.*—With reference to the decision of the Argyllshire County Council on the report from the Small Holdings and Allotments Committee, are you aware that the great majority were much more influenced by the form of the report and the recommendations therein than by any desire to throw out the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts?—I cannot say that that was my opinion; it was rather to the opposite effect, because from the meetings which I had attended I always observed that there was a certain amount of shuffling, and trying to keep back the reports and keep the thing extended.

33,411. You mean that they wished to delay the procedure?—Yes.

33,412. Did you not hear that there was a good deal of difficulty as to the conditions on which the Allotments and Small Holdings Committee reported that land should be obtained, and that it was felt that these conditions were likely to prove very onerous to the ratepayer?—That was shown of course: owing to the conditions on which the landlords would give the land.

33,413. And has it not got a good deal to do with the conditions laid down by the Acts whereby the necessity for buildings and fencing are so clearly prescribed in a manner that is likely to cause very considerable expense to the ratepayers of the County?—Certainly, that was the view that was taken on the matter.

33,414. But you consider that the rejection of the recommendation of the Committee was intended to put an entire end to all proceedings under the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts in the County Council?—Yes, I considered that at the time.

33,415. Was it not suggested that there should be, after further consideration and after further consultation with the proprietors, some more feasible scheme to be brought up in future before the County Council of Argyllshire which must prove acceptable and must be workable?—I could not go into that, because not being present at that meeting I have only the minutes to go by.

33,416. There was a good deal of discussion, you know, that does not go down in the minutes?—Yes, I understand there always is at the meetings: we cannot take from the minutes a full and exact record of what takes place.

33,417. Therefore, on the whole, would you not consider that there was a tendency on the part of the Argyllshire County Council generally to go in for any reasonable scheme that would not entail too much expense upon the tax-payer of the county?—At the meetings which I attended previous to that I was always of opinion that it was exactly the reverse. My opinion was that there was a section of the County Council that simply wanted to knock this business on the head.

33,418. That was merely your opinion, and you were not at the last meeting when the discussion took place previous to the vote?—No.

33,419. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—As to the County Council being willing to adopt some more reasonable scheme than was proposed by the Committee, are you aware that the County Council dismissed the committee altogether?—Yes, I am perfectly well aware of that.

33,420. So that they have now no such committee at all?—No.

33,421. And is it possible, therefore, that the Council can be looking for a better scheme?—I don't see how they can be looking for it when they dismissed the committee, and abandoned the scheme, of course, in doing so.

33,422. Did the committee do their work very thoroughly?—I consider that they did.

33,423. They tabulated very carefully all the returns that were sent to them?—Yes.

33,424. And did the applicants send in all the information that could be reasonably asked for?—Yes, I consider that they did, at all events from this district.

33,425. And do you look to this that the County Council have absolutely rejected these Acts as being unworkable?—That is my opinion.

33,426. Do the minutes show that they have said that it would be unfair to impose upon the County the extra cost of carrying out the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts?—Yes, I think so.

33,427. Therefore, the Council absolutely gave up any idea of meeting the demand?—By going further in the matter.

33,428. *Mr Sutherland.*—I wish to ask you just one question on this matter of the action taken by the County Council of Argyllshire. What is your opinion generally as to whether it was the fault of the Act or of the County Council that there were no small holdings got in Islay?—Well, really from the manner in which the subject was brought up in the County Council—

33,429. I only want a general expression of your opinion with regard to where the fault lay?—My opinion is that it was the fault of the Act.

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33,430. Then I would like to ask you with regard to the tenure upon which the tenants in Port Charlotte hold their land and houses. How are they held?—I understand they are held from year to year; the houses are leased, but not their lands.

33,431. Their houses are built on building leases, are they?—The land is not in connection with the houses.

33,432. They are separate subjects?—Yes; they are what are called in the Crofters Act 'village squatters.'

33,433. And, therefore, do not come under the operation of the Crofters Act?—No; which is a great hardship.

33,434. In this parish have you got any crofters at all under the Act?—Yes; there are a few.

33,435. Where are they to be found?—There was one crofter in Tormisdale who applied to the Crofters Commission and got a reduction of rent.

33,436. Are there not more than one?—There are; but one applied to the Commission and got his rent reduced.

33,437. To what extent?—I think about £5, and the arrears wiped off.

33,438. Can you tell us what rent he paid?—I do not remember just now. It was over £20, I think £24 or £25, and is now under £20.

33,439. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to these Acts which you have made such an attempt to put into force here, you have expressed the opinion that the Acts are faulty?—Yes.

33,440. But do you think that the County Council have given them a fair trial?—I don't consider that they have given them just the length of trial that they might have had: I think there was always some hindrance put in the way of adopting them.

33,441. That further inquiry ought to have been made?—Yes; I consider so.

33,442. Then seeing that they asked the applicants to send in the particulars as to the extent of land they wanted and the rent they were to pay for it, would it not be reasonable to expect that these people should get a reply from the County Council?—I would have thought they deserved to get it, in recognition of what they had done.

33,443. The people were put to a good deal of trouble in answering the communications from the County Council with regard to that, but did they get any definite reply?—They got no reply except what they saw from the newspapers.

33,444. That is, that the whole scheme was knocked on the head by the proprietors, factors, and big farmers on the County Council?—Yes.

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NEIL MACDERMID, farmer, Nerabus, Rhinns (80)—*examined.*

33,445. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I have been a farmer since I was born.

33,446. And are you a farmer still?—Yes, ever since.

33,447. What is the size of the farm you hold?—It is not a big farm.

33,448. Do you know the acreage of it?—Not exactly, but I think it is about 66 acres.

33,449. Of arable land?—Mostly arable, not altogether.

33,450. Is 66 acres the area of your whole farm?—Yes, about 66 acres.

33,451. What rent do you pay for that?—£75, 15s.

33,452. Is it far from here?—Not far from here, more than two miles. It was hereabout that I was born in the year 1814.

33,453. Are there more farmers of that size round about you?—No; the hill was taken from us in the year 1867.

33,454. The hill pasture was taken away from you?—Yes.

33,455. And what was done with it?—They added it to another big farm, Kelsay, which one Macintyre had.

33,456. Have you a written statement that you would like to read?—Yes. Neil Macdermid, born in Carn in November 1814; came to Craigfad in 1832; left Craigfad and came to our present farm in Nerabus, in May 1850. The hill pasture was taken from us in the year 1867 and added to another neighbouring big farm to our great disadvantage and loss, which I hope the Royal Commission will be able to restore to us again.

Port-Charlotte, Islay. Argyllshire.

Neil Macdermid.

33,457. Was this pasture that was taken away from you added to the farm of Kelsay?—Yes.

33,458. Did you get any reduction of rent at that time?—The rent was fixed on us just on the small piece that we have.

33,459. Do you remember what you were paying before 1867,—was it more than £75?—Yes, it was more.

33,460. Then you got a reduction of rent when the pasture was taken from your farm?—Oh, yes.

33,461. May I ask you with regard to that rent, £75, 15s. for 66 acres, do you consider that a high rent?—Well, it is very high on us for such a small croft of land. It is only about one-third of the big farm altogether.

33,462. Have you made representations to the proprietor about that rent; have you ever applied to get the rent reduced?—No, never; it was the factor who made the rent at the time.

33,463. But it is the proprietor who gets it?—Oh, yes, it is the proprietor who gets it.

33,464. What would you like to tell us?—Just that the hill pasture should be restored to us again, so as to make us able to live somewhat comfortably and able to pay our rent. It was on the hill pasture that we depended for paying our rent.

33,465. Have you any sheep?—No, we don't keep any sheep. We have had a few hoggs wintering for some other person.

33,466. Is it dairy farming you carry on? do you make cheese or butter?—No, nothing of that kind.

33,467. What is the principal crop you raise?—Oats, potatoes, and turnips.

33,468. No barley?—No barley now. We used to sow some barley, but in these years past we have not done it.

33,469. Supposing your hill pasture were given back again to those from whom it was taken, would the farm of Kelsay still be a large farm?—Yes, it would be still a large farm.

33,470. Would it be larger than your farm after that?—Oh, yes.

33,471. Was this pasture taken from you alone, or did any other person have a share in it?—There was one person who was a neighbour of ours at one time; he lost the farm at the time the hill was taken from us.

33,472. When the hill was taken away from you, were there other farmers whose farms were taken up altogether; is that what happened?—The low farm was given us altogether, and what the other person had of the farm was taken.

33,473. And was it altogether added to the farm of Kelsay,—your pasture and the whole of that other man's farm?—Kelsay got the hill pasture.

33,474. Was it pasture in which other people had a share as well as you?—No, it was not; most of it was ploughed at the time.

33,475. At the time it was taken off?—Yes.

33,476. But I am asking you about the farm before it was added to Kelsay. Had any person a share in the pasture before it was taken away besides you?—There were three of us.

33,477. It was taken away from you and added to Kelsay farm?—Yes.

33,478. Perhaps you would prefer to be examined in Gaelic?—Yes, I would.

(Examined through an Interpreter).

33,479. Had three of the farmers a share in this pasture along with you before it was taken away and added to Kelsay?—Yes, there were three when we had the Ben.

33,480. There were no more than three?—No.

33,481. What has become of the other two?—There are two with me yet in the land.

33,482. So that if that pasture were given back, you would have your share in it, and the two others would have their share?—Yes.

33,483. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You are not sole tenant of Nerabus, are you?—No, there is a brother of mine and nephews in the same farm.

33,484. And I suppose £75, 15s. is the rent of the whole?—Yes, all that we have.

33,485. How many tenants are there in Nerabus just now?—Three.

33,486. How is the rent paid; have they separate holdings in it, or are they in partnership?—Any one may go in with the rent, but each has a share of his own: we are joint-tenants. Each of us has a share of his own marked out.

33,487. What you state is that you desire to get back the hill pasture that was taken from you?—Yes, that is what we want if we can get it.

33,488. Were you appointed to give evidence before this Commission at a public meeting?—Yes.*

33,489. Then you consider that such an extent as you have would be a suitable size of farm for the people generally?—I have little enough as it is.

33,490. But the other people are looking for such places as you have,—not to be taken from you, but to be taken out of larger farms of course?—To be sure, no less would do them if they could keep it at all.

33,491. And do you think that small places such as yours are paying a higher rate of rent than larger farms?—I think so.

33,492. There is a great demand for such holdings when they are open for competition?—There are plenty asking for small holdings.

33,493. And is there a great demand for the larger farms just now?—No, I don't hear of any.

33,494. Are the rents of the larger farms coming down very much?—That is a thing I cannot enter into. At the time of paying the rent I was getting a reduction from Mr Ballingall, the factor.

33,495. Not a permanent reduction; the rent has not been permanently reduced, has it?—It is not permanent, but as long as the markets are low.

33,496. And during these bad times they have still kept up the higher rent?—No, I was claiming a reduction.

33,497. Have you got a lease?—No.

33,498. Had you ever a lease?—Not since I left Craigfad.

33,499. Where is Craigfad?—On this side of our farm.

33,500. You never had a lease of Nerabus?—No.

33,501. When did you enter Nerabus?—In 1849 or 1850.

33,502. What was the original rent when you went in?—Twice £18, 10s.—£37. There were a great many persons there at one time, and most of them went away to Canada, and then we got the other share.

33,503. When you got the whole of it how much did you pay?—I am not quite sure.

33,504. When did the other people leave?—In 1852 I think.

33,505. How many tenants were in it altogether when you went there first?—There were plenty.

33,506. Can you give the number any more definitely?—Seven or eight farmers.

33,507. Can you give us any idea of the rent that was paid by them for it?—No.

33,508. Can you give us any idea of the condition of the people when they held the land? Were they living in comfortable circumstances?—No, not anything like it.

33,509. You think their places were too small for them?—Yes, surely.

33,510. What was the reason of their leaving?—Just that they were not able to pay the rent.

33,511. Would they have been quite willing to stay if they had got it at a rent that they could be able to pay?—Yes, to be sure.

33,512. And you say that they were not in such comfortable circumstances as the people are now generally?—I think not. All the markets were very low at the time: they had to sell their cattle, and got very little for them.

33,513. When they went out?—Yes.

33,514. And they got no opportunity of staying by being helped with a reduction of the rent? they got no offer of a reduced rent during bad times?—No.

33,515. *Mr Forsyth.*—Under what name is your farm in the valuation roll?—Nereabolls.

33,516. Are the names of all three Macdermids in as joint-tenants of the farm?—Yes.

33,517. And you hold your stock together jointly?—Yes, mostly: as long as the hill was in our possession the stock was joint, but on the lower part every person on his own share was keeping what he thought the farm would keep.

33,518. But have you got separate cattle stock on the farm now?—Yes.

33,519. Have you separate houses?—Yes.

33,520. And do you work the arable land jointly?—No, not the arable land: each person has his own share.

33,521. And does one man pay rent for the whole of you, or do you pay separate rents?—One of us pays the rent for the whole, but each person contributes his share. I have only one-fourth of the farm.

33,522. Then if you obtained extra pasture in addition to what you have now, you would be very considerable farmers, would you not?—We would be far better off, surely.

33,523. But you have already got what many people in this district are seeking for, have you not?—Oh, yes, that is very true.

33,524. And you rather wish that other people should be in the same position as yourself, do you not?—No doubt; I would like every person to be comfortable.

33,525. Rather than seek any great advantage for yourselves?—Yes, I would like every person to be well-off. I would like that the honourable Commissioners should take a step to the hill and see for themselves.

33,526. *Mr Sutherland.*—We mean to go and see every place: you will show us the land when we go?—Yes.

33,527. *Mr D. F. Macfadyen.*—You have said that there were some tenants there previous to your going. Were there people in Nerabus by the name of Campbell when you went?—Yes.

33,528. Were they put out of the farm when you went? Was the farm taken from them?—It was taken from this man when the Ben was taken from us all.

33,529. Who got Campbell's farm?—We got it, the three of us, the lower part.

33,530. Why was Campbell put out of his farm?—I don't know; I cannot go into that.

33,531. Are you aware that he was not in debt for the farm?—I don't know; I cannot say.

33,532. You know Carn very well, I suppose?—Yes, pretty well; it was there I was born, and I remained there till I was eighteen years of age.

33,533. Is there a farm steading on it? And is the farm cultivated?—Yes, it was all cropped.

33,534. Is it cropped now?—No, nothing of it. It was all cropped at the time I was there.

33,535. Do you know Toronay?—Yes.

33,536. Is it cropped now?—Nothing of it, except what the shepherd has.

33,537. Did it use to give good crops?—Yes.

33,538. And did Carn also give good crops?—Yes, Carn was a good place for a crop.

33,539. Do you think Carn and Toronay would make suitable places for small tenants yet?—Oh, they would.

33,540. *Mr Ballingal, factor for Mr Morrison of Islay.*—Are you quite sure of the acreage you gave for your farm? I believe there are 82 acres arable and 81 pasture, making in all 163, whereas you said 66 acres?

* Macdermid has since written that he misunderstood this question. He represented the Nerabus people only.

—I do not think there are that number, but I did not measure it, so I cannot say.*

33,541. Did I not suggest that some of your nephews should leave your farm and take another?—Yes, that is quite true.

33,542. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Did the factor offer you a better farm instead?—Yes, he did, but the last farm was not to let at the present time: the farmers are still in the place.

33,543. When he asked you to clear out, did he offer you another vacant farm?—He did not, but a place that was not suitable to me, and I could not go.

ALEXANDER MACDERMID, Nerabus (31)—*examined.*

33,544. *Mr Sutherland.*—You have heard the evidence given by Neil Macdermid?—Yes.

33,545. Do you agree with that evidence?—Yes.

33,546. Can you give us any explanation with regard to the way in which the holding is held?—No.

33,547. Do you understand that you have a tack or a lease?—Not so far as I know.

33,548. How many dwelling houses are there on the holding?—Three farmers and three cottars.

33,549. Are the cottars employed in cultivating the land?—No.

33,550. Have you any idea of the extent of the holding?—No.

33,551. You heard Mr Neil Macdermid say that he thought it was about 66 acres?—I don't know about that.

33,552. But otherwise you agree generally with the evidence given by him?—Yes.

33,553. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you hold a portion of Nerabus by yourself?—My mother does.

33,554. Does your mother pay rent?—The whole of the rent is paid by one.

33,555. Does she sell her stock separately?—Yes.

33,556. And farms a certain portion of the whole, can you not tell me how much?—One-fourth.

33,557. Is it the case that you want an extension of that farm?—Yes, we want more grazing.

33,558. Separately, or as a part of the whole?—Just the same.

33,559. Do you want that grazing to be attached to your portion of the Nerabus farm?—To the whole farm.

33,560. What do you consider your proportion of the rent to be?—I don't know—£18 odds.

33,561. But surely there must be some accounts kept among you if the rent is paid in one hand?—We pay £18 odds: the whole rent is £75.

33,562. Is it a fourth that your mother has?—Yes.

33,563. Then you come here to say that you, Macdermids, hold this farm in a sort of separate manner, but with one payment of rent made up among you, and that you wish that this joint-holding should have additional pasture?—Yes, that is what we desire.

33,564. *Mr Sutherland.*—Can you give us any receipts for rent from the factor?—Yes.

33,565. Is there anything else you wish to add?—No.

GILBERT MACARTHUR, fisherman, Port-Charlotte (64)—*examined.*

33,566. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—A labourer and fisherman.

33,567. Were you appointed by any meeting to give us evidence to-day?—Yes.

33,568. Were there many at the meeting?—About 80 or 90.

33,569. Were they all of one mind that you should come here and give us evidence regarding our inquiry?—Yes.

33,570. Have you any written statement?—No.

33,571. Which occupation takes up most of your time, labouring or fishing?—When weather suits, fishing.

33,572. Where do you go to fish?—Out in the loch. Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

33,573. Do you go up to Mull of Oa?—No, I was at the herring fishing at the Gruinard side, but I am getting too old for the cold nights at the herring fishing. Gilbert Macarthur.

33,574. Is there a herring fishing there?—Yes, on the north side of Islay.

33,575. Have you a harbour there on which you can land herring?—Not very good.

33,576. Is it in Gruinard Bay?—Yes, but there is a bar across which makes it very dangerous when there is a swell on the sea.

33,577. It is very shallow?—Yes.

33,578. What size of boats do you use at the herring fishing?—Big and small boats: small skiffs first and then bigger luggers.

33,579. What is the length of keel of the biggest?—About 28 feet.

33,580. Where do you get a market for your herring?—There are some buyers here, and some at Bruichladich, and some ship them to Glasgow.

33,581. Has there been a good herring fishing at Loch Gruinard?—Yes, last season, but it was very stormy, and the fishing was not very prosperous. A good many boats were wrecked by the storms.

33,582. Is the quality of the herring caught there good?—Excellent.

33,583. As good as the Loch Fyne herring?—The same quality, but larger fish.

33,584. Where do you find labour when you are not fishing?—I generally plant potatoes for myself, and cut peats, and so on.

33,585. Have you any land at all?—Not an inch.

33,586. And you would like to have some?—Yes.

33,587. How much do you think would be suitable for you?—Between 12 and 15 acres.

33,588. Would you remove from your present house, or would you like to get the land in the neighbourhood of the village?—In the neighbourhood of the village if I could.

33,589. Is that because you would not be under the necessity of building a new house?—Of course, that is natural.

33,590. You are not one of those who have got the small holdings Mr Macfadyen spoke about?—No.

33,591. Is there any distinction in the village as to who have land and who have not? Is it a certain rental that gets the land, or is there any rule?—When the houses in the village were built first of all there were four acres laid out for each house. But some of the people went to America, and others lost their land, and some had bad lots, and they were too dear.

33,592. They gave them up?—Yes, and went away to America.

33,593. What was done with these?—They were given to the rest, so that they have a patch here and there scattered throughout the village.

33,594. And the tendency of the holdings has been to get larger?—Yes.

33,595. But they were of one uniform size at first?—Yes, four acres were laid out for each house.

33,596. The whole village was laid out on that plan?—Yes.

33,597. Do you have your house on a building lease?—I have not a house at all: my eldest brother sits in the father's place.

33,598. Are you of opinion that there is sufficient land in the neighbourhood to give small holdings like that to the people round about?—Plenty of land.

33,599. Within easy access of Port-Charlotte?—Within a mile or a mile and a half.

33,600. Would that give a small holding of that size to every person who would like it in Port-Charlotte, do you think?—Well, it would, I think, in this manner; Griamandary would make six good small holdings, and then some of the Port-Charlotte people would remove there, and give their lots to the like of me.

33,601. There are people who would like to move and become small farmers, and that would leave more land for allotments?—Yes.

33,602. You anticipate that the pressure upon the

* Macdermid has since written:—In 1867 all the pasture land was taken from us and added to Kelsay. So far as I can judge all we have now is between 70 and 80 acres.

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Gilbert Macarthur.

land round about Port-Charlotte would be relieved by some people wishing to go away and taking small farms?—Yes, they would make room for the rest.

33,603. Are there many in the same position as you?—A good number.

33,604. How many fishermen are there in Port-Charlotte? How many families?—About 14.

33,605. Have any of these land?—Yes, some of them have, but at the time of the fishing they go to the fishing, and then work their wee farm again.

33,606. Are the fishermen who have got pieces of land better off than those who have not?—Of course, they are. The like of me when I have to pay £6, 4s. an acre for planting potatoes in, of course, the farmer ploughs the ground for me, but I have to put in my own manure, and cast it up.

33,607. You think you would be far better off if you had some land yourselves at a reasonable rent?—I am sure of it.

33,608. Have you any difficulty in getting it sometimes?—Yes, it is a growl, and put your hand to your cap before you get it.

33,609. Are there many fishermen who have got no land at all?—There are.

33,610. How many?—Five.

33,611. Do you think they would be all as willing to get a small piece of land as you are?—Yes.

33,612. And they would be perfectly prepared to pay a reasonable rent for it?—Yes, a fair rent.

33,613. Can you give us any information about the length of the lease upon which the houses are built in Port-Charlotte?—It was three nineteens at first, but that period has expired now, or is just about it.

33,614. And what is the new arrangement, do you know?—I am not sure; Mr Ballingal and those who get new leases will be able to agree. My father had a fifty-seven years' lease, and he was about the first.

33,615. When was Port-Charlotte built?—Sixty-two or sixty-three years ago: I was nine months old coming to Port-Charlotte from Tormisdale where my grandfather was a small holder.

33,616. Are there many people now living in Port-Charlotte who held land in the country round about?—Yes, a number.

33,617. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—How were the houses of Port-Charlotte built,—by the tenants or by the proprietor?—By the tenants. Every man built his own house, and they helped one another and got the village up.

33,618. And it was built about the same time?—Yes, sixty-three years ago.

33,619. Where did the people come from?—From all the farms round about. At Kilchiaran there were 14 farmers at one time, and at Lossit 13 or 14, and Tormisdale there was a good number. My grandfather and my father came from there: my father being the eldest, he left my two uncles in the farm and came to Port-Charlotte; and that is the way all Port-Charlotte gathered in from the farms: no strangers.

33,620. They were allowed to build houses at this place?—Yes.

33,621. Why was this place chosen for the village?—Walter Frederick Campbell of Islay laid this place out for them: he wanted to make it attractive, and he gave them this ground to build their houses on; and every man built his own house, and had four acres of ground to cultivate.

33,622. It was because it was supposed to be a convenient place for fishing?—Yes, and it was in his mind to erect some public work, so that along with their four acres the people would have some employment: but that scheme was never carried out.

33,623. What sort of industry was he contemplating?—He had in view at one time to put up a cotton mill: for at that time it was thought to drive the mill by the water-power of a small stream.

33,624. What rent did the settlers pay for their four acres?—Those in the low row pay 35s. to 36s. or 40s., —that is the best: but two or three rows up the rent comes down to about 15s. an acre.

33,625. And when the leases are running out, you don't know particularly, I think, as to the arrangement come to?—Not as to the new leases.

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Gilbert Macarthur.

33,626. Are you able to say whether there is a considerable increase in the rental?—No, the rent has not been increased, but it is too dear; there has been little or no reduction.

33,627. You say that the people have come from the farms round about and settled down here?—I said that, which is truth.

33,628. They were able to build houses for themselves here after being put out of the farms?—Yes.

33,629. Is it the case now that you would like to see that process reversed, and that the people should be allowed now to settle upon the land originally occupied by these tenants,—that some of them should leave Port-Charlotte and settle on these lands?—To my mind those who have families in Port-Charlotte, and pretty well off, that could stock a small holding, are quite willing to leave Port-Charlotte and go into a small holding and settle there again, the same as their forefathers were, for this place is too narrow for them.

33,630. Do you anticipate that they would be unable to stock these holdings if they were made available?—There are a good many in Port-Charlotte who are able enough to take a small holding now, and willing to go.

33,631. And you think that that would also be for the benefit of those who remained?—I am quite certain of it.

33,632. They would be quite as well able to build houses now as they were when they built Port-Charlotte?—And better.

33,633. These farms you state are going out of cultivation?—Yes, and getting wilder with rushes, heather and fern.

33,634. That is the result of consolidating the small holdings under a large farm?—Yes. You will see for yourselves places that I have seen, where I weighed barley out myself at 53 lbs. the bushel, now under fern. Fern will never grow but in good soil, that is virgin soil, where barley would grow.

33,635. You are clear that the land has very much deteriorated under large farmers?—Yes. You will see whole stretches where formerly the small tenants cultivated, but to the moss are now useless, under rushes and heather.

33,636. *Mr Sutherland.*—Was your father a fisherman?—No, he was a crofter here, and a small holder in Tormisdale. My grandfather and great grandfather and all were tenants in this parish, from the eighth century.

33,637. *Mr Macfadyen.*—You know Kiltulm very well?—Yes.

33,638. Do you think it would be a proper place for small holders?—It would hold four good small tenants.

33,639. You also know Grimsay?—Yes.

33,640. Do you consider it a suitable place?—Yes.

33,641. I understand from what you have said that this barley you spoke of was grown in Carn?—Yes, and produced 53 lbs. a bushel.

33,642. Is Carn cultivated now?—Not an inch.

33,643. There is a little bit of cultivation goes on behind the house, is there not?—Yes, a mere corner.

33,644. For the family?—Yes.

33,645. You consider Carn then would make a very good place for small holders?—Yes, four in Carn, and two in Torony.

33,646. Do you know Gearach well?—Yes.

33,647. Do you consider it would make a suitable place?—Yes.

33,648. And Lossit?—Yes.

33,649. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—How is Gearach held at present?—One half is cultivated in part, and the other half is wild, back into its original state of heather.

33,650. Is it held in conjunction with another farm?—It is divided; there is a farmer in one half of it and a sheep run.

33,651. Who has the sheep run?—Mr Mactaggart.

33,652. And that part is allowed out of cultivation?—Yes.

33,653. There is one other holding on it that was cultivated?—Yes.

33,654. And the part of it that is out of cultivation is, you say, fit for cultivation?—Yes, it was cultivated in the past. I have seen three or four carts going to the mill at once with fine oats from the same place.

33,655. *Mr Sutherland.*—You have heard Mr Macfadyen's evidence?—Yes.

33,656. Do you agree with it generally?—Yes.

DONALD MACARTHUR, Port-Charlotte (66). (Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

33,657. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you also a fisherman?—No.

33,658. Have you any land?—Yes.

33,659. How much?—Nine acres.

33,660. Where is it?—In Port-Charlotte.

33,661. Have you a house also?—Yes.

33,662. Did you hear the evidence of the previous witness?—Yes.

33,663. Do you agree with it?—Yes.

33,664. Is there anything in addition that you would like to say?—No, nothing.

33,665. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Can you mention any other place that is suitable for small holdings not mentioned by the previous witnesses?—I don't know; but some of the parks nearer hand could be divided among the people of Port-Charlotte.

33,666. What rent do you pay for your nine acres and house?—£8, 3s. odds for the grazing and all.

33,667. That is the rent of the holding with the house and pasture and all?—Yes, but as to the grazing, it is in proportion to the number of cattle that I pay rent.

33,668. Are you a crofter under the Act?—No, I am not under the Act.

33,669. So you could not apply to the Crofters Commission?—No.

33,670. The house was held under a long lease?—I never got a lease.

33,671. And is it the old rent that you are paying?—No, the lot has been drained, and I pay interest on the money spent in drains.

33,672. Does the £8 cover the interest?—That is the whole rent including everything. The rent was only 10s. at first, but it increased every time the land was drained.

33,673. Your father had the house before you?—Yes.

33,674. By whom was it built?—By my father. I was the eldest and succeeded him.

33,675. *Mr Macfadyen.*—Do you pay ground rent for your house?—Yes.

33,676. Do you pay £8 rent for your cropping land?—The rent includes everything.

33,677. Do you pay £2 to graze every cow that you put out to grass over and above that?—No, that includes grazing the cattle at £2 a head.

33,678. How many cows have you?—Two cows; I pay £2 for the one I graze, and keep the other tethered on my own lot. I have other cattle on the hill, for which I pay 10s. to £1.

33,679. How many cattle have you got?—I have got six head of cattle just now, but sometimes more and sometimes less.

33,680. How many do you graze on your own lot?—I only graze one on my own lot.

33,681. Do you graze five in the glen, or in the marsh?—I graze five head, between stirks and young beasts.

33,682. What do you pay for them?—From 10s. to 20s.

33,683. What is your separate rent for the house, what for the lot, and how much do you pay for the grazing of your cattle?—I pay 17s. 6d. for ground rent: I am not sure what I pay for the land itself, as it is all in one, but for grazing I pay £2 for the cow, and 10s. to 20s. for those in the glen.

33,684. *Mr Sutherland.*—Have you got a receipt for the rents that you pay?—Yes, I can put it in.

33,685. *Mr Maccallum.*—Leaving out of consideration the rent of your house and the grazing of the cow, do you pay £5 for the land?—Yes, and more. Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

33,686. You say you pay 17s. 6d. for the house, and £2 for the cow's grass, that is nearly £3: does that not leave £5 for the land?—I think it is higher than that. Donald Macarthur.

WILLIAM MACKECHNIE, fish dealer, Conispy (50). (Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.) William Mackechnie.

33,687. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I am a fish dealer.

33,688. Have you got any land?—I have no land.

33,689. Would you like to get some?—Yes, I would.

33,690. Have you ever applied for any?—Yes.

33,691. To whom?—I applied to Mr Ballingal, the factor.

33,692. And what reply did you get?—That he had no land to give.

33,693. Did you apply to the County Council also?—Yes.

33,694. And did you get any reply?—No, I did not.

33,695. You are in the same position as the others who applied?—Yes.

33,696. Is there any land in the neighbourhood of where you live that would be suitable for holdings?—Yes, there is land in the neighbourhood, plenty of it.

33,697. Do you speak for other people besides yourself?—Yes, I am speaking for others.

33,698. Had they a meeting?—They had a meeting among themselves.

33,699. And were they pretty unanimous in their opinions?—Yes.

33,700. Are you of opinion that there is land suitable that would make such holdings as you ask for in your neighbourhood?—Yes, plenty.

33,701. What size of holding do you consider suitable?—From 12 to 20 or 30 acres.

33,702. How many people in your neighbourhood, do you think, would take such holdings if they got the opportunity?—Six.

33,703. Would some of them have to remove from their present houses?—Yes.

33,704. And would they be willing to do so?—Yes.

33,705. How are they mostly engaged at present?—Labouring about in the neighbourhood, every place they get work.

33,706. Have any of them got land?—No, none of them.

33,707. How many families are there in Conispy altogether that have no land?—I think there are 21 families without land.

33,708. And what use is the land put to?—Foreland is the name of the place: it is a large farm.

33,709. That is the same farm that we heard about already?—Yes.

33,710. Have you any doubt that these families, if they got land the size you wanted on reasonable terms, would make a much better living than they do now?—There is no doubt they would.

33,711. *Mr Macfadyen.*—Do you know the Sunderland farm well?—Yes.

33,112. And you know Foreland also?—I do.

33,713. Do you consider that these farms would make suitable places for small holdings for crofters?—I do think they would be very suitable for small holdings.

33,714. Do you know the farm of Grimsay?—Yes.

33,715. Do you consider that that would make a suitable place also?—I think it would be suitable for small holdings.

33,716. *Mr Sutherland.*—You heard Mr Macfadyen's evidence?—Yes.

33,717. Did you follow it?—Yes.

33,718. Do you agree with it generally?—Yes.

33,719. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I think you said you were a fish dealer: have you had any experience in farming?—I was farming all my life.

33,720. Where did you work at farming?—In Islay with my father; and I was in the south.

33,721. Where was your father?—In Conispy.

33,722. Had he a farm?—Yes.

NEIL MACNAB, fisherman, Port-Wemyss [Bun-Amhunn] (67).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

33,723. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I am a fisherman.

33,724. Have you any land?—Yes.

33,725. How much?—I have six and a half acres.

33,726. What rent do you pay for that?—About £4.

33,727. Is there a house on that land?—The house is not on the land; it is in the village.

33,728. And do you hold the two subjects separately?—Yes.

33,729. From the same proprietor?—Yes.

33,730. Is your tenure of the house and your tenure of the land the same?—I have no lease for the house nor for the land.

33,731. You are a tenant from year to year?—Yes, I got land not long ago from the factor, two and a half acres.

33,732. So the original holding was four acres, was it?—Yes.

33,733. How was the additional two and a half acres used before you got it?—It was grazing land, uncultivated.

33,734. Did you yourself improve it?—I have done all the improvements on it.

33,735. And are there many in the same position as yourself?—Yes, there are.

33,736. How many fishermen are there in Port-Wemyss?—There are about 50 tenants.

33,737. Are they all fishermen in Port-Wemyss?—All fishermen.

33,738. And have they all got land?—All except two or three.

33,739. Would the two or three who have no land like to get the same as the rest?—Yes, they would like land; but when the factor was putting out this new land, some of them would not take it, as it was so poor.

33,740. Was it land adjacent to the other land the fishermen have?—Yes, beside it, and on both sides of it.

33,741. And where is the better land that could be given to you?—There is plenty of good land if it could be given.

33,742. Is it near Port-Wemyss?—About half a mile from Port-Wemyss, from the boundaries of the village.

33,743. Are there many fishermen in Port-Wemyss who, if they got land, would cease to be fishermen?—That is what they say.

33,744. Would you yourself prefer to be a farmer, without having anything to do with fishing?—I would like it.

33,745. And is that the general object you have in coming here to give us evidence?—I would like to get more land, but I was sent here to represent others.

33,746. Had they a meeting?—Yes.

33,747. Were you appointed along with Mr James Macnab to represent the people of Port-Wemyss?—Yes, I was.

33,748. What is the general desire of the people of Port-Wemyss with regard to land?—That they should get land.

33,749. What is their opinion with regard to the size of holdings that would be most suitable?—Some would take 100 acres, some 80, and others from 50 down to 30 acres.

33,750. So that what they desire is a graduated system that would give an opportunity to every person according to his means?—Yes, that is my idea.

33,751. What are the names of the large farms in the neighbourhood of Port-Wemyss?—The farm that is a desert and uncultivated is Ballymony sheep farm.

33,752. Is Port-Wemyss an old village?—It is about sixty years since it was built.

33,753. Was it formed about the same time as Port-Charlotte?—Yes, about the same time. Port-Charlotte may be a year or two older.

33,754. Was it founded under the same circumstances as we heard to-day in reference to Port-Charlotte?—Yes, the same.

33,755. How long have you been a fisherman?—Over forty years.

33,756. Were you always engaged in the fishing from your youth?—Yes.

33,757. And was your father before you?—My father was a farmer.

33,758. Are most of the people in Port-Wemyss in the same condition in that respect as yourself?—Some are, and others are not.

33,759. Have you heard what Mr Macarthur said about the fishing?—I heard, but it is different from the fishing I was acquainted with.

33,760. Wherein does it differ?—We follow deep sea fishing, for ling; we leave this district and go away to Barra and to Lewis and over the Mull of Cantyre.

33,761. Then you require to have large boats?—We do.

33,762. Are there many large boats in Port-Wemyss?—There are six or seven big ones just now. They are not so big as those that went to Barra to the deep sea fishing.

33,763. Did you ever go to the east coast?—I have not been fishing at the east coast, but others from the village have done so: and I have been on the east coast.

33,764. Do any fishermenf rom Port-Wemyss go to Ireland?—There is one here who was fishing in Ireland: I myself was never there.

33,765. Have they been successful lately in the fishing?—The herring fishing was not so good this year: it was a failure, and the trawlers have spoiled it. The deep sea fishing was not so good either.

33,766. But you think there are a number of people who are now fishing in Port-Wemyss who would like to get back to work at the land again?—They say so.

33,767. What is your opinion regarding the fishermen: have they been fishing for love of the work, or because they had no other means of livelihood?—They were forced to follow it: it is not for the love of it.

33,768. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do the fishermen at Port Wemyss make a fair living at the fishing one year with another?—There is not a fisherman at Port-Wemyss that will support himself by fishing alone.

33,769. You require some other help?—Yes.

33,770. What other help are you getting?—Work sometimes, and doing the best we can.

33,771. But you cannot make a living entirely by fishing?—No, we cannot live by fishing alone.

33,772. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is that about the general size of holding, the one that you have?—I am amongst those that have the largest share: some have only two or three acres.

33,773. How many holdings are there altogether?—I think there are about 52 holders of land.

33,774. What stock do they keep?—They keep a cow each generally.

33,775. What stock have you yourself?—I have four just now, two cows and two followers.

33,776. How many others will have two cows?—A large number of them.

33,777. From what farm was the land taken that was given to you?—It came from Mr Morrison.

33,778. But what is the name of the farm?—Ellistermore.

33,779. Did you not say that there was land in the immediate neighbourhood that was suitable for holdings?—The farmer has it, and we have got some of his land already.

33,780. How far distant is Ballimony from you?—It is about a mile straight from our place through the moor.

33,781. Would it suit you to get grazing land from Ballimony?—Excellent.

Char-
Islay,
lshire.

Macnab.

33,782. Then about the fishing: have you a good harbour?—We have no anchorage, and we have no quay.

33,783. Has there been a proposal to build a quay?—Yes, but it did not proceed.

33,784. Would it be a benefit to the fishermen there?—Yes, it would; it is the very thing that would do them good, and bring trade to the place.

33,785. Do you know what steps have been taken to get a harbour built?—We applied to have a quay, as there was Government money.

33,786. Were the fishermen willing to contribute towards the building of it?—Yes, they were: they were to give about a third of it, or eight days of their labour.

33,787. Has that matter been before the County Council?—Yes.

33,788. Do you know any reason for the delay in building it?—I do not know, further than that the sum they were setting apart for it was not large enough.

33,789. The sum contributed by the people, do you mean?—No, the sum the Government allowed was not sufficient to build a suitable quay: it would not do at all.

33,790. It is at Portnahaven that this pier is wanted?—Yes.

33,791. That is close to Port-Wemyss?—Yes.

33,792. And would it serve the purpose of the Port-Wemyss people?—Yes.

33,793. But it has been delayed from time to time by the authorities?—Yes. I don't know whether it was the County Council, or the Government, or who it was, but it has been kept back at any rate.

33,794. But you have not got an absolute refusal yet?—I don't know that it is utterly cast aside.

33,795. But you think it is a scheme that ought to be encouraged in every possible way?—I am quite sure of that.

33,796. Do you know what sum the Government offered for the building of the pier?—First they thought of £1400, and then they came to £1000, and again down to £500.

33,797. That was the last offer, £500?—Yes.

33,798. Who inspected it on the part of the Government, do you know?—There was one from the Crown.

33,799. Are you aware what report he sent in?—I don't know; it is the County Council that should know that.

33,800. But are not you interested in this scheme yourselves?—Yes.

33,801. And the County Council never communicated with you as to the terms that Government were willing to grant, did they?—I never heard much about it; some would say this, and others would say that.

33,802. *Mr Ballingal, factor for Mr Morrison of Islay.*—I rather think you have fallen into an error in saying that you have no lease. There is a building lease, is there not, in name, I think, of Agnes Macnab?—It must still be in the office then; I have not got it.

33,803. *Mr Macfadyen.*—Perhaps I may be allowed to make an explanation as to the pier at Portnahaven. The matter came up before the County Council, and the Scottish Secretary has given a grant (at least it was to be given) of £750. Now the people of Portnahaven have promised to contribute labour to the extent of £250 in value, and if that pier had been gone on with it would have been found to be a great benefit in fostering the industry of the port.

33,804. *Mr Sutherland.*—Why has it not gone on, Mr Macfadyen, if the Secretary for Scotland has given the grant, and the people are willing to contribute their labour? [*Mr Macfadyen.*—I was just going to ask that question. I, as a member of the Piers and Harbours Committee of the County Council, cannot give any information as to where the plans of the pier have gone, but they have disappeared.]

33,805. Do you happen to know the reason, Mr Ballingal? [*Mr Ballingal.*—The Government offered either of two sums, £1000 or £700, according to whether it was to be a boat quay or a steamer quay. That was the provisional offer, but latterly the Government told us that they could only afford £540 for building this. I thereupon wrote to Mr Brand, Glasgow, asking him to draw up plans and specifications for a quay to be built for £550; and I asked if he considered that a permanent structure could be built for the money. I offered him £20 to pay for those plans. Well, I never heard from him from that day to this. I wrote him again two months afterwards asking him whether he thought the £540 was too little, or my renumeration for the plans; but I never heard a word from him.]

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Neil Macnab.

33,806. It has not gone beyond that stage? [*Mr Ballingal.*—No, there the matter lies]. [*Mr Macfadyen.*—In explanation of that, I might be allowed to say that Mr Brand says now that the plan that has been adopted was not for a pier at all but simply for a slip.]

33,807. Can you tell me upon what representation the Government offered the £540? [*Mr Macfadyen.*—It was upon a misrepresentation; because the plans that were sent to the Government were never submitted to the County Council at all.]

33,808. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Were not plans submitted to Government before they gave a provisional promise of the grant? [*Mr Macfadyen.*—Certainly, but this plan has been lost.]

33,809. Do you say that those plans that were originally submitted to the Government have disappeared?—They have disappeared: they cannot be accounted for even by the County Clerk. Col. Malcolm says he has not the plans and never handled them.

James Macnab.

JAMES MACNAB, fisherman, Port-Wemyss [Bun-Amhunn] (60).

(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

33,810. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a fisherman also?—Yes.

33,811. You have heard the evidence given by the previous witness, Mr Neil Macnab?—Yes.

33,812. Do you agree with that evidence?—I agree with all he said.

33,813. Is there anything you would like to add to it yourself?—I don't think there is: he was speaking about everything that would do us good.

33,814. Has your experience as a fisherman been very much like his?—Yes, about the same.

33,815. Then we may hold you as generally concurring in that evidence?—Yes.

33,816. *Mr Maccallum.*—There is perfect unanimity among the people of Port-Wemyss in reference to this question?—We are of the same mind about it.

33,817. And you think the matter has been sufficiently represented to us by previous witnesses?—I think so.

Hector Bell.

HECTOR BELL, fisherman, Portnahaven (60)—*examined.*

33,818. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a fisherman?—Yes.

33,819. Is the fishing industry at Portnahaven very like that at Port-Wemyss?—Yes, it is just the same.

33,820. But I understand you are on different estates?—Yes.

33,821. Is there a desire on the part of the people of Portnahaven to get additional land?—Yes.

33,822. Have they got some already?—Yes.

33,823. Are the conditions the same as we heard with regard to the other estate?—Near about.

33,824. Did you get any recent enlargement of your holdings there?—Yes.

33,825. The same as those at Port-Wemyss?—Yes, or rather more perhaps.

33,826. Would some of the people in Portnahaven like to leave the fishing altogether and settle as cultivators of the land?—Yes.

33,827. Is that the desire of the greater part of them?—Yes, most of them.

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Hector Bell.

33,828. How many fishermen are there in Portnahaven?—Perhaps eighty.

33,829. The population of Portnahaven then is greater than the population of Port-Wemyss?—Yes, there are 84 houses altogether.

33,830. Would some of the fishermen at Portnahaven like to remain, and others to take separate holdings away from where they are now?—Yes, those that have a fair share of what is there already; but some of them have very small pieces, one acre and so on.

33,831. As small as that?—Yes.

33,832. Is the whole of the estate held as one farm outside Portnahaven?—Yes, Cladville.

33,833. Who occupies that farm?—One Dr Johnson.

33,834. That is not the proprietor?—No, the proprietor is Mrs Baker.

33,835. Does she reside there?—No.

33,836. And she lets the place?—Yes.

33,837. So it is a tenant farmer that is there?—Yes.

33,838. Is there land on that farm that would make some small holdings?—Yes.

33,839. But not so much, of course, as would accommodate all the people in Portnahaven who wish land?—No.

33,840. But there is plenty land in the neighbourhood, is there, on the other estate?—Yes, Ballimony, on the march.

33,841. And you would like that we should look at that land and judge for ourselves?—Yes.

33,842. You would be willing to show us the land you refer to?—Yes.

33,843. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is there a resident tenant in Cladville?—No, only a grieve.

33,844. *Mr Forsyth.*—What sort of holding would you want if you left the sea?—From 50 to 100 acres.

33,845. As much as that?—Yes.

33,846. Of arable land?—No, between arable and pasture.

33,847. Have you any experience of what they call in other parts of the island, a groat holding? Is that about the size you want?—Yes, something about the size of the groat land.

33,848. It was the old custom in Islay to measure land in that way?—Yes.

33,849. You understand that when 70 or 80 families want holdings of that size, it means a great deal of land altogether?—I do not mean that they should all go.

33,850. But that some should go?—Yes.

33,851. Would they be willing to move entirely away from Portnahaven?—Yes, those who have not enough to hold them where they are. The fishing is going back, and the trawlers coming about the west of Islay here spoil the fishing altogether, so that in a short time we will have no fishing there at all.

33,852. Are you blaming the steam trawlers?—To be sure.

33,853. Do you see them passing?—Every day in winter.

33,854. Can you catch them within the three mile limit?—Yes, we see them.

33,855. But you cannot catch them?—No.

33,856. Do you want some help from Government to keep the trawlers in order?—Yes.

33,857. Have you heard anything about that?—Oh, yes, we did. We see them passing by quite close in winter, half a dozen or a dozen every day.

33,858. How do you hold your houses? Have you long building leases?—We have no leases at all.

33,859. But you have built your own houses?—Yes.

33,860. And you have land varying from one acre to good sized pieces?—Yes.

33,861. And they have given more land lately to some of you?—Yes.

33,862. Was there much given lately?—In Portnahaven we got about 120 acres.

33,863. Divided among you somehow?—Just so. Some get none, some get one acre, and some two.

33,864. But you want more still?—Yes.

33,865. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you find the additional land a benefit?—Yes, but we would like a quay: we are not going to get it at all, it appears.

Port-Charlotte, Islay Argyllshire

Hector Bell

33,866. *Mr Macfadyen.*—Had you applied for more land previous to your getting it from the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

33,867. But you never got it till the visit of the Crofters Commission?—No.

33,868. *Mr Sutherland.*—Was it an enlargement of holdings given you by the Crofters Commission?—No, no. We made application to the Commissioners, but all the applications that were heard were dismissed, and we were placed as cottars.

33,869. *Mr Maccallum.*—Would it not be on account of the house not being on the holding?—Most likely; but we pay our rents in full.

33,870. Do you desire to get the benefit of the Crofters Act?—Yes.

33,871. And was it after you had sent in an application to the Crofters Commission that the land was granted?—No.

33,872. You got the land before?—Yes, we got the land eight years ago.

33,873. But after that you desired to get the benefit of the Crofters Act?—Yes.

33,874. And applied?—Yes.

33,875. *Mr Macfadyen.*—Had the people in Claddich applied for more land before?—Yes.

33,876. Did they get it?—I don't know.

33,877. They got more land when the Crofters Commission came?—I don't know whether they did or not. They made application, and they gave up their applications in hopes of getting another piece from the factors, but it is never settled yet.

33,878. Do you know if Currie and those other people in Claddich got more land for grazing after the Crofters Commission came?—No, I cannot say that they did. It was promised to them by the factors, but the Commissioners did not fix fair rents for them so far as I know.

33,879. *Mr Maccallum.*—There were applications, then, from Claddich, which is different from Portnahaven?—Yes.

33,880. Do you say that these applications were withdrawn?—They got a reduction of rent. [*The Secretary.*—The blue-book is not yet published, but I can state that land was assigned in this district.]

DUGALD DUNCAN, fisherman, Portnahaven (54) —*examined.*

Dugald Duncan.

33,881. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you also a fisherman in Portnahaven?—Yes, and I have a piece of land.

33,882. How much land?—Two acres.

33,883. Did you get any enlargement recently?—Yes, I had only one acre before that.

33,884. You also have a house in Portnahaven?—Yes.

33,885. What rent do you pay for the two acres and the house?—About £3, 4s.

33,886. You have heard the evidence that was given to us by Mr Bell?—Yes.

33,887. Do you concur in that evidence generally?—Yes.

33,888. You agree with what he has said?—Yes.

33,889. Is there anything beyond that that you would like to say to us?—Yes, I believe there is a good number of our people who would require some assistance for taking more land.

33,890. You mean if they got land and formed new holdings away from their present houses?—Yes; they would require a little assistance in the way of a loan of money to put them on a proper footing.

33,891. What is your opinion regarding the size of holdings that would be necessary or desirable, or wanted by the people?—My opinion is that they would need to be of different sizes.

33,892. From what size to what size?—From 100 acres down to 20.

33,893. Are you counting in arable acres?—Yes.

33,894. Now taking the bigger size of holding, 100

acres arable, how many would, in your opinion, be able to take without any assistance a farm of that size?—I cannot exactly give you the number, but I know there are some.

33,895. There would be one or two?—Yes.

33,896. Supposing the holdings were about 50 acres arable, would there be a greater number able to take that size?—Yes.

33,897. And so on downwards?—Yes.

33,898. Do you think there would be a number in Portnahaven who would be able to take some of the smaller holdings without assistance?—I don't know if they would; I think they would be the better of assistance.

33,899. Of course, you keep in view that these people would have to leave their present houses: you see if any of those people who have got two acres and a house were to leave and go to a new place, they would get compensation for the house and land they leave behind?—I think if they were to get land in Ballimony, which is only about a mile from Portnahaven, they could do well enough without leaving their present houses, some of them.

33,900. You do not think one mile too far for them to go in the morning and come back in the evening?—No, but I think that anyone taking the 100 acres holding would be the better of a house up there.

33,901. There is a desire for such holdings?—There is.

33,902. Would you yourself, now, be willing to take one of these?—Yes, I would.

33,903. And give up the fishing altogether?—Give up the fishing entirely.

33,904. Is the fishing a very laborious and precarious occupation?—Very.

33,905. You heard what the last witness said about the people not being hereditary fishermen: they have not been for many generations fishermen, but are the descendants of people who lived upon the land and cultivated it?—Just so.

33,906. Would that, in your mind, be an element in encouraging them to go back upon the land again?—Yes, a good many of them would go back.

33,907. Have they ever lost the desire to go back to cultivated land?—Some of them.

33,908. Are you a native of this place?—I was not born on this island, but my mother was a native.

33,909. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you any idea of the amount of capital required to start and work a hundred-acre arable farm?—No, I cannot give that.

33,910. But you think in spite of that that some of your fishermen could tackle a holding of that size?—Yes.

33,911. But you would need large advances of capital, would you not? You know that a farm of 100 arable acres would require a good deal of stock, implements, horses, and so on?—Yes.

33,912. And you wish to become farmers of that size?—A few of them: the smallest number, I believe.

33,913. It would be a very small number, would it not, who could take a farm of that size?—Yes, perhaps three or four.

33,914. But these men would require assistance in the way of capital?—Some of them: I think there are one or two who would manage to make a start without assistance.

33,915. These would probably be men with £500 to £1000 of their own?—Yes.

33,916. Don't you think such men might possibly get farms by ordinary offer in the country? Or are they too scarce?—I don't know, I am sure.

33,917. Could not men of capital like that obtain farms nowadays on fair terms in the ordinary way? Men who wish a farm, and who have plenty of capital?—I think they might, too.

33,918. This hundred-acre arable holding is, I think, the largest that has been brought before us since this Commission commenced its work, and that is why I make inquiry. A holding of 100 acres arable with anything like an outrun is simply a large farm?—Yes.

33,919. And if you have men of capital who are willing and able to stock such farms, it appears to me that they might possibly find them nowadays?—Yes. Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

33,920. But the majority would require small holdings?—Small holdings, and assistance to make a start. Dugald Duncan.

33,921. Such holdings would probably be four or five cows?—Yes.

33,922. What you call the groat holding?—Yes.

33,923. That seems to be the most common form of holding desired here?—Yes.

33,924. *Mr Maccallum.*—The scheme that you would favour is a graduated scheme of holdings, down from 100 acres?—Yes.

33,925. Now as to the assistance required, would they require more assistance on account of the land having now been allowed to get into a wild condition?—Oh, to be sure.

33,926. A good deal would be required to bring it first of all to a good condition?—Yes.

33,927. And you think that that is the most effective way of getting the land into cultivation again, to advance money to small holders rather than advancing it to proprietors to be spent through their agencies? You think that would be a more effective way of improving the land than by giving it to large farmers through the factors?—Yes.

33,928. Is there a keen competition for all small holdings that are offered?—I cannot say anything about that, but other people tell me there is a very keen competition all over Islay.

33,929. There is a strong desire for getting holdings, you told me?—Yes, but they are scarcely small enough to suit us. Some of the holdings offered are pretty large sizes of farms: we would call them small farms.

33,930. But you do not think there is an opportunity of getting small holdings at all just now, supposing they had the capital?—No.

33,931. They cannot get small holdings, because they are not numerous?—No.

33,932. So that however willing and however well equipped they might be for a small holding, they have no opportunity of getting such a thing?—No.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL MACEWAN, feuar, Bowmore (52) —*examined.* Duncan Campbell Macewan.

33,933. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—My occupation is various.

33,934. Do you cultivate any land?—I do.

33,935. May we call you a farmer?—A feuar.

33,936. You are a feuar in Bowmore?—Yes.

33,937. Have you a written statement to submit to us?—Yes, I shall hand you evidence to show that Killarow, the central parish, is not being represented, and I have a list of 75 persons who would like you to hold a sitting in Bowmore.

33,938. Is it your business here to-day to get us to go to Bowmore?—Yes, principally, for the parish of Killarow and Kilmeny.

33,939. But, I presume, you are prepared to answer any questions that we may put to you?—As far as in my power.

33,940. You understand, of course, that every day we hold a sitting for taking oral evidence is taken away from the inspection of land, and it is a matter for you to consider which is the more important, that we should see the land and decide for ourselves, or that we should sit and hear evidence?—I coincide with everything you say.

33,941. We will take your application for a hearing at Bowmore into consideration. Meantime, can you tell us what the population of Bowmore is?—About 800.

33,942. It is a much older town, I understand, than the others?—It is the first ever formed in Islay.

33,943. It is not a burgh, is it?—Not yet.

33,944. But it is a very much older place than Port-Ellen?—Yes.

33,945. What is the main industry of Bowmore?—We have a distillery, but there is nothing doing there.

33,946. Is it permanently closed?—Not permanently, it is open, but all they do in the twelvemonth could be done in a week.

Port-Charlotte, Islay, Argyllshire.

Duncan Campbell Macewan

33,947. Is the result of that that a number of people are thrown out of employment at present?—The fishermen and crofters, and others have nothing to do, and it is to-day the poorest parish in Islay.

33,948. Is it the case that a great number of people who used to find work at the distillery are at present out of employment?—Yes, that is the case; I estimate that at the very least £30 or £35 a week used to be earned in Bowmore, but now there is not £5 a week.

33,949. And so far as you know is there any prospect of the distillery being re-opened or kept going at its full productive power as before?—Not the least, so far as I know.

33,950. Were the houses in Bowmore built upon feus?—Yes, I am the oldest feuar in Bowmore.

33,951. What is the duration of your feu?—Life,—while water runs and grass grows.

33,952. It is a perpetual feu?—Yes.

33,953. Are these mere building feus, or is there land held in connection with them?—That is for those who have thirty-nine or forty years' lease. There are not many who have perpetual feus.

33,954. What is the extent of your own feu?—About twelve acres freehold. The arable extent is ten acres. This is the first feu ever granted by Daniel Campbell of Islay.

33,955. You have ten acres arable and the site of the building?—Yes.

33,956. Then you are a freeholder of that?—Yes.

33,957. How many are in a similar position?—Not above three or four.

33,958. What feu-duty do you pay?—£4, 19s. 4½d.

33,959. The great majority hold yearly feus?—Yes.

33,960. We saw in the neighbourhood of Bowmore small allotments: how are these held?—Mostly from year to year; they took in the land from us and cultivated it.

33,961. When did they get these allotments?—Eighty or ninety years ago. It was then banks and pits, and whenever it was brought into cultivation the laird increased the rent.

33,962. What is the average rent now: are they all about the same size?—They are different sizes.

33,963. What would you propose yourself with regard to these people who have such small holdings at Bowmore?—As far as I know, some of them could do with more, but some have none at all. There are a number of fishermen who would like when the fishing is not prosperous to have cultivated land; and whatever the Commission would like to put on that land they would be willing to pay.

33,964. Are there many fishermen in Bowmore?—Yes, about 80.

33,965. Have any of these gotl and?—None whatever.

33,966. And is there a general desire among them to get small holdings?—All that I have heard are desirous of getting a large or small holding.

33,967. None of the fishermen have got the allotments we saw round about Bowmore?—No.

33,968. Are there any of those who have these allotments that are, in your opinion, fit to take small farms away from Bowmore altogether?—When the land is available for cultivation.

33,969. There are a number?—Yes, 78 that I marked down at a meeting they called there.

33,970. What land is there that is, in your opinion, available for that purpose?—Within half a mile or a mile of Bowmore.

33,971. On what farm?—On Ardlarach. But there is the cottage farm, Raineach Mhor, adjoining Bowmore; that was Bowmore at one time. Miss Carmichael is the present tenant; 28 lots were taken into that, and that house was put up at one time for a sister of Captain Campbell down there. They put one farm to another making altogether about 100 acres.

33,972. Do I understand that this farm of Raineach Mhor was made up of small holdings?—Yes, taken from the crofters.

33,973. How long ago is that?—Thirty years ago.

33,974. And that land is, in your opinion, suitable for small holdings?—For any size of holdings you choose.

33,975. Is there very much of it?—About 180 acres. I offered for that farm, but could not get it.

33,976. Is there much of that farm of Raineach Mhor under cultivation now?—Under rotation, it is. It is all arable.

33,977. What is the next farm to Raineach Mhor?—Ardlarach, young Macmillan's farm.

33,978. Is that a large farm?—About the same size.

33,979. It is not as good land as the Rhinns of Islay, is it?—No; it is stoney and gravelly, but good for potatoes, and it is adjacent to the town.

33,980. People who have got no land would be glad to get it?—Yes.

33,981. Is there any other farm in the neighbourhood you would like to call our attention to?—Corrary, Lonban, Kyngarry, Neraby, Cattadale, Barr, Knockleanach, Daill. These have been neglected by not being represented.

33,982. We have been over these and seen them for ourselves; are these the farms you would recommend to our notice?—By all means.

33,983. Take the farm of Neraby. How many holdings do you think could be made there, of a size to suit small holders?—I should say there would be a nice farm for a man having a horse or two.

33,984. But take the whole stretch up to Loch Bharradail, from the school up to the loch?—I think about 100 holdings from the parishes of Kildalton, Killarow, and Kilmeny.

33,985. You mean both sides of the river?—Yes. If you were to have a sitting in Bowmore I would give you details of them all.

33,986. But you could not give us more details than we saw. You take in both sides of the river, and back to the hill?—Yes. Neraby on the one side, and Kyngarry and Cattadale on the other, and away down to the hill.

33,987. You think there could be 100 people put there?—I am sure of it.

33,988. How many do you think there were before?—There has been that number, from Torry Bridge to Knocklearach, in penny, twopenny, and fourpenny lots.

33,989. Would you put in now as many as were there before?—I would.

33,990. We did not see the remains of nearly as many houses as that?—The foundations were cleared. The stones were put into drains and dykes, but I am satisfied the land would maintain as many soldiers and sailors, of the best kind, as could be reared for the Crown, as was the case formerly.

33,991. How long is it since the people were cleared out of these farms?—I cannot say, for I was in Australia for about ten years at the time of the gold mania in 1853.

33,992. Were you in Bowmore before that?—Yes, I went out and returned with a few pounds and spent it here. But I am sorry to say I am losing; I am getting behind, I cannot get in my rents, and without many people being located on the ground you will not have trade there, blacksmith, or joiner, or anything. I have been on a station larger than the whole of Islay, with sheep, cattle, and horses, and I am happy to say I managed it.

33,993. Did many people go from Islay in 1853?—Yes, I knew hundreds.

33,994. Do you think that in Bowmore and among these people that you represent here to-day, there would be a number of people who would be willing to take advantage of getting holdings if these farms were broken up?—By all means, and they would try to pay better for the landlords than they do at present.

33,995. And do you think that many of them would require assistance before they could take small holdings?—I hope there will be assistance offered. Money is freely sent to the wilds of Africa, but why not look at home before you go abroad.

33,996. Then you think some of them would require some assistance?—By all means. Most of the holdings in my parish cannot support the people.

33,997. Then with regard to the security, are you of opinion that there would be any danger as to the

repayment of the money?—Not on loan from Government.

33,998. Can you give us any information regarding the progress of retrogression of the people in Islay for years past?—I read a statement to the Commission five years ago, but if you will grant us a sitting in Bowmore I shall be able to give you full information. You are sitting in Kilchiaran and Kildalton, but we are left out in the cold though we pay more rates in Kilarrow.

33,999. If we were to hold a sitting at every place, we should not be able to report to Parliament for five years?—You could extend your visit.

34,000. I think the evidence you are giving us is very full?—But there are others to give evidence also.

34,001. We were talking just now of your opinion as to the advance of capital for making holdings. Do you think that there are some people in Bowmore who would take holdings without any assistance?—I am certain sure of it.

34,002. How many do you think there are in that position?—I have got 75 signatures here for that, although I have not had time to prepare details.

34,003. Some would be able to take larger holdings and some smaller holdings?—Yes.

34,004. Would the greater number require assistance or the lesser number?—The lesser number. I am sure the majority do not require it. These signatures have all been obtained at one meeting, although we were taken unawares.

34,005. You cannot hold that, seeing you had several months' notice of our visit. Would all these signatories be desirous of taking holdings?—Yes, small holdings.

34,006. The fishermen would take the smaller holdings?—Yes, even this cow park they would like for potato ground.

34,007. And the remainder would take larger holdings?—Yes, of 10 to 12 and up to 50 acres, according to their means, if they get them at a fair rent.

34,008. And these holdings could be obtained on the large farms you have already mentioned?—Yes. The others can corroborate me if I am wrong.

34,009. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You gave us the names of several large farms. Can you give us the names of the townships that were on these farms separately,—say on Corrary? Could you tell us the names of the old townships and the number of tenants?—At Lower Corrary, which is about a mile from Bowmore, one Macdougall had to emigrate to America.

34,010. But can you give us the numbers?—No. You must recollect that I was ten years in Australia.

34,011. But in your earliest recollection?—I remember this Macdougall and others, perhaps four or five of these small tenants, and it is under one now.

34,012. How much cultivation is there on that farm of Corrary now?—I could not go into detail.

34,013. The next farm you mentioned is Lonban: how many tenants were on that farm?—Four or five tenants were knocked into the farm of Laggan.

34,014. Do I understand from you that there were five tenants on Corrary, and that it is now one farm?—Yes.

34,015. Is it held now as a separate holding, or is it attached to another farm?—A separate holding. There are two farms, Upper and Lower Corrary.

34,016. But did the five tenants hold Upper and Lower Corrary?—Yes.

34,017. Then coming to Lonban, how many tenants were there?—Lonban is only a small spot: there were two there.

34,018. The next place you mentioned was Kyngarry?—Between Kyngarry and Cattadale there were 18 tenants.

34,019. Do you include Cattadale in the 18?—No.

34,020. How many tenants now hold what was occupied by these 18?—Two tenants.

34,021. Then in Cattadale, how many tenants were there in your earliest recollection?—Two.

34,022. And in Barr, how many?—Only one, John Currie and two Maccachans. Of course, there might be more, but others will be able to speak about that better than I can. Port-Charlotte, Islay.

34,023. Then on Nereby, how many do you recollect there?—There were eight to my knowledge, taking the district up to Nereby and Rosgary. Duncan Campbell Macewan.

34,024. And about Daill?—Taking Dluich and thereabouts, I cannot say for certain, but I am sure there would be other eight.

34,025. Do you remember Knocklearach being under tenants?—Yes, that is where Charles Macneil was.

34,026. How many do you remember in it?—I cannot say. There is Lossit in the same farm. I would say four for Knocklearach, but perhaps some of the others will be able to tell you better than I can.

34,027. Do you think it would be a good thing to advance money to those who are applying for land just now in order to enable them to stock their holdings?—In my opinion Government never passed an Act since the Reform Bill of 1832, that would be better than giving such advances.

34,028. It is your opinion nevertheless that the people would be able themselves to take the holdings without that assistance?—Most of them; the majority would.

34,029. But they would all be better of getting assistance?—Yes. They may in a year or two get their sons to help them, even suppose the Act passed.

34,030. And you think that would be a better way than using Government money for colonisation elsewhere?—Yes.

34,031. How is Bowmore affected by the removal of the small tenants round about it?—There is not a young man to be seen, and there is nothing doing.

34,032. Do you think Bowmore would be the better of some leaving it and going to occupy these farms?—Certainly.

34,033. And the business of Bowmore would be all the better for having the land round about it cultivated?—Yes.

34,034. *Mr Forsyth.*—You are a considerable proprietor of houses, are you not, in Bowmore?—Yes.

34,035. I see by the Valuation Roll that you have a good many?—But I am very sorry to say I get no rent.

34,036. You find Bowmore is not prospering?—No, it is a dead hole altogether.

34,037. And you cannot get your rents in?—No, nor anything else, but I have to pay my taxes all the same.

34,038. But you are of opinion that there would be prosperity if there was an additional quantity of land provided for the people?—By all means. The people would work instead of being idle and having to go to the poorhouse.

34,039. In fact you would rather reduce the size of Bowmore itself and get the people out to the land, is that your cure?—Yes: they were forced into this little village when they were evicted from their farms, and here they are paupers.

34,040. Then there is no business of any kind carried on?—No business whatever.

DUNCAN CARMICHAEL, feuar, Bowmore (58) —*examined.* Duncan Carmichael.

34,041. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a feuar?—A feuar and a crofter, or a cottar.

34,042. You have a feu in the town of Bowmore, and a lot of land outside it?—Yes, paying a feu and tax on it.

34,043. Do you pay for the feu and for the allotment separately?—We pay them all together.

34,044. How much do you pay for them altogether?—When it is in full, £12, 8s.

34,045. Do you include the rates?—No, the rates are in addition.

34,046. Are the feu-duty for the house and the rent for the land cultivated separate in the receipts you get?—No, they are not separated.

34,047. How much land have you?—I never measured, but I calculate about 15 acres.

Port-Charlotte, Islay.

Duncan Carmichael.

34,048. What stock do you keep on that?—Three cows and three stirks.

34,049. Would you take a bigger holding than that if you got the opportunity?—I am considering that I would: it is big enough at the rent, until we get the Act extended to cottars.

34,050. But supposing the Act to be extended, and fair rents to be fixed by an independent body, would you be prepared to take a larger holding than the one you have at present?—Perhaps I would take a field or two more.

34,051. Are there many people in Bowmore who, in your opinion, would take holdings like that?—There are plenty of them crying for holdings, small bits.

34,052. Especially the fishermen?—Yes, fishermen and workmen.

34,053. Who have got no land at all?—Yes.

34,054. Do they get land from the large farmers round about to plant potatoes in, the same as we heard of elsewhere?—No, not to my knowledge.

34,055. You have heard what Mr Macewan said about the large farms round about Bowmore: do you know these farms yourself?—I should know them.

34,056. Have you been over them often?—Yes.

34,057. And are they, in your opinion, fit to be made into small holdings?—The small holdings or lots are not workable at the present time.

34,058. But larger holdings,—small farms?—Yes, small farms.

34,059. You think these large farms are suitable for that?—Yes.

34,060. And you are also of opinion that there are people about Bowmore and other places who would be glad to get them?—I think there are a few: I have heard them say they would.

34,061. And you have no reason to doubt that they mean what they say: that they would take them if they had the opportunity?—I cannot justify them, but that is their talk.

34,062. Now with regard to allotments, do you consider that you are paying too high a rent for them?—Yes, we think so.

34,063. Do you think you are paying less or more per acre than the large arable farmers?—Oh, we are paying far more.

34,064. And, of course, you are certain that you are paying more than the people who pay for grazing only, those who have allowed the land that was before cultivated to go out of cultivation?—I do not go into that: I cannot say what a big farmer out in the country pays.

34,065. Have you a general belief that they are paying less than you?—I think they are cheaper.

34,066. Have you been in Bowmore all your lifetime?—No, I have been fourteen years in it. I succeeded my uncle.

34,067. Have you seen land in large farms in this island let out of cultivation since you came?—Yes.

34,068. There are a number of fields which you knew bearing crop that now are uncultivated?—A number of the small farms are now put into one large farm. I could name them if you like.

34,069. We have a list from Mr Macewan: have you any others to add to that list?—Grobolls. It is into Tallant farm between Bridgend and Bowmore.

34,070. And is that a farm that would be suitable for making into smaller holdings?—There were crofters in it before.

34,071. It is a farm that was made out of crofters' land?—There were three crofters in Grobolls altogether, and it was made part of Tallant.

34,072. But you think the case of the fishermen in Bowmore is the most pressing case, as they have no land at all?—I think they ought to get it if possible: but land is too dear; they are better without it.

34,073. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—There is a large number of fishermen in Bowmore who have no land?—Yes, nearly all the fishermen have no land at all.

34,074. And they are asking for land?—They were asking for allotments.

34,075. Do you think that there is land in the immediate neighbourhood that would satisfy their demands?—Yes, give Bowmore back what she had, and it would nearly satisfy all the fishermen there: that is 18 to 20 lots of between two and a half and three acres apiece. These were taken from them and added to the cottage farm.

Port Charlotte, Islay.

Duncan Carmichael.

34,076. Has there been any land granted lately to the Bowmore people at all?—No, except three or four, giving them a few rows here and there for potatoes.

34,077. But has the proprietor given land for allotments recently?—Not that I heard of.

34,078. Are you aware whether they made application to him?—I suppose they did, or to the Crofters Commissioners: I don't know.

34,079. Do you mean to the County Council?—Yes.

34,080. But in any case they did not get any additional land lately?—No, not to my knowledge.

34,081. *Mr Macfadyen.*—You have just said that the people in Bowmore were desirous of having allotments. Do you mean more than one acre of ground? You do not mean simply gardens, but two or three acres?—I mean an acre, or two or three acres: that is what they told me. That is allotments: three acres and a cow is an allotment.

DONALD MACGILLIVRAY, mason contractor, Bowmore (48)—*examined.*

Donald Macgillivray.

34,082. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a feuar in Bowmore?—No, I cannot say that I am a feuar: but I was appointed by a meeting to come here.

34,083. What is your own occupation?—I am a mason, a crofter.

34,084. May we designate you a crofter?—I was brought up a crofter.

34,085. But are you a crofter under the Act?—No, just a cottar in Bowmore.

34,086. You have one of those allotments outside Bowmore, have you?—We have two or three fields.

34,087. What is the acreage?—I think about 11 acres. Then we have another place which is 50 acres.

34,088. Yourself?—My brother and I.

34,089. But you have the 11 acres by yourself?—Yes.

34,090. What rent do you pay for these 11 acres?—£12 or so.

34,091. Is your house in Bowmore?—Yes.

34,092. Separate from the 11 acres?—Yes.

34,093. And do you pay a separate feu-duty for it?—That includes the feu-duty.

34,094. Do you remember how much the feu-duty is?—About 27s.

34,095. Is there a strong desire on the part of the people in Bowmore, those who have no land, to get small holdings, and those who have to get larger holdings?—Yes, there is a great desire, excepting in the case of the fishermen.

34,096. You heard the evidence given to us by Mr Macewan about the number of fishermen: is that in your opinion correct?—As near as may be.

34,097. Would you in your own mind have any doubt as to the ability of these fishermen to cultivate small holdings to advantage if they got them?—They say they would; and they would be the better of getting them too.

34,098. Have you heard the evidence from Port Wemyss and Portnahaven to-day, where there are small holdings already?—Yes.

34,099. And you think it is only reasonable that if Bowmore had the same opportunities they would do as well?—It is quite reasonable.

34,100. You heard the desire of the Portnahaven fishermen to get bigger holdings?—Yes.

34,101. Is it your opinion that there should be graduated holdings to give every one a chance?—Yes.

34,102. Do you see an argument in favour of that, in the experience we have had here to-day of people in Bowmore who have no land wanting small holdings, and people in Portnahaven who have small holdings wanting larger ones?—Yes.

34,103. You think it is a reasonable want, don't you?—Yes.

34,104. In your opinion there can be no doubt as to the desirability of the fishermen in Bowmore getting small holdings if they can be got?—None.

34,105. With regard to those who have got small holdings already, are there many of them who would like larger holdings?—Some of them have been talking of it.

34,106. You understand that they would have to transfer themselves bodily?—Yes.

34,107. Are there many, in your opinion, who would be prepared to do that?—There are a few; I cannot say there is a great number.

34,108. Would that be those who have the larger allotments already?—I believe so.

34,109. Would you be disposed to do that sort of thing yourself?—I believe I would.

34,110. Do you know those farms mentioned by Mr Macewan and the last witness?—Yes.

34,111. Are they suitable for the purpose?—Yes, some of them are.

34,112. Which are the most suitable?—I believe those that were mentioned.

34,113. Take first of all those that are, in your opinion, suitable for allotments. These must be near Bowmore?—Yes.

34,114. Which are the most suitable?—Grobolls and Gartmain. The latter is about one and a half miles from Bowmore.

34,115. You also heard the statement that these farms were made out of what were small holdings before. Is that within your knowledge?—Some of them are.

34,116. And have you heard the same regarding others?—Yes, I have heard that that is the case.

34,117. Those in the neighbourhood of Bowmore would be suitable for allotments. Now, which would be most suitable for small holdings?—I suppose Avenvogie, Kyngarry, and the others that were mentioned,—Nereby, Daill, &c.

34,118. What size of holding would you recommend, provided small holdings were to be made?—It depends altogether upon the kind of ground.

34,119. Take the average ground in the farm of Nereby.—If you get the best land there, you could do with perhaps 40 or 50 or 60 acres; and then you would have to extend the holding over the hill for pasture.

34,120. About 40 acres of arable?—You could not get 40 acres of arable.

34,121. For how many holdings?—I am not very well acquainted with the farm, but I believe it has about 1200 acres altogether.

34,122. You would take it as far as it would go, and then go on to the next farm?—Yes.

34,123. But, of course, in dividing the farm, would it not be reasonable to suppose that you would leave to the present steading a sufficient amount of land?—You would have to do something to it.

34,124. Do I understand that the greater part of the various farms mentioned by Mr Macewan are out of cultivation?—Lower Corrary is out of cultivation just now, but it is taken in rotation. It has been added, what they call the Home of Corrary, to the farm of Laggan, which belongs to Mr Ramsay.

34,125. Has the fact that the distillery at Bowmore has not been in full operation told upon the place very much?—It has.

34,126. Are there many people employed in it when it is in full operation?—There used to be a good number of people. I heard the manager say they used to spend £30 to £35 a week in wages.

34,127. And is the most of that stopped now?—Well, there are still the manager and one or two men working about it, but that is all.

34,128. With regard to the fishing, what is the principal fishing there?—Only flounders and cod.

34,129. There is no herring fishing?—Not in the loch here; but they go outside.

34,130. Has the fishing been unsuccessful lately, or about the average?—No, it has been a success lately.

34,131 *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You state that there are some people in Bowmore,—and I think you yourself are one of them,—who would be willing to take small holdings, and who would be able to stock them?—Yes. Port-Charlotte, Islay

Donald Macgillivray.

34,132. Such holdings are not frequently in the market, I suppose?—Very seldom.

34,133. But whenever any such holding is in the market there is a great run, is there not?—Yes, and a high rent put upon it.

34,134. These small holdings are not coming down in rent?—No, I think it is the other way.

34,135. And the large farms are coming down in rent, are they not?—Yes.

34,136. Very much; to nearly half?—Some of them are, and perhaps a little over the half.

34,137. And very little demand for these?—Yes, becau e only capitalists can go in for them.

34,138. You are not at all afraid but that there would be quite a good demand for such holdings as you have been speaking about?—I am certain there would be.

34,139. *Mr Macfadyen.*—I would like this matter of allotments to be cleared up. Allotments mean an acre or less; but the people want more than that, do they not?—Some of them say they would not take more than an acre, and others say they would take three acres.

34,140. The majority go in for those over the acre?—Yes.

34,141. As to the fishing, I think you said it had been successful?—The herring fishing.

34,142. Is it not the case that in Loch Gruinard this year the herring fishing has been anything but successful?—I heard that.

34,143. It has been pretty successful on the Jura side, but not on the Islay side?—But they were sold in Islay.

34,144. No, they were sold in Glasgow; many of them did not come to Islay?—I understood it was successful.

MALCOLM MACMILLAN, steamboat agent, Bowmore (38)—*examined.* Malcolm Macmillan.

34,145. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—Generally, I am a steamer agent.

34,146. Are you a native of Bowmore?—Yes.

34,147. Have you lived there all your lifetime?—I was two or three years away south with the farmers.

34,148. Have you any connection with land at present?—My father has.

34,149. Is your father a farmer, or has he one of the allotments?—Yes.

34,150. You have heard the evidence that has been given by Mr Macewan, Mr Carmichael, and Mr Macgillivray?—Yes.

34,151. Do you agree generally with that evidence?—Yes.

34,152. You are quite able to corroborate it from your own personal knowledge?—Yes: there are plenty of farms that would do for holdings.

34,153. Is there anything additional to what they said that you would like to bring before us?—No.

34,154. You will, of course, know all about the trade of Bowmore by sea?—Yes.

34,155. What is the principal trade at Bowmore?—I think there is little or no trade at all just now.

34,156. But when there is any?—The fishing, and the distillery.

34,157. You export fish and whisky?—Fish and whisky.

34,158. Then, of course, you would import all the requirements of the people of the village?—Yes.

34,159. Is it from Glasgow principally?—Yes, the bread and everything comes from Glasgow.

34,160. Do Mr Macbrayne's steamers call at Bowmore?—Yes. I am agent for them.

34,161. How often does the steamer call?—Once a week, every Tuesday.

34,162. Is the access to Bowmore easy? Does the

Malcolm Macmillan.

steamer get in quite safely?—No, there is no pier, just a ferry-boat.

34,163. Has there never been a pier at Bowmore?—There is a sort of pier, but it has not enough of water.

34,164. It is only at certain states of the tide that the steamer can get in?—She never gets in at all, nearer than a mile and a half. We have to take everything in in boats. But I was mostly at farm work: I am only a few years at this.

34,165. Did you work your father's holding?—Yes, regularly, and also kept a few cattle. I had to go to the annual roup of grass parks at Islay House.

34,166. They are put up for auction annually?—Yes.

34,167. How much do you pay for the grazing of a cow?—It is the whole field I take.

34,168. Each person takes a field?—Yes.

34,169. Is that still continued?—Yes.

34,170. Where do you get the parks?—They are auctioned in Islay Square. I would like if I could get a holding.

34,171. *Mr Maccallum.*—You are one of those who would be quite willing and are quite ready to take a small holding if it were available?—Yes, at any time.

34,172. And are there several people in Bowmore in the same position?—I believe there are.

George Campbell.

GEORGE CAMPBELL, Port-Charlotte (66)—*examined.*

34,173. *Mr Sutherland.*—You are now living in Port-Charlotte, are you?—Yes.

34,174. Where were you before you came to Port Charlotte?—I was in Nerabus.

34,175. When did you leave it?—Twenty-seven years ago, I lost the land.

34,176. Why did you lose it?—When my father died I lost it; I thought I was strong enough to do for myself as my name was not in the books.

34,177. Did you wish to have a holding?—To be sure I did.

34,178. When your father died, what became of the land?—The lower part was given to those who were there, and the upper to Kelsay.

34,179. And is the land used for these purposes to this day?—It is.

James S. R. Ballingal.

JAMES S. R. BALLINGAL, factor for Charles Morrison of Islay (60)—*examined.*

34,180. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you wish to give us any evidence, Mr Ballingall?—I have an abstract of the holdings on the estate, and a statement showing the acreage of the principal farms.

34,181. Have you anything to say beyond that formal information?—Nothing beyond that.

34,182. You will hand it in to the Secretary?—Yes.

The statements handed in were as follows:—

ABSTRACT OF HOLDINGS ON THE ISLAY ESTATE, 1894.

Class I.	Holdings rent		10s. and under	£10	No.	139
,, II.	,,	,, £10	0 ,,	30	,,	55
,, III.	,,	,, 30	0 ,,	75	,,	40
,, IV.	,,	,, 75	0 ,,	100	,,	16
,, V.	,,	,, 100	0 ,,	150	,,	12
,, VI.	,,	,, 150	0 ,,	200	,,	15
,, VII.	,,	,, 200	0 ,,	300	,,	16
,, VIII.	,,	,, 300	0 and above.		,,	5
					,,	298

ACREAGE OF FARMS ON THE ISLAY ESTATE TAKEN FROM OLD TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Class.	Arable and Green Pasture Acreage.	Heathy Pasture Acreage.	Total Acreage.
A				
Ardnahoe,	II.	...	...	6,947
Ardnave,	I.	751	624	1,375
B				
Ballymony,	II.	160	1,240	1,400
Braigo and Sanaigbeg,	,,	833	155	988
Ballytarsin, 2 farms,	VI. & VII.	275	...	275
Balole and Duisker, 2 farms,	2 & 3	678	970	1,648
Ballimartin,	3	104	287	391
Balliclaven,	2	461	1,107	1,568
Balulive,	2	...	...	1,020
C				
Coultoon,	4	350	62	412
Craigfad,	5	136	83	219
Carn and Torronich,	4	170	279	449
Coultorsay,	4	134	134	268
Conisby, 8 farms,	6	533	740	1,273
Carnduncan, 5 farms,	6 & 7	175	279	457
Corsapool and Craigens,	2 & 5	416	966	1,382
Coullabus,	4	264	300	564
D				
Daill,	1	1,247	691	1,938
E				
Easter Ellister,	3	266	430	696
Eorrabus, 2 farms,	3 & 6	234	...	234
Esknish, 4 farms,	6 & 7	312	74	386
F				
Finlaggan,	2	385	680	1,065
G				
Gearach,	3 & 6	336	100	436
Gartacharra,	6	159	132	293
Gruilin,	...	106	130	236
Gruinart,	2	903	250	1,153
Gartachossan, Gartloist, and Gartmain,	2 & 6	786	86	872
Gortantoid,	2	...	...	4,764
K				
Kelsay,	3	290	404	694
Kilchearan,	1	800	224	1,024
Kindrochid, 4 farms,	6	284	315	599
Kilnave, 3 farms,	5 & 6	275	430	705
Kilinallin and Bunanuilt,	1 & 5	733	3,962	4,695
Kilmeny, 3 farms,	6	221	128	349
Keppols and Robolls,	2	571	162	733
L				
Lossit,	3	308	178	486
Leek Gruinart, 4 farms,	7	223	300	523
Lyrabus and Blackrock, 10 farms,	...	253	576	829
N				
Nerabolls,	6	214	135	349
Neriby,	2	956	...	956
O				
Olistadh,	...	220	237	457
Octofad,	2	474	200	674
Octomore, Lorgbaw, and Brybruich,	3	600	479	1,079
Octovullin,	3	255	300	555
P				
Port-Charlotte, Lotts, &c.,	7 & 8	450	122	572
Persabus,	3	86	425	511

	Class.	Arable and Green Pasture Acreage.	Heathy Pasture Acreage.	Total Acreage.
R				
Rockside, ...	1	1,191	1,494	2,685
S				
Smaull, 2 farms, ...	4	378	189	568
Sanaigmhor, ...	4	496	872	1,368
Scarrabus, ...	3	266	500	767
Skerrols, ...	4	221	...	221
T				
Tormisdale, ...	5, 6 & 7	400	173	573
Torronich, ...	4	90	164	254
Tallant and Grobolls, . .	2	640	253	893
Torabolls, ...	3	215	100	315
Tiervagain, ...	5	139	25	164
W				
W. Ellister, ...	4	310	250	560
				56,866

(Signed) 'J. S. R. BALLINGAL.'

4th April 1894.

[ADJOURNED.]

THIRTY-SIXTH SITTING.

JURA, April 6, 1894.

Present:—

ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P. (acting as *Chairman*).
JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*.

JOHN KEITH OR MAC-CICH, crofter, Knockrome, [Cnoc-Crom] Jura (64).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

34,183. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I am a crofter.

34,184. Are you a crofter under the Act of Parliament?—Yes.

34,185. Have you applied to the Crofters Commission to fix your fair rent?—Yes.

34,186. And did they do so?—Yes.

34,187. When was that?—Three or four years ago.

34,188. How many crofters are there in Knockrome?—Six.

34,189. How many families are there altogether?—Ten.

34,190. And are there four families that have got no land?—No.

34,191. What land have the four got who are not crofters?—Three of them are double tenants, and one is a poor woman.

34,192. What were you asked to lay before us here to-day?—I was asked to say that we have scarcely any water for our cattle; and to speak about the boundaries that we used to have.

34,193. Were the old boundaries made narrower?—Yes.

34,194. When was that?—There was a wire fence put up which narrowed the bounds; of old we used to have liberty to go over to the back of the island.

34,195. How many years ago was that?—A great many years ago. It was in 1852.

34,196. More than twenty years?—Yes.

34,197. Thirty?—I suppose so.

34,198. Do you remember it yourself?—Yes, I was there myself.

34,199. What was done with that land that was taken from you?—Put into the deer forest.

34,200. And is it the desire of the people of Knockrome, if possible, to get the land back?—We do not ask to go to the back of the island, but if we got to the top of the hill that would do.

34,201. Up to Maol-na-Fineag?—We go as far as that just now.

34,202. How far were you thinking it would be desirable you should get?—Before the wire fence was put up our cattle used to go to the watershed.

34,203. Was that the old boundary?—For a while; but when I was a boy they used to go up to the back.

34,204. Do you know Beinn-Tarsuinn?—Yes.

34,205. Did the old boundary go as far as that?—It went to that.

34,206. Could you show us the land you refer to if we went to see it?—I myself am troubled with rheumatism or I should be glad to accompany you.

34,207. But some one else who knows the land could show us it?—Yes.

34,208. Is there anything else you would like to state to us?—No.

34,209. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You stated that you were deprived of water for the cattle, I think?—Yes.

34,210. When were you shut out from the water?—When the last fence was put up.

34,211. When was that?—I am not sure of the exact year. It was in 1879. This was the fence that cut off our water-supply and a portion of our grazing.

34,212. What is the name of the water you speak of?—The Corran river.

34,213. What stock have you just now?—Seven cows.

34,214. Have you a sheep stock?—There are 150 sheep in the township divided among the nine.

34,215. What rent do the crofters pay?—£12.

34,216. Does each of the six crofters pay the same?—Yes.

34,217. What was the rent before you applied to the Crofters Commission?—A few years before the Commission came it was £15, but previously it was £20.

34,218. Did you get any reduction when the fence was put up that deprived you of a good deal of your grazing?—No.

34,219. Was your stock of sheep reduced when your boundaries were diminished?—Yes.

34,220. What stock had you when you went to the other side?—I don't remember, for I was only a boy.

34,221. Was the application for fair rent lodged by each of the crofters?—Yes.

34,222. Was it the crofters who applied, or the proprietor?—It was the laird who applied.

34,223. Is there any desire among those tenants for new holdings away from their present holdings?—No.

34,224. All your desire is to have the boundaries of your present pasture extended?—Yes, only an extension of pasture.

34,225. And access to the water for your cattle?—Yes; we would like to have access to the water referred to, as we are very scarce of water in the dry season.

34,226. Was the pasture of which you were deprived a good sheep pasture?—Yes, it was good sheep pasture, and part of it was old arable land near the river.

34,227. *Mr Robert Cullen, writer, Bridgend, Islay, on behalf of Mr James Campbell of Jura.*—Were you desired by the crofters to come here and represent them, or do you merely speak for yourself?—Some of them sent me to speak on their behalf.

34,228. Do you definitely state that you were asked

Jura. John Keith or Mac-cich.

to come here by the crofters who are not present here to-day and who reside in the township of Knockrome?—Yes.

34,229. Can you not remember, even as a lad, what number of sheep were upon the township of Knockromé?—No.

34,230. Would there be 200?—There were a good many [*Dorlach math*] when the two townships were together.

34,231. What idea do you intend to convey to the minds of the Commissioners by a good number '*dorlach math*'?—I do not remember the exact number.

34,232. You have already said that it was not the crofters who applied to the Crofters Commission, but the laird, and you say that the rent was £20 before that. Is it not the case that the rent was reduced to £18 before the Commissioners came? [*Miss Isabella H. Campbell of Jura.*—Did not the laird reduce the rent to £18 in 1888?]—Yes.

34,233. And were the tenants also relieved of twenty days' duty work by the laird before the Commission came?—Yes.

34,234. Was that work valued at £2?—I believe it was; but it was great slavery.

34,235. Is there sufficient water for the cattle just now upon the township?—Plenty.

34,236. Was there sufficient during the most of last summer, except for a very short period perhaps?—Except when it was dry, as it was the whole summer.

34,237. Do you ever recollect, in all your lifetime, such an exceptionally dry summer in Knockrome as you had last year?—Yes.

34,238. And was there water then?—At a long distance water could be had. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Were you in want of water for your cattle last summer?—Yes.]

34,239. Were you any worse off here than you were in the dry season of which you remember before the march fence was shifted?—On every occasion when there is a dry summer we are badly off.

34,240. Whose sheep and cattle were upon the hill at the time you had the pasture that was cut off?—They belonged to the crofters of Knockrome.

34,241. Was other people's stock upon the land when you had it?—No.

34,242. Had the laird not sheep upon that portion that was taken off at that time?—No.

34,243. Was that portion added to the deer forest?—Yes.

34,244. *Mr Maccallum.*—About this water you speak of, what was the name of it?—Amhuinn-a'-Bhile.

34,245. Was it dry last year? Or if you had access to it, could you get water for your cattle there?—Yes.

34,246. *Mr Cullen.*—Have you got into arrear of rent since your fair rent was fixed?—No.

34,247. Are you not in arrear of judicial rent?—A little of the last rent.

34,248. What do you mean by the last rent?—Some of the rent for the last half-year.

34,249. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are the rents payable in advance? [*Miss Campbell.*—The rents are not payable in advance.] [*Mr Cullen.*—I may state that the balance of arrears due by the witness since last Whitsunday is £8, 19s. 3d.; there is also due the half-year's rent to Martinmas 1893, £6, and the current half-year's rent to Whitsunday 1894 will be due shortly, £6. He has paid £3 to account, so that his arrears are left at £17, 19s. 3d.]*

34,250. Had you any arrears of rent before the Crofters Commission fixed your rent?—Yes.

34,251. And what arrangement did you make with the Commission regarding these arrears?—They reduced some of the arrears. Jura. John Keith Mac-cich.

34,252. How much did they cancel? [*The Secretary.*—The total arrears were £58, 7s. 8d., whereof there were cancelled £38, 7s. 8d., and balance ordered to be paid in two instalments of £10 each at Martinmas 1890 and Martinmas 1891. The fair rent was fixed on 10th May 1890.]

34,253. You said that the rent was reduced before the Crofters Commission came here. How long was it before their visit?—A few years.

34,254. Would it be five years?—About three or four. [*Miss Campbell.*—It was in 1887.]

Neil Darroch, crofter, Knockrome (34). (Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

Neil Darro

34,255. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a crofter in Knockrome?—Yes.

34,256. Did you hear the evidence given by Mr Keith?—I only heard a part of it.

34,257. Do you agree with the part of it that you heard?—Yes.

34,258. And is there anything of your own that you would like to add to his testimony?—I did not hear the earlier part.

34,259. Were you asked by the people of Knockrome to come here?—No.

34,260. Do you come to give us your own opinions?—Yes.

34,261. Did you hear Mr Keith say that the people of Knockrome would like to have an enlargement of their present grazing ground?—Yes.

34,262. Do you agree with him that that is the mind of the people so far as you know?—Yes.

34,263. You are of opinion that they all desire that?—Yes.

34,264. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Can you speak with regard to any other part of the north of Jura? Do you know about the Ardlussa Estate?—No.

34,265. Three tenants, I think it is stated, hold half of the farm of Knockrome?—Yes.

34,266. Do they concur in asking an extension of holdings as well as the crofters?—I cannot say as to that.

34,267. You speak only for those who are under the Crofters Act?—Yes.

34,268. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you know anything about the reduction of rent, and the arrears of rent in Knockrome? Might I ask if you yourself are in arrear of rent?—Yes, to some extent.

34,269. What was your rent before you got any reduction at all?—£20.

34,270. And what is it now?—£12.

34,271. Did the arrears gather during the time you were paying the £20, or during the time you were paying the £12?—When we were paying the £12.

34,272. Have you then paid on an average £12 of rent for a number of years past?—Yes.

34,273. Even when you were getting into arrears?—Yes.

34,274. *Mr Robert Cullen, writer, Bridgend, Islay.*—Since the fair rent was fixed on your croft by the Crofters Commission, have you gone into arrear on that £12 rent?—Yes, but we were paying the arrears as well as the rent; we could not pay them both.

34,275. What was the arrear left on you by the Commission? [*The Secretary.*—The arrears in this case amounted to £90, 5s. 7d. The sum of £60, 5s. 7d. was cancelled, and £30 ordered to be paid in three yearly instalments, £10 at Martinmas 1890, £10 at Martinmas 1891, and £10 at Martinmas 1892.]

34,276. Did the laird reduce your rent in 1887 to £15?—Yes.

34,277. And take off the duty work, which is equivalent to £2?—Yes.

34,278. So that your net rent was £13?—We were paying the £15 laid on us.

* With reference to the above statement, Keith has forwarded the following explanation:—"There is no mention of half-year rents in our rent-book. The rents are only paid once a year, although we meet the laird or his factor twice a year. There is only one market held in this island during the year. That is on the last week of June, and the rents are not paid till after that date. The arrears mentioned are not correct. The current half-year's rent (which is not due till May 28th) cannot be counted as arrears. As the rents are only taken from year to year, my rent from 1893 till 1894 is not arrears, and that leaves the arrears at £5, 19s. 3d."

34,279. And he took off twenty days' labour, did he not, at the same time?—It was only twelve days.

34,280. Well, say twelve days; what do you consider the value of your duty work which the laird had formerly obtained? [*No answer.*]

34,281. *Mr Maccallum.*—Your rent was at one time £20 *plus* so much work?—Yes.

34,282. If the work was valued at £2, your rent was, therefore, £22 originally, is not that so?—Yes.

34,283. The laird did not *pay back* the £2 for the work which you did not perform?—No.

34,284. *Mr Cullen.*—Do you remember a piece of land being taken off and added to the deer forest?—I do not remember.

34,285. Whose stock was grazed on the forest?—I suppose they were Knockrome and Ardfernal cattle, but I do not remember.

34,286. Had the laird no stock in the forest?—I do not know.

34,287. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to your rent I understand you to say that it was reduced from £20 to £12?—Yes.

34,288. Then you were ordained to pay £10 of arrears?—Yes.

34,289. So that the £10 of arrears added to the £12 of rent made £22 which you had to pay?—Yes.

34,290. Therefore, what you have had to pay during the last two years was more than your original rent?—Yes.

JOHN KEITH OR MAC-CICH, senior, crofter, Keils (67).

(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

34,291. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a crofter under the Act?—Yes.

34,292. What rent do you pay?—£8, 5s.

34,293. Were you asked by the people of Keils to come here to give us information?—They are all here themselves.

34,294. Then what do you wish to say to us; have you a written statement?—No.

34,295. What would you like to tell us?—About Keils old bounds.

34,296. What were the old bounds?—The boundaries that the township used to have, and that we ourselves have had.

34,297. Are they narrower now than they were formerly?—They are twice as narrow as they were.

34,298. Where do they extend to at present?—There is a wire fence up to where we go, at Aonach-Cheinn.

34,299. And is there a desire on the part of the people of Keils to get that old boundary restored?—Yes.

34,300. What is the land used for at the present time that was taken off your bounds?—For deer.

34,301. Can you give us the date when this change was made in your boundary?—About twenty-six years ago.

34,302. Was it a deer forest then that bounded with you formerly?—There were deer going over the ground where the cattle are, but the fence was put up in that year.

34,303. Were there sheep at that time upon the ground that is now a deer forest—I mean outside of what you held?—Yes, the laird of Jura had sheep.

34,304. But are there any sheep there now?—No.

34,305. Could you point out these old boundaries that the people of Keils want restored, to the Commissioners or to their surveyor, if they went to see the place?—Yes.

34,306. *Mr Forsyth.*—What kind of fence is it that divides your pasture from the hill now occupied; is it a deer fence?—It is a fence that keeps us out of the forest, but does not keep the deer from going in, and a few of them were in our stackyards last winter.

34,307. How many wires has the fence?—I think it has five.

34,308. Then it is an ordinary sheep fence?—I don't know what is the height of a deer fence.

34,309. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—How many crofters are in Keils?—There are four that have holdings the same as mine, and there are fourteen who have one cow each. Jura. — John Keith or Mac-cich, senior.

34,310. Do the four crofters pay an equal rent?—Yes.

34,311. Those who have grazing, I think you say, have one cow each?—Yes.

34,312. Have they any land to cultivate?—They have: some of the ground was taken from us and given to the small holders.

34,313. Are they able to winter their cows from the produce of the land they have?—They require like ourselves to buy feeding stuff to supplement it.

34,314. What stock have the larger crofters got?—Five cows.

34,315. And what sheep stock?—Five sheep.

34,316. Before they were confined so much as they are now, that is twenty-six years ago, what sheep stock had they?—One hundred and fifty between the four.

34,317. Is it well suited for sheep?—Better for sheep than for cattle.

34,318. Were you before the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

34,319. What was your rent before they adjudicated on it?—It was reduced by the proprietor from £13, 10s. to £12, and the Commission reduced it to £8, 5s.

34,320. Have you been paying your rent regularly since it was fixed by the Commission?—I am not owing much, and I could not pay even the fair rent were it not that I get help from my family.

34,321. You could not take it out of the land?—No, it would be impossible, it is so small.

34,322. How many acres arable have you got?—They say it is ten, but we do not consider that there are ten in it.

34,323. Do you think it would be a great advantage for the crofters to get this additional land that they are speaking about?—Yes.

34,324. Would it be possible to add any arable ground to your holding?—There is a field above the schoolhouse here that used to be in, and that could be utilised if we had outrun in proportion for grazing.

34,325. Who occupies that field just now?—We ourselves have it, but we have no power to change it from grazing.

34,326. You could cultivate that to profit if you had more grazing?—If we had more grazing we would, of course, require more arable.

34,327. And would you cultivate more if you got additional grazing?—Yes, a lot of the ground is nothing but bog now for want of cultivation.

34,328. *Mr Gordon.*—Did your pasture, before the other ground was taken off, extend to the watershed? Did it go down into Glen Asdale?—Glen Asdale is a long distance from our present bounds.

34,329. Did it formerly go there?—Yes, we have been gathering sheep up at Beinn-a'-Chaolais. The former tenant was factor for the laird of Jura, and he had the home farm.

34,330. Did his sheep come up to the top of the hill, or did you go down to meet him half way down the other side?—Mr Campbell's sheep were coming up to Glen Asdale, and our boundaries went up near that.

34,331. Was the march at the top of Glas-Bheinn?—It went over the back of Glas-Bheinn.

34,332. *Mr Cullen.*—With reference to that ground that Mr Gordon has mentioned, did the laird's sheep not go over all that ground?—No.

34,333. You have five cows and five sheep; how many heifers have you?—Four.

34,334. Have you a horse?—Yes.

34,335. Any calves or stirks?—Five.

34,336. Is it not the case that all the draff and the meal and other feeding stuff that you buy is used for the five cows and five sheep?—The croft was quite sufficient to maintain them without the draff.

34,337. Is that the number of stock you gave in to the Crofters Commission?—Five cows and followers. When these cows had calves we were allowed to keep them till July when they were sold as stirks.

34,338. You say there were 150 sheep amongst the

Jura.

John Keith or Mac-cich, senior.

crofters of Keils. How many crofters were there at Keils at that time who were joint owners of that sheep stock?—There were only four.

34,339. Were there not twelve?—We have once seen twelve crofters in the township, but they were disbanded because there was no room for them.

34,340. You have stated you are desirous of getting more land. Do you know the hill of Dubh-Chreag?—Yes.

34,341. Is it contiguous to the Keils boundaries?—Yes.

34,342. Were the Keils tenants offered the whole of Dubh-Chreag?—Yes, but we would not be much the better of it.

34,343. But you refused to have it?—I cannot say whether they refused it or not.

34,344. Do you know the croft at Ardmenish that was occupied in 1893 bywidow Catherine Macdougall?—Yes.

34,345. Were you offered that croft?—Yes.

34,346. Did you refuse it?—Yes, I did not want to put any poor widow out of her holding.

34,347. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Was it a vacant croft that you were offered?—No, it was November last.

34,348. The person who was then in the croft is there still?—Yes.

34,349. Was it because you did not wish the widow to be put out of the croft at Whitsunday 1894, that you would not take it?—Yes, everybody requires to make a living.

34,350. How high is the deer fence?—Not very high.

34,351. Can you tell me when a deer was last seen in your stackyard?—About two months ago.

34,352. Did you ever get compensation from the laird for damage done by deer to your crop?—We had to be watching the deer, and we got 2s. 6d. a night for that; but there has been twice as much damage done to the crop as we got in compensation for watching.

34,353. What was the amount you got in compensation from the laird for the damage done by the deer?—I don't remember whether it was £2 or £3.

34,354. In your opinion did you get full compensation for the damage done?—No indeed.

34,355. And your time was also taken up in watching?—Yes.

34,356. *Mr Cullen.*—Did you lodge a claim with the proprietor for the damage that had been done?—No.

34,357. To your knowledge, was the laird aware of the extent of the damage that was done to your crop?—I cannot say anything about that.

John Keith or Mac-cich, junior.

JOHN KEITH OR MAC-CICH, crofter, Keils [Cill-Arnadail] (67).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

34,358. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a crofter in Keils?—Yes.

34,359. Did you hear the evidence given by the previous witness?—I caught cold while keeping the deer out of my stackyard, so that I am somewhat deaf, and did not hear his evidence.

34,360. Is the deer fence not sufficient to keep out the deer?—They run out and in as they like. The fence is large enough to keep our stock out of the forest, but not to keep the deer in.

34,361. Did you hear what the previous witness told us about the old pasture they used to have?—I did not hear, but I presume he has told everything.

34,362. Are you desirous of getting that pasture back that was taken away?—Yes, the cattle are starving, and there is no market for them. The cow will cost me in hand-feeding before she takes the bull more than the market price of her offspring as a year old.

34,363. *Mr Gordon.*—Did the former boundary of the crofts go beyond the watershed of the hill, that is beyond Glas-Bheinn?—The boundary was the watershed at the back of Glas-Bheinn, and the sheep went backwards and forwards. There was no fence, and they went over the hill occasionally. It was the fence that caused the poverty. Our sheep went among the laird's, mixing with them.

Jura.

John Keith Mac-cich, junior.

34,364. Coming up Glen Asdale?—Yes.

34,365. *Mr Maccallum.*—Are there any sheep now on that ground?—No.

Alexander Keith or Mac-cich.

ALEXANDER KEITH OR MAC-CICH, crofter, Keils [Cill-Arnadail] (42).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

34,366. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a crofter in Keils?—Yes.

34,367. Have you heard the evidence that has been given with regard to Keils?—Yes.

34,368. Do you agree with that evidence?—Yes.

34,368*a*. And is there anything further you would like to state yourself that they have overlooked?—Only that we have to buy feeding stuff for our beasts; we have no wintering or summer grazing for them.

34,369. And do you require to buy food for your cattle in summer as well as in winter?—Yes. I give them meal in summer.

34,369*a*. Have you any idea of the number of acres in your pasture?—No, I cannot say; but we know the boundaries, and can show them.

34,370. Are you in the habit of seeing a measured acre?—Yes.

34,371. Have you any idea how many of them would be in your pasture?—I cannot say.

34,372. Have you 500 acres of pasture, do you think?—We cannot say, because there are so many others besides us.

34,373. You heard what was stated as to the old boundaries?—Yes.

34,374. You, of course, can have no personal recollection of the time when you had these old boundaries?—Yes, I was guarding sheep there myself.

34,375. Do you think it is a desirable thing that you should get back these old boundaries?—Certainly.

34,376. Have you read the notice convening the meeting here? Do you know the object of our inquiry?—Yes.

34,377. And do you know any land outside what was spoken to here to-day that it would be desirable we should see in pursuance of our remit?—Yes.

34,378. Where is the land that would be suitable for small holdings?—Sanaig and Strone.

34,379. Is that north or south from here?—South. It is next the shore side.

34,380. Besides Sanaig and Strone, do you know any other place that you think it would be desirable we should visit?—Yes, Learganbreac, north of here.

34,381. Any other place?—Cnocbreac, on the west side.

34,382. Any places in addition to these?—No.

34,383. Are these places, in your opinion, localities in which new small holdings of a reasonable size could be made?—There are plenty places in the island suitable for that.

34,384. But are these suitable places?—They are.

34,385. And what other places do you refer to?—There are many places that have no name which I know would do for cultivation.

34,386. For cultivation with grazing attached?—For both grazing and cultivation.

34,387. Are they mainly on one side of the island, or partly on one side and partly on the other?—On both sides.

34,388. And, speaking generally, what use are these lands put to now?—Sanaig and Strone are used for grazing cattle.

34,389. And Learganbreac?—In the deer forest.

34,390. And Cnocbreac?—In the deer forest also.

34,391. And you are of opinion that holdings could be made there?—Yes.

34,392. Would they be better or worse than the holdings at Keils do you think?—Far better.

34,393. Would you yourself take such a holding if you had an opportunity on reasonable terms?—Yes, and able and willing to pay for it.

34,394. Do you think it would be easier for you to pay a larger rent out of a moderately sized holding than your present rent out of a small one?—I am certain it would be far easier to pay rent for a good sized holding than for small bits.

34,395. Even in the arithmetical proportion of rental to acreage?—Yes.

34,396. So the larger the holding is the higher the rent ought to be on that principle?—Of course.

34,397. And is it the case that the large holdings are paying more per acre than you?—The small holdings pay more per acre.

34,398. How does the rent you pay per acre compare with the rent paid for the deer forest, do you know?—I think we pay twelve times as much for an acre.

34,399. Was your case before the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

34,400. Did you get a reduction of rent?—Yes.

34,401. Have you any arrears?—No.

34,402. And have arrears accumulated since the fair rent was fixed?—I paid them all.

34,403. Were there any arrears upon you?—Yes.

34,404. What was your old rent?—£10, 16s. before the Commissioners came.

34,405. And what did the Commissioners do to it?—They brought it down to £8, 5s.

34,406. What arrears had you at that time?—I paid £20 of arrears. [*The Secretary.*—The holding was in name of Widow Marion and Alexander Keith, the total arrears were £51, 12s. 4d., of which there were cancelled £31, 12s. 4d., and the balance of £20 was ordered to be paid in three instalments, £7 at Martinmas 1890, £7 at Martinmas 1891, and £6 at Martinmas 1892.]

34,407. Did you get the benefit of the reduction before the Crofters Commission came here?—Yes.

34,408. How much was your rent before that?—I think it was £13, 10s.

34,408*a*. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—If you got the land that you were referring to and the old boundaries, would you be able to winter the stock you have?—No, not without more arable.

34,409. And is there arable contiguous to you that might be added?—Yes, if we got more grazing there is plenty of ground we could cultivate.

34,410. That is not at present in your possession, is it?—Yes.

34,411. Or do you refer to the pasture you have at present; you would cultivate it if you get more grazing?—Yes, certainly.

34,412. Is it your opinion that the land in these places you have mentioned is well suited for small farms?—Yes, very good land.

34,413. There is a large forest in the island?—Yes, most of it is forest altogether.

34,414. When was the last addition made to that forest, do you remember?—Indeed, I am not certain of that.

34,415. But you remember an addition being made to it, don't you?—Yes, I remember a bit being cut off from our holdings and added to the forest.

34,416. But it was a forest when you remember it first?—Yes.

34,417. Then you cannot state of your own knowledge what use it was put to before then; but has it come to your knowledge that the land that is now in the forest was used for rearing cattle and sheep?—Yes.

34,418. Could you tell us the names of the old farms that are now included in the forest?—Most of it is pasture ground that was cut from the other holdings, Knockrome, Ardmenish, Learganbreac, and Keils.

34,419. The pasture was taken from the small holdings, was it?—Yes.

34,420. But was there a farm at Learganbreac?—Yes.

34,421. And Cnocbreac?—Yes.

34,422. These are old farms?—Yes.

34,423. And it is your opinion that these old farms might be converted into small farms, and that these would let well, that there would be a competition for such farms as these; I think you said that you yourself would like to take such a farm as that?—Yes, I know it is good land.

34,424. And are there others in the same position as you?—Plenty.

34,425. *Mr Gordon.*—What stock have you?—Five cows and five sheep, two stirks and two heifers.

34,426. What extension would you suggest for the grazings of Keils?—It is not convenient to add more to it than the old boundaries at the west side of Glas-Bheinn.

34,427. But would you cross over the hill down to the other watershed?—Yes.

34,428. Is there anything on the ground that would make a good march there after you cross the hill?—Yes, it is good pasture to the other shore.

34,429. Possibly, but how would the men do that are upon the other shore; where would you make their march?—It was of old at the top of the hills where the march was; part would fall to each side.

34,430. Do you know Aon-Bheinn?—Yes.

34,431. Was that the old boundary?—Yes.

34,432. Glas-Bheinn is the highest hill?—Yes.

34,433. Do you suggest that your township boundary should go beyond the watershed, or to the top of the hill?—It was a little to the back of Glas-Bheinn.

34,434. You did not go down into Glen-Asdale?—No.

34,435. Do you live on your croft?—Partly.

34,436. What do you work at?—Just any kind of work I get.

34,437. Are you working at the distillery?—No.

34,438. Did you ever work there?—Yes, I have worked at the steamers and vessels there, and at cargoes.

34,439. At the shore here?—Yes.

34,440. Is that your principal employment at present?—No.

34,441. What is your principal employment just now?—In the meantime I am working at my croft.

34,442. *Mr Cullen.*—Are you a mason by trade?—I was never a day learning to be a mason.

34,443. But you are a mason?—Yes, of course, I am.

34,444. If you took a croft at Cnocbreac, would there be any possibility of your getting anything in the shape of work, discharging vessels, or mason work there?—It would not matter if I could live on the croft.

34,445. You say that you pay twelve times as much per acre as is paid per acre for the deer forest. Is your acre not worth twenty times more than the average acre in the deer forest?—It is not.

34,446. Do the crofters put seaware on their crofts here for manure?—Yes.

34,447. Is there plenty seaware to be got at Strone and Sanaig?—Yes, they could get it there too, on the shore.

34,448. How far away is the shore?—Just next to the farm.

34,449. Are there plenty of peats at Strone and Sanaig?—Yes.

34,450. On what part of Strone are the peats?—There are peats on every part of it.

34,451. About Learganbreac,—is it not an essential appendage to the deer forest?—Oh, I think they could do without it.

34,452. Whose stock was on it before it was put into the deer forest?—The laird's.

34,453. Whose stock is on it just now?—It is the deer, the stock I see on it.

34,454. Are there not people living there?—Very few.

34,455. How many?—I did not count them.

34,456. What do they do?—They are gamekeepers.

34,457. How many families were there when it was a township?—Four.

34,458. And how many are there just now? Is it not the case that there are four there now?—I believe there are.

34,459. *Mr Sutherland.*—You still hold the opinion, I think, that you pay a large sum more per acre for your holding than they get for the deer forest?—Yes, that is my opinion.

Alexander Keith or Mac-eich.

34,460. And you also stated, in reply to a question, that you thought the land in the deer forest was better?—Yes, some of it.

34,461. But there is a good deal of the land in the deer forest that is not so good as the land you cultivate?—Yes, the high part of it, of course.

34,462. But who made your land worth so much? Who gave the value to the land you now occupy?—I did a good part of it myself.

34,463. And were your father and mother there before you?—Yes.

34,464. Did they work on that land?—Yes.

34,465. What was it worth, do you think, when they went there first,—was it worth as much as it is now?—No, there were no houses at all then.

34,466. Who gave it the value it has now?—The people made a great improvement on the ground.

34,467. And who gave the value to the deer forest that it has just now?—It has it by nature.

34,468. What was the occupation of the four families who used to live at Learganbreac?—Crofters.

34,469. *Mr Maccallum.*—Can you tell us the present population of the island of Jura?—About 600.

34,469*a*. And do you know what its population was in former times?—No, I cannot say, but I know there were far more inhabitants in Jura then than there are now.

34,470. Are you aware that, according to the Statistical Accounts of 1841, there were then 1228 people in the island?—No.

34,470*a*. The present population is the half of that?—Yes.

34,471. *Mr Cullen.*—Was there a kelp industry, do you know, in the island at that time?—I never saw kelp worked here in my lifetime.

John Black. JOHN BLACK, crofter, Keils (32)—*examined.*

34,472. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you also a crofter in Keils?—Yes, along with my father.

34,473. A joint tenant?—Yes.

34,474. Is your case in any way different from what we have heard the others say?—It is much about the same.

34,475. Then do you corroborate the evidence they gave?—Yes, my father lived in Learganbreac, the place that was mentioned.

34,476. Were you born there yourself?—No, I was not. It is forty years since they left it.

34,477. And do you concur, generally, with the evidence you have heard the other witnesses give?—Yes, most of them. If I could get there on reasonable terms I would go on chance. My ancestors were in Sanaig as well.

34,478. And you think these townships would be well adapted for new settlements?—Far better.

34,479. Would they be better than the place you are in now?—Yes, for we are quite closed in: there is no grazing for our cattle or anything, and they are half starved.

34,480. But supposing you were to get your present grazing extended?—Well, it would be always so much; but I would rather go to another place, if I could get it, where I would have arable land. My brother would go along with me.

34,481. Is the desire to get larger holdings general in your opinion?—Well, I would like to get them.

Neil Clark. NEIL CLARK, care-taker, Learganbreac (about 60)—*examined.*

34,482. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I live at Learganbreac, working at the village.

34,483. May we describe you as a labourer?—I am care-taker on the deer forest of Learganbreac.

34,484. What would you like to say to us?—Oh, I have nothing particular to say.

34,485. *Mr Cullen.*—Do you know Keils Glen?—Yes.

34,486. Are the deer wintered there?—Yes.

Neil Clark.

34,487. Is it a good place for wintering deer?—Yes.

34,488. Could they be wintered in the forest very well without Keils Glen?—Well, no, not on this side.

34,489. Do you remember seeing the laird's sheep on the forest?—Yes, I herded the laird's cattle and sheep there.

34,490. Were the Keils and Knockrome crofters sheep running along with the laird's sheep?—Not since I went to Leargan.

34,491. But before?—Before that they went back and forward there.

34,492. What is Learganbreac used for at present?—It is used for many a thing: for feeding sheep, cattle and horses and deer; and for people. There are five families in Learganbreac.

34,493. In your opinion is there available land at Learganbreac for more crofters or for more residents than are there just now?—No, I don't think so. There used to be five families, four crofters, and a herd in Learganbreac, and there are five families in Learganbreac just now.

34,494. Is it necessary to the deer forest to have Learganbreac along with it?—What would the deer forest do without it?

34,495. *Mr Sutherland.*—When was Learganbreac added to the deer forest?—About fifteen years ago.

34,496. Was there a deer forest before that?—Well, there were deer in Jura, but there were also sheep and cattle; the old laird kept sheep and cattle and deer there.

34,497. There were deer in Jura when Learganbreac was in possession of the crofters?—Yes, but I believe deer were in Jura since Jura was—

34,498-99. So that Learganbreac will not be absolutely necessary to the deer?—To the deer forest.

34,500. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is it only fifteen years since that was added to the deer forest?—Well, it was under sheep and cattle before that.

34,501. And the deer forest existed then and was in good working order without Learganbreac?—But that was only putting a little cattle on it to graze in the summer time and a few hoggs in the winter time. The deer were among them there. We have cattle and horses on now.

34,502. When the tenants were there, did the deer come?—No. There were a few deer stopping in the hill and going back and forward.

34,503. And you state that it is a very good place for sheep and cattle?—Yes.

34,504. You say there are five families in it just now?—Yes.

34,505. Do they cultivate it?—No, very little.

34,506. And it is just simply devoted to the deer?—Yes.

34,507. But it was formerly cultivated?—Well, we had a park for wintering our horses and cattle.

34,508. But the tenants who were there cultivated it, I suppose?—Yes.

34,509. But now it is not cultivated?—No.

34,510. And it is well adapted, according to your view, for cultivation and for stock raising?—Yes.

34,511. *Mr Cullen.*—Do you know what the rent of the deer forest is?—No.

34,512. Were the deer done away with entirely, and the green patches or the good patches devoted to crofters, would Jura as a whole, or would the people as a whole, be better than they are just now?—No, I don't think so

34,513. Why?—Where would they get work then, or how would those get work who now get it from the shooting tenant? The crofters could not give them work.

34,514. So that you could not make as good a livelihood by getting that land at Learganbreac or Cnocbreac as you do just now?—No.

34,515. *Mr Sutherland.*—But you are not the people of Jura?—No, but I belong to Jura, and I have been twenty-five years at Learganbreac.

34,516. *Mr Maccallum.*—In your early recollection

were there more people in Jura than there are now?—Oh, yes.

34,517. It supported a bigger population in former times when it was under tenants than now when it is under deer?—Yes.

34,518. And there was more produce sent out from the island?—Yes.

34,519. Do you know the number of cattle that used to be sold yearly out of this island?—No.

34,520. Do you know that the Statistical Account states that between 1000 and 1200 cattle were sold from this island annually?—No, I cannot say.

34,521. But there is no such produce sent out now?—No.

34,522. What does it produce now?—I cannot say. The people have now double the land they had at that time. There were then twelve families in Keils, twelve in Knockrome, twelve in Ardfernal, and three in Cnocbreac.

MISS ISABELLA H. CAMPBELL of Jura—*examined.*

34,523. I should like to say that Ardmenish, which has been referred to and which is now under four crofters, was in the proprietor's own hands formerly, and his factor lived there. In 1847, he made it a crofter township, and removed the crofters from Learganbreac, distributing them on other parts of the estate where there were vacant crofts; and put his factor to Learganbreac, giving him a sheep stock and grazing his own cattle at Learganbreac. The laird had sheep all over the forest ground. Keils, Knockrome, and Cnocbreac people's stock grazed along with the laird's stock, but simply as a privilege, not as a right—and as Neil Clark has told you, he was the herd at Learganbreac, where the laird summered some of his cattle, and Clark usually went along with the shepherds to gather the laird's sheep on the forest ground. At Cnocbreac there were four tenants, and Neil Clark's mother, who was a widow, was also there: but these four tenants were at the same time herds to the proprietor and watchers of his salmon river there; and received their crofts as part of the wages they thus earned. When he removed them, only one left the island; the others got crofts in other parts.

In 1868, Keils Glen was formed into part of the forest. Half of that was in the hands of the Keil's tenants; the other half was in the hands of the laird's own factor, who was removed at that time from Feoline, the home farm that is now let with the forest to Mr Evans. Learganbreac, as I said before, is now under the same number of people as there were before, viz.:—four families, and Neil Clark, who was the laird's own herd for the cattle. The population was very considerably larger than it is at present: that was entirely owing to the kelp industry, which yielded the proprietor from £1500 to £2000, and when that was done away with several hundreds of the people emigrated themselves, because there was no occupation for them. There was not a single eviction from this place. At the present moment, one of the tenants at Knockrome has resigned his double share: the laird would be willing to divide the township of Knockrome into eight shares, equally, if he could do so, but the difficulty is to divide it to the satisfaction of the tenants; and if a Commission would come and divide that among the tenants equally we would only be too pleased. There will be another croft vacant at Ardmenish at the May term; we wanted one of the Keil's tenants to go there, for the reason that it would have made a vacancy in Keils, and the people of that place would have got a bigger farm, with the fourth share divided among them. I have heard several of the Keil's tenants maintain to-day that they have not sufficient provender to maintain their stock, but they keep a very large stock in excess of what they are entitled to do, and for that reason they are short of provender.

All I have to say in conclusion is, that up to the present day the feeling between the tenants and the proprietor has been a very friendly one, and, I think, if you ask them, one and all would be sorry to see Mr Evans compelled to leave the island, although they may wish to get a little more land.

I should like if you would allow a short statement to be read, and then lodged with your Secretary. It is signed and dated.

34,524–25. *Mr Sutherland.*—By all means. You will, of course, understand that when read it is admitted as evidence, upon the usual condition that questions may be put in elucidation of any of the points raised. Meantime, I should like to ask you one or two questions on the statement which you have already made. But first of all, I think you invited us to go and see the land at Knockrome, and I rather think that statement must have been made under a slight misapprehension of our duties as a Commission?—No, I did not say 'you;' I said I wished some Commission would come and divide it equally among the tenants, as we could not do so to their satisfaction, because they declare that some of the land is poor and some good.

34,526–27. I quite follow you now: I was under the belief that you thought we had anything to do with the division of land. You understand that what the crofters have already is their own to a certain extent?—But I only meant that I wished some Commission would do it because we cannot.

34,528–29. You did not mean that to invalidate any of the statements that were made here to-day, or to suggest that the want of agreement among the tenants would be any bar to their occupying new land, provided they got the opportunity?—I do not quite understand you.

34,530. Was the statement made with the intention of giving us the idea that there would be any difficulty in getting new tenants to agree as to new holdings?—There is a very great difficulty in the way of our making the holdings equal for them, because they declare that the ground is not equally good; and if we divide it ourselves, the one would say he had got a better portion and the other an inferior portion.

34,531. But did they say so?—Yes, they say that portions are bad, and that is the difficulty we have in dividing it.

34,532. And did it absolutely prevent a proper division being made?—It has prevented my father and my brother from doing it. They have wished to do it, and would like to do it to-morrow if it were possible.

34,533. In consequence of that expression they refrain from dividing it?—From dividing it.

34,534. May I ask, did the tenants ever ask to get their bounds enlarged?—No, they have never asked that; and they did not apply to have them enlarged when the Crofters Commission was here.

34,535. You said, I think, that there was a tendency on the part of the crofters to keep more stock than they were entitled to keep?—Yes.

34,536. Does the one complain of the other in that respect? Do you ever hear any complaint?—Oh, yes, there have been complaints.

34,537. Are you aware of the existence of provisions that have been formed to regulate these things? There is an Act of Parliament recently passed which, if put in force, would prevent that.—These rents were fixed according to the applications made under the Act.

34,538. But there is another Act of Parliament which allows arrangements to be made for the regulation of stock and rules for grazing; was there any attempt made to put that in operation?—None.

34,539. May I ask, as a matter of opinion coming from you, whether that desire of theirs to have more stock is not to a certain extent a laudable one?—Certainly, and that is the very reason why we should have liked that one of the tenants from Keils would be removed, so that the stock of the others could be increased by the fourth share.

34,540. Is not the most evident way to enlarge their bounds seeing there was so much land available?—Did we not offer it, and was it not refused?

34,541. Where is that?—It is contiguous to their holdings and can be easily seen from the road. It is where we have our own sheep and cattle.

34,542. When, may I ask, was that offer made?—

Six or seven years ago. My brother wrote authorising it to be offered, but it was refused.

34,543. Did they assign any reason for refusing that offer?—No, I did not hear any reason.

34,544. Or, in your opinion, were there any conditions that would make it unacceptable?—There were no conditions whatever; they were to be given the grazing of Dubh-Chreag. There was not even a fence, and their stock would have gone a great deal further than the actual hill,—in short, they would have come on to our ground very considerably.

34,545. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to Knockrome, I think it has three tenants who are not under the Crofters Act?—Three double tenants.

34,546. What is the rent of these tenants?—The rent of these tenants is £30, 10s.; but the laird only exacts from them the same rent as was fixed by the Crofters Commission in the case of the others, viz., £24 for the double share.

34,547. And one of these has resigned?—Has resigned one of these shares, being so very heavily in arrears, although he had £60 lent to him by the laird to try and help him. Instead of being able to pay any of that back, he has got so much further into arrears that he is now £148 in debt. On two other occasions my father has advanced sums of £50 and £100, and in each case instead of the money being repaid the debt has very considerably increased.

34,548. And is it the intention to divide the holding among the crofters?—Most willingly, if they can manage it among themselves to their own satisfaction.

34,549. Would they have any feeling about taking the holding that was in the occupation of a neighbour?—Well, the holding is thrown upon our hands; what is to become of it?

34,550. But they have made no application for that holding?—No, because they have not yet been told that it is vacant.

34,551. But you are aware of the strong feeling that Highlanders have about taking land that was in the occupation of another person unless they are perfectly sure that the removal is absolutely voluntary?—But if they know that he has relinquished the holding they cannot have any such feeling. If we are unable to divide it equally among them, my father intends to offer it to the tenant who has no arrears.

34,552. Is the rent of these three tenants taken down permanently? Is it returned to the Valuation Roll at the lesser figure?—Yes, it is in the Valuation Roll at £24, although it is nominally £30, 10s.

34,553. When was that done?—After the Crofters Commission was here. The laird also cancelled their arrears to the same extent as had been done by the Commission in the case of the other crofters whose rents had been adjudicated on.

34,554. You said that the Keils' tenants refused to accept additional grazing?—They refused to accept Dubh-Chreag, which was offered to them unconditionally; and a croft at Ardmenish, which will be vacant in May, was offered in succession to each of the four tenants.

34,555. How can their refusal to accept that be reconciled with their application to-day for more land?—I cannot tell you, except that they never wish to vacate where they are, and this, I conclude, is owing to the low rents they pay for their present crofts.

34,555*a*. Is it the case that Dubh-Chreag would not increase the value of their holdings to any considerable extent?—Well, we consider it very good grazing for our own stock.

34,556. Is it not under deer just now?—There are deer all over Jura, and always have been.

34,557. But must it not have been the case that in the opinion of these crofters the land was valueless,—the particular part that was offered?—No, I think they wished to get one particular spot and won't take anything else.

34,558. Is it reasonable to suppose that if the land was of any value they would not take it?—I don't pretend to know anything about the value of land: but there are three farmers here, and you can ask them what they consider the value of that land to be.

34,559. I think we got an opinion from some of the witnesses here to-day that the land would not really benefit them?—But ask some one else and you may get a different opinion. Our best wedders are taken off Dubh-Chreag every season, and giving it up would mean a loss to the laird for his own sheep.

34,560. Don't you think these people are intelligent people, and that they ought to know what would be for their benefit?—I think they are very intelligent people, and I think they are very nice people and very hard-working people.

34,561. And perfectly capable of forming an opinion as to the value of the land offered them?—But I think when other land is offered to them it is rather hard that they won't take it, but wish to spoil another place which would become utterly valueless.

34,562. But you don't think they have any desire to spoil it?—But it would spoil it.

34,563. Yes, in your opinion?—Well, I think it is the opinion of a good many people.

34,564. The following statement was then read on behalf of the witness:—

ARDFIN, 6*th April* 1894.

The very name of this island, Jura, from Dhiura or Dera,* is, in itself, significant that deer have always been abundant; indeed they are prehistoric, for a fossil stag's antler was dug out of Jura gravel not very long ago. In olden times they were able to roam wherever they liked, no part of the island being fenced off from them.

In 1875, the late proprietor, Mr Richard D. Campbell of Jura, let some 27,000 acres as a deer forest. To do this no crofters or cottars were turned out of the island, or even removed, and it was Mr Campbell's own stock that had to be taken off the ground. The stock (sheep and cattle) kept by Mr Campbell on what is *now* called deer forest was never large: part of it was only summered there; the ground being chiefly high bleak land is poor and only suited for deer, and if the small particles of better ground were taken from the deer forest and converted into a few indifferent crofts, the rest of this large tract of poor land would become utterly valueless even for deer, for unless hinds get a little better feeding in winter they cannot rear their calves, and in a short time the stock would be nil.

Doing away with the existing deer forest would injure the Jura crofters instead of benefiting them, as the few facts hereafter stated will go to prove:—

1st. The yearly rates paid by Mr Evans, lessee of the deer forest, in a great measure reduce what must otherwise fall on the crofters.

2nd. A large portion of from £5000 to £6000 spent annually by Mr Evans in Scotland is circulated in this island. The sum of £1300 is paid in wages alone per annum to outdoor servants, *all Highlanders.*

3rd. Mr Evans distributes venison freely among the Jura people. He has fenced, *gratis*, a good many small crofts, and put wooden lofts and partitions into houses, besides helping the people in many other ways too numerous to mention. In 1892, Mr Evans spent £105 in providing cement, which, with some additional help from Mr Campbell, laid floors in every house from Lagg to Small Isles. If these few facts are taken into consideration, it will, I think, prove that the deer forest is a decided gain to each and all of us in Jura.

The farm of Tarbert, some 24,000 acres in extent, which is under sheep and deer, used to be farmed by the proprietor, but is now let. The present tenant, Mr Dugald Fletcher, a well known farmer, will, I think, be present himself to state how impossible it would be to settle crofters on any part of Tarbert excepting the few fields close to his own house, without which the farm could not be worked. This farm when first let returned a rental of £800 a year, but owing to the poor prices for sheep and wool the rent had to be reduced to £500 a year.

Keanuachdrach farm, about 3500 acres in extent under sheep and deer, situated at the north of Jura, is let to Mr Archibald Maccormick at a rent of £135.

* Norse, Dyr = a wild animal, a deer; and ey = an island. Therefore Dyr-ey means "Deer-Island."

Isabella ampbell.

This farm in better times returned a yearly rent of £200. The present tenant maintains that he cannot make the farm pay, even at the present reduced rent, unless Mr Campbell gives him the shooting and fishing along with it at the nominal rental of £15 a year. This shooting includes three deer as well as other game.

The farms of Ardfin, Strone, and Sanaig, in all about 9000 acres in extent, are farmed by Mr Campbell of Jura himself. Sheep, cattle, and deer graze all over them together as in olden times.

Mr Campbell, shortly after succeeding his late brother in the management of these estates, with a view to lighten the burdens on the people in such depressed and altered circumstances of the times, voluntarily dispensed with the duty work which every tenant was bound to render him, valued at £2 a year as estimated by themselves.

Mr Campbell, a few years ago, was reluctantly compelled to part with his fine well-known herd of Highland cattle, the expense of labour to provide wintering being so high that it far exceeded the prices they realized. Even with his three farms Mr Campbell has to winter from 300 to 400 of his hoggs away from Jura; and, those wintered at home having to be artificially fed, the expense is great. Besides this the heavy death-rate makes the keeping up of stock extremely difficult, and to obtain anything of a price for sheep or wool, fresh blood must be continually brought in. This the crofters do not seem to realize, which perhaps accounts for the fact that sheep sold by crofters invariably fetch the very lowest price in the market. Farms of even small size can only be worked by men possessed of a certain amount of capital. Crofters do not (at least in Jura) care for working a farm together; each and all of them prefer a croft entirely to themselves.

If the better spots of land were taken from Mr Campbell, Mr Evans, and Mr Fletcher, thus rendering the rest of the ground valueless for any purpose, some thirty to forty families, almost entirely Jura people, at present employed as servants by these three gentlemen, would be thrown out of work, and the local rates, which are high enough already, would be very greatly increased.

The distribution of compulsory rates was for the year to Whitsunday 1894 as follows:—

Mr Campbell of Jura's proportion, . .	£402
Mr Evan's (Jura forest), ...	120
Mr Fletcher, farmer, Tarbert, . . .	44
Mr Archibald Maccormick, farmer, Keanuachdrach, ...	13
Crofters, ...	20

Mr Campbell will be glad to show the return of his farm for 1893, and although worked as economically as possible his loss is very considerable.

Mr Campbell for the benefit of his people keeps up three ferries, and a meal mill at a great loss to himself; and if the large tracts of bare bleak land are left valueless on his hands through picking out a few spots where imported crofters *might* manage to exist, it would be impossible for him to continue to do so.

No crofters have ever been sent out of the island by Mr Campbell or his predecessors.

Mr Campbell advanced considerable sums of money to several tenants and crofters. In every case the money advanced is still unpaid, and a large sum in addition is owing. One of these parties, just declared a bankrupt, has run his debt into hundreds of pounds. Out of 14 crofters who, in 1890, had their rents fixed by the Crofters Commissioners, several are very considerably over a year in arrear of rent; this will prove that even with ready made crofts, money lent and every advantage for procuring seaware, &c., the crofters rarely succeed in eking out a bare subsistence. How would it, therefore, be possible for them to do so where everything had to be made, no seaware convenient and no roads to their crofts? Then who is to take over the existing sheep stock which could not be kept on by Mr Campbell or Mr Fletcher without the better grounds for wintering? And what is to become of the large number of Jura people who would be thrown out of work by Mr Campbell, Mr Evans, and Mr Fletcher?

Jura.

Miss Isabella H. Campbell.

Except for the distillery, which does not afford work to many, people have no means of earning money in Jura; and I have no hesitation in saying that the young people, male and female, as a rule, all wish to get away to the low country. Regular wages paid by Mr Campbell, Mr Evans, and Mr Fletcher *to Jura people* amount to about £1200 per annum, and extra labour to about £200.

Mr Campbell can show the Commissioners a field on his own home farm about 15 acres in extent reclaimed by his late brother some fifty years ago; and though labour was to be had at that time for very little it cost £1100 to reclaim the same and build a dyke round it.

The rainfall in Jura is very heavy, the yearly average being 65 inches (one year was as high as 94 inches), which is greatly against stock of all kinds. The distance from markets and the scarcity of transit reduces the value of all produce very considerably. Steamer freights are high, which also adds greatly to the expense of goods coming to or going from the island. Stock has often to be kept in towns for several days, having arrived either too late or too soon for the markets.

(Signed) 'I. H. Campbell.'

34,565. *Mr Sutherland.*—I should like to ask a question with regard to the assessments, Miss Campbell. It was stated that the rates paid by Mr Campbell, the proprietor, Mr Evans, the shooting tenant, and Mr Fletcher were so much: but do they pay more in proportion than the crofters do?—No, not more in proportion,—the same.

34,566–67. So that all that is shown by the information given is that these have a great deal of land and the crofters have very little, is that not so?—Yes, but what we mean is that if there is no deer forest, and nothing on the land there can be no rates charged, seeing the land would not be used for any purpose: hence the assessments would be heavier.

34,568. Provided it was not occupied in any way?—A great deal of it could not be.

34,569. But you will understand that it was never intended that the land should not be occupied under any arrangement whatever: so that the comparison just proves, as I say, the actual distribution of the land.—But do you consider that if the 27,000 acres of deer forest were to be put under crofters it would return anything like £1348?

34,570. I was just going to suggest a question with regard to that. Have you any means of comparing the value of the land per acre held by the crofters with the land per acre held as a deer forest? We have had statements here to-day which were not materially shaken, that the crofters pay a great deal more per acre for their land at present than is paid for the deer forest; and is it not reasonable to suppose that provided they were put in possession of this other land they would pay just as much?—That is a question I cannot calculate out at this moment, but I think if any of the Commissioners take the trouble of walking over the deer forest they will find a great part of it is nothing but stones where nothing could exist. When an experienced and practical farmer will only pay £500 for the farm of Tarbert, size 24,000 acres—very superior ground to what is let as a deer forest, is it at all likely crofters would or could pay £1348 for 27,000 acres, of which a large portion is 1500 feet above sea-level? All these acres would be useless and valueless to crofters and would fetch nothing.

34,571–72. Quite so, if they were selected and taken out from the rest; but that has never been done in any rational distribution of the land?—Still I think the rates must necessarily be much heavier if that land is put under crofters.

34,573. That is a point that has been frequently brought before us, and the same statement has been made over and over again: but I think a little reflection will show that the crofters, wherever they are, pay higher per acre, or at least as high, as any large occupier whatever, and that rates would follow distribution of

Jura.

Miss Isabella H. Campbell.

land, so that if the occupancy simply was changed nothing would be lost?—The land held by the crofters is very superior to what is let as a deer forest in this island, and I don't think you will get crofters that will pay rates on £1348 as the forest does.

34,574. Simply because they have not got the land?—No, but even if they had the land. My uncle having had stock on the land, we know that it will not maintain much stock. He could not keep his cattle there except in summer, and we were obliged to part with our own cattle because the expense of providing wintering far exceeded the price we got for them. A large portion of the stock referred to by the Rev. Mr Maccallum as leaving the island were the laird's own cattle. My grandfather and great-grandfather had enormous folds that were on the low ground and in different places, but which we cannot now keep on.

34,575–76. That is a point that requires some explanation. What is the difference between now and then when they could keep and export a large number of cattle? Have you any idea why it should not be so now?—The prices are so much lower.

34,577. But that would not affect the *maintenance* of the cattle?—Yes, because you have to spend much more in providing the wintering for them. Labour costs double what it used to be here.

34,578. But that is a question of value, not a question of being able to maintain the stock?—Well, another point I can tell you is that the ground has deteriorated. We have had three competent men to come and examine our own farms, and they all said that the ground now was not in a fit state to maintain the amount of stock that it had.

34,579. To what cause did they attribute that?—The climate.

34,580–81. The climate has changed?—I think the climate has got worse. Look at our heavy rainfall and the wet weather we have.

34,582. Unfortunately that is prevalent all over?—I suppose it is prevalent all over Scotland.

34,583. There was a sum of £1100 mentioned as having been expended upon reclamation?—Yes, you will see that field on your way back to-day.

34,584. I could perfectly well believe that that is a sum which would never return a profitable interest upon a park or a field unless it were very large and very fruitful. But did the proprietor expend any money in reclaiming the land in occupation of the crofters for which there is rent paid?—Yes, the proprietor reclaimed Ardmenish where there are crofters now.

34,585. But not the places at Keils and Knockrome?—No, that was never in the laird's hands, but the laird paid for the draining of the whole of Keils and Knockrome.

34,586–87. Does that not point to the fact that crofters are very profitable occupants of land, when land upon which the proprietor spent £1100 pays him no return, and land upon which he spent nothing gives him a rent of £12, as we heard to-day? Putting it very generally,—I don't wish to press it very much,—but is not that a point that must be kept in view?—But I consider that a great portion of what they pay the rent for at Keils is not arable land cultivated; it is what they graze their sheep and cattle on, and nothing was done to that.

34,588. But that would be a high rent to pay per acre for grazing. There was also a statement made to the effect that the crofters' cattle fetched a lower price than other cattle?—Sheep: I did not say cattle.

34,589. I beg your pardon,—sheep?—It may go for both sheep and cattle, perhaps.

34,590. It is quite possible; unfortunately, it agrees with our experience that cattle and sheep are in a great many places inferior. But did you never think that that was owing to the want of facilities they have owing to the narrowness of their bounds?—No, I think it is very often that they have not good enough blood. My father and uncle always tried, if possible, to help the crofters in the way of giving them fresh blood from their good stock, at moderate prices, to improve their stock.

34,591–92. But would it not, in your opinion, be a pretty good thing to put them in a position to help themselves, if they are intelligent people as we have seen to-day?—We are anxious to do so; whenever there is a vacant croft we would like to give it to them.

Jura.

Miss Isabella H. Campbell.

34,593. I think we have not heard a statement of the comparative acreages of the farms on this estate, such as we have received on most others?—Without having somebody to come and measure them off we could not give that: but if any of the Commissioners are able to do so from the Ordnance Survey Map, we have a large one. I very much regret that my father was unable to be present to-day, and my brother also could not attend.

34,594. If I may be allowed to say so, I do not think their interests have suffered in any way by their absence; but if you would be kind enough to allow our surveyor to have facilities for seeing the boundaries of the farms?—Certainly; the whole of our farms are on the way to the ferry.

34,595. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—The money that is spent in the island now is, of course, brought from outside; there is very little wealth produced in the island itself?—Do you mean that the crofters can make very little wages?

34,596–97. I mean that by the use to which the land is presently put, there is very little produced in the island?—Very little.

34,598. It is a waste now?—I don't quite understand: it is much more remunerative.

34,599. Ah, but that is money *spent* in it, not money *produced* by it. People come here to spend money, but the island itself is worthless as a wealth-producing subject?—I don't see what you are going to produce out of the island.

34,600. But did you not say that enormous herds of cattle were at one time maintained on the island?—When I say enormous herds, I mean that the laird had a herd of 200 to 300 head.

34,601. And these were noted herds?—It was a well known herd; it was considered to be one of the finest Highland herds in Scotland. My father parted with that herd very reluctantly.

34,602. That was a valuable produce that the island gave?—Yes, but at such a heavy loss that we could not keep it.

34,603. But still the island did maintain these enormous herds?—The herd was maintained at such a loss that we could not continue to do it.

34,604. But was feeding stuff taken from elsewhere to keep up these cattle?—Yes, we had to import feeding stuff to a great extent; and now even with sheep stock we have to do the same.

34,605. Yes, now, because it is laid waste; but when the herd was formed, was there much wintering bought?—In the olden days when the ground was better the feeding had not to be imported; but latterly owing to deterioration of the ground or other causes it went back, and feeding stuffs had to be imported. And another thing is that, from whatever cause, the animals reared were no longer so strong, and they required more housing and altogether more attention than they received in olden times.

34,606–07. You stated that a good deal of capital would now be required for setting up small farms?—Well, I think there must be a certain amount of capital to build a house and fence the land and do all that sort of thing.

34,608. But these crofters have a good deal of stock already?—They have all stock.

34,609. And if they got larger holdings the stock would soon increase to a sufficient amount?—Exactly; we are willing to give them that. We have shown our willingness by offering a very much larger croft at Ardmenish as also Dubh-Chreag for grazing their sheep stock.

34,610. So that the difficulty might be got over in that way?—A great many of them are already in arrears, and I don't know how they are to get money to set up in larger holdings.

34,611–12. But still they happen to have stock?—They have the stock on their present holdings.

34,613. Then as to the statement that it would not do to cut off all the green spots and leave the rest for the forest, of course, you are aware that no such proposal was ever made by any person?—Well, you have gone over all the green spots here that are suitable for cultivation.

34,614. But was it not the intention of those who were speaking of that, that there should be grazing ground along with it? Did they not want the pasture as well as the green spots?—They could not cut sufficient provender to maintain the cattle out of the small patches.

34,615–16. But you see enormous herds were maintained before; and besides that, would they not have sheep which would not require to be hand fed?—The laird had his own sheep in the forest.

34,617. And is not that rather the process that has been going on already, confining them to a few green spots, and taking the pasture from them?—I don't think they can complain of that in Jura.

34,618. There has been a statement made to us to-day that they were deprived of their pasture?—You will see for yourselves whether they were deprived of it.

34,619. And you yourself object to them being confined to narrow bounds?—I don't think the crofters in Jura are confined to narrow bounds, and I think, as I have said, that where they pastured out they pastured simply as a privilege on the ground where the laird had his own stock; as Neil Clark himself told you he gathered the laird's sheep off that ground.

34,620–21. Of course, we know this, that cattle were allowed to cross boundaries; there were not fences, and they have stated that although these boundaries were set out and declared still they were not rigidly kept; the laird's cattle wandered upon their ground, they don't deny that?—Yes, but we do not admit that they had these boundaries; we say their stock just grazed on the laird's ground where he had his own stock.

34,622. You say it was yours, and they say it was theirs?—They say it was theirs.

34,623–24. But still the stock of both were there, and they are not there now; they have been confined now to a small spot, which was not the old condition of affairs?—Yes, but there are very few now in comparison with what there used to be in the island; and that was not through any fault of ours, but owing to the failure of the kelp industry.

34,625. I think you said the proprietor made a large profit out of the kelp?—It yielded from £1500 to £2000 a year.

34,626. Was that a profit off the people's work?—The people worked at wages to him. He paid them wages for making the kelp.

34,627–28. I was rather astonished at hearing that the proprietor got out of the labour of these people £2000 a year?—It was not out of their labour but out of the kelp.

34,629. Did not he make that profit out of it? What did he contribute to it?—He paid them wages the same as anybody else pays a servant wages.

34,630. He made that as profit out of the labour of the people?—It was just like any other industry; it is just as if you had a coal-pit and paid wages to the miners for working it

34,631–32. It was not a patriarchal system; it was just a commercial transaction?—Yes, it was simply a commercial transaction, the same as if there had been a coal-pit and wages were paid to the miners, and the people of Jura would be very thankful if the laird would employ them again in the same manner. The people emigrated of their own free will, because they found they could not live here.

34,633. I think you also stated that they all wanted separate crofts?—I did not say they wanted them. I said they preferred them.

34,634–35. I did not see any indication of that to-day: I think they have a common pasture as it is?—They have, but I go a good deal among the people, and I hear them say they would like to get a separate croft for themselves, I think if you ask them they would say the same thing,—that they prefer it. Jura. Miss Isabella H. Campbell.

[Adjourned.]

THIRTY-SEVENTH SITTING.

BRIDGEND, ISLAY, April 9, 1894. Bridgend, Islay.

Present:—

Angus Sutherland, Esq., M.P. (acting as *Chairman*).
James Noel Muller Forsyth, Esq.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary*.

John A. Nicholls, mines manager, Robolls (47)—*examined*. John A. Nicholls.

34,636–37. *Mr Sutherland.*—You are described here as a mines manager, is that correct?—Yes.

34,638. You are kind enough to offer to give us information regarding our inquiry. Have you a written statement?—No, I have not a written statement. I have resided on the island of Islay for the past eighteen years. During that time, I have, of course, been situated right in the midst of the agricultural districts in connection with our works, and my experience has been that during that period farming carried on under the present system of large sheep farms has proved rather disastrous than otherwise to the interests of the island as well as perhaps to the interest of the community at large. I may state that the gentleman who owned the farms on which our works are situated (the combined farms of Finlaggan and Robolls), stated to me that after fifteen years farming upon the large sheep farm principle he had not made "a brown penny." These were his own words on the occasion of his sale when he sold out at Finlaggan. At that particular time there were some cottars living in close proximity to our works; these, I think, applied to the present factor, Mr Ballingal, and obtained a park about 13 acres in extent. At the time they got this park it was overgrown with rushes, heather, and rough grass, with a good deal of lime rock jutting out here and there. These men at that time were kindly granted the park, and by their industry and cultivation of the land they have made a splendid park of it. Another portion of this little farm, about six acres in extent, was given over to another small crofter, who is to-day charged an enormous rent for it,—£12 for the six acres and the house. The house is no doubt rather a good one,—too good for the small patch of land; hence that man is claiming or asking to get if possible a little more land added to what he has already. He is, in my opinion, quite capable of paying rent if he got the land, and it would be difficult to find a more industrious man: in fact, he is quite a model crofter. He works his land admirably, and I, for my part, should like to see that encouraged. Then again in travelling over the island otherwise, I look around me and see the ruins and the great havoc that have been made by evictions in the past (I am not prepared to say whether justifiable or otherwise), and I see the amount of arable land now under large sheep farms, and so many people in our midst hungering and thirsting as it were for the land that they to-day are not in possession of, but which their forefathers held, and held advantageously and beneficially for themselves and their country. These men reared up big families and sent them out into the

Bridgend Islay.

John A. Nicholls.

world, and to-day they fill all sorts of professions and occupations, noble and hardy and strong men. I should really like very much to see these farms broken up once more and placed in the hands of the people, who would utilise the land and obtain from it a much larger product than it yields to-day. To-day our importation is very great, consequently impoverishing our island. We have to pay for importing feeding stuff when we should really be drawing money for exports from such a beautiful and lovely island as Islay. I am fully persuaded that if the land was once more handed back to the people it would benefit the community at large, and I am convinced that the only royal route to agricultural prosperity is the breaking up of the land. Only a few sheep are at present exported, and we are importing a great quantity of things for the sustenance of the people. In the year 1820, if I am rightly informed, this island maintained no less than about 17,500 people. The island has not diminished in size; the land probably has degenerated under the sheep farming system, and I believe it now supports only 8500 or so. I was told by one of the leading sheep farmers in the island not very long since that one acre of land newly laid out under grass was capable of feeding and sending off better sheep and cattle than three acres of land that had lain out for a number of years. If this information is correct (and I have no reason to doubt it, seeing I got it from one of the leading authorities), the land deteriorates after lying out of cultivation for fifteen or twenty years, and the stock falls off considerably in number, to the extent I am told of no less than three-tenths. Then again the weight of the stock has to be considered as well as the amount, and I understand that in place of 65 lbs. (the weight of the sheep formerly produced and sent to market from new land), 40 or 45 lbs. is now the extreme weight of the sheep, after fifteen or twenty years. If stock degenerates in such a manner, and land also, under the big farm system, I am fully persuaded that it is high time another system or plan should be adopted, in the way of giving it to the farmers who would once more cultivate it and raise large crops out of it.

34,639. You have given us a very interesting statement, and upon the whole, I think, you have limited yourself strictly to the points under our consideration. I would like to ask you one or two questions relative to your statements. You intimated that in one case within your own knowledge land was given to a person who had previously had some?—Yes.

34,640. I suppose I need hardly ask you the question whether, in your opinion, that man was benefited very considerably by getting that land?—Very considerably, and he would derive still greater benefit had he more land granted him.

34,641. What was the state of the land when he got it?—It certainly had been under crop previously, and owing to mismanagement (I daresay I may use the word honestly) the croft did not perhaps yield such returns as it does to the present tenant. He has dug out the large pieces of rock, and greatly improved the land in many respects. Nevertheless there are some parts of these six acres I referred to still uncultivated, because they are not capable of being cultivated; a plough cannot pass through the land. All that could possibly be brought under cultivation he has ploughed.

34,642. Immediately before he got possession of it, was it being cultivated?—Partly, but not to the same extent as it is now. He has brought in new land.

34,643. Do you know any holding that has been given to any small holder, which had lain waste some time before?—I don't know of any at the present moment except the croft that I spoke about as given to the eight families.

34,644. You spoke of the rent that was paid by another small holder, is that the same case?—No.

34,645. I think you said it was upwards of £1 an acre?—It was £2 an acre, not taking the house into consideration.

34,646. What did you say was the extent of the holding?—About six acres.

34,647. In your opinion, is there in the neighbourhood of your locality plenty land of that description?—Decidedly; very large tracts of land.

Bridgend, Islay.

John A. Nicholls.

34,648. And is there a general desire, within your knowledge, among the people to get possession of such land?—There is a very strong desire.

34,649. Have you anything to say on the point of having the desire for land on the one hand, and the land on the other, why they have never been allowed to come in contact, the land and the people?—I have not, further than that the landlord does not seem to encourage the small holder, for he charges twice and sometimes three times the rent he charges the large farmer for the land, and again, he almost always refuses to renew the expiring lease of the small farmer, preferring to add the land to the next large farm; so the small holder has either to become his neighbour's servant or leave the country. Thus the landlord is to blame for the present state of affairs.

34,650. What are the difficulties do you think in the way?—I can hardly say; probably the factor may be able to give some explanation as to that by-and-bye. Whether the people have applied for the land or not I cannot say, but one thing I know, that a large number of people applied through the County Council, and I was informed that previously there had been an application direct to the estate, made if not through Mr Ballingal, to some higher official, who recommended that they should go through the channel of the County Council.

34,651. I think you stated that, in your opinion, the island of Islay ought to be an exporting island?—I think it should be a self-supporting island if not an exporting island.

34,652. Does it export anything?—A little in the way of sheep and cattle. I think it has no other exportations, but it has large importations of all kinds.

34,653. Have you seen the agricultural statistics that have been collected of land under cultivation in this country, may I ask?—I have not, in respect to the island of Islay.

34,654. Is there less or more land under cultivation in Islay now than there was fifty or sixty years ago, do you think?—Far less under cultivation now.

34,655. Have you any idea of the proportion?—I have not.

34,656. Judging from the indications you see on the face of the country?—That is the only thing I can judge from. Plough furrows are to be seen all over, showing that at one time the land was under cultivation.

34,657. Have you formed any estimate of the proportion that is waste now which was at one time cultivated?—In the Kilmeny district I would say there are hundreds of acres, perhaps thousands.

34,658. In that one locality?—In the district between Bridgend and Bun-na-h-abhuinn.

34,659. You spoke of the population having decreased from 17,500 to about 8500?—Yes, the decrease was about nine thousand.

34,660. Are you aware that that is looked upon in some quarters as a sign of prosperity?—I would not say it is a sign of prosperity, the depopulation of the island. It naturally tends to drift the people into other places and to open up foreign competition.

34,661. Has it that effect, do you think?—It has, in my humble opinion. I think that is where the great disaster comes in to-day; the foreign competition we have to contend with is almost destructive to our prosperity.

34,662. I think then I may take it generally from the whole gist of your evidence that you believe there is the desire for land on the part of the people, and that there is the land there to give them?—The land is here for the people and the people for the land, provided some scheme was adopted to compel landlords, if not otherwise willing, to grant it.

34,663. And that you know of a concrete example which you have given us where it has been followed by good results?—Yes.

34,664. Now may I ask you to indicate more exactly, so that we may go and see them for ourselves, the particular spots upon which you think this land can be

occupied?—I would say there are large tracts of land, over a portion of which I purposed accompanying your honourable Commission, but owing to a misunderstanding as to the meeting place we missed each other. I think you have now gone over that district, but there are several tracts that are now going to waste over at Ardnahoe and away to Bunnahabhain. That land is to-day covered with heather, and there is a very strong desire among some of the people to be settled there as a crofter township in order to reclaim the land.

34,665. *Mr Forsyth.*—Supposing a good deal of this land were successfully cultivated in the future by small holders, do you think the exports from the island would be largely increased?—I think they would, or the imports would be lessened a great deal at all events.

34,666. I am coming to that; but take the exports first. You think a great deal more stock could be turned out of the island?—I think there might be.

34,667. Do you know what is turned off now?—I am not in a position to say how much there is turned off now. I am only basing my calculations on the ground that is lying waste to-day, and the way in which I see it uncultivated.

34,668. Then your opinion generally is that the exports of stock would be largely increased?—I think so.

34,669. Then as to the imports, you understand, do you not, that the imports are very largely articles which are now considered as necessary (and very properly so) in the way of food and such like, which in the old days were more or less regarded as luxuries and which were not imported: that is the case, is it not?—Yes; but large quantities of what might be grown here in our own island are to-day imported.

34,670. To what articles do you refer?—To such as oats and feeding stuff generally; also butter, oatmeal and condensed milk.

34,671. Do you think then that the imports of oatmeal might cease?—I think it should, and I think we should be in a position to export.

34,672. To export oatmeal in addition?—Yes.

34,673. But you would have an increased import of such articles as groceries, tea, &c., would you not, with a larger population?—As the population would increase probably there may be a little of that, but I hold that the increased exports would at least balance the imports.

34,674. Do you think you could get your exports and imports to balance?—I think the exports would be more than equivalent to the imports.

34,675. Keeping in mind that the imports would be enormously increased in the case of groceries and such commodities?—Certainly, I am taking that into consideration.

34,676. Then you think the exports of stock would be so much increased as to balance all the increased imports?—I think it would be more than equivalent in that respect.

34,677. You are aware, of course, that a good part of the imports would consist of feeding stuff, manure, and such like, which are used to increase the export in the way of stock, &c.?—Yes, I am aware of that.

34,678. So that you could hardly take your accounts strictly upon that?—Not strictly upon that point, but I maintain that if the land were properly cultivated, a sufficient or almost sufficient quantity of feeding stuffs could be raised on the island, and so minimise the import, and also by the increased stock of cattle for export a much larger amount of manure could be made at home to keep up the land, and so the need of artificial manure would be lessened greatly, if not superseded, and likewise the import of it.

34,679. *Mr Maccallum.*—You say that some cottars got 13 acres of land. How many cottars got these acres between them?—I believe the number is six, but there are some present who are able to say more definitely.

34,680. Are their houses on that land?—The houses are in close proximity to the park, but not directly on it.

34,681. Are these people among those who wish to get more land?—These people are among the parties who have made a demand for more land.

34,682. They do not consider that they have enough?—They do not. They have all that they asked for at the time; the factor kindly granted them all they asked for, but they desire more.

34,683. Do you know how much they pay for these 13 acres?—I am not in a position to say, but you will be able to get that information from some of the delegates present.

34,684. What stock do they keep?—Little or none. They have not any hill pasture, which it is very desirable they should have, in order, I suppose, to make dung to keep up the strength of the land. I don't think it is beneficial to the land to put so much artificial manure into it. One or two of them have a cow, I think, but others have none, as they have no place to keep one, and it is not a very easy matter to get grazing. It is both difficult and expensive to get grazing outside.

34,685. What is the occupation of these crofters?—They are generally labourers, I think; they work anywhere they can get work to do.

34,686. And you think there is a demand for land in this parish which has not been met by the proprietors?—There certainly is, and ample land for the people, but their cry has as yet been unheeded.

34,687. When did this desire show itself? Was it brought prominently under your notice at the time of your candidature for the County Council?—It was brought under my notice about that time, and also prior to that; and since that time the desire has been increasing.

34,688. It showed itself, did it, after they became acquainted with the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts?—Yes, it came more particularly to the front at that time. But there was a strong desire among some prior to that.

34,689. They thought these Acts gave them an opportunity to get land?—Yes.

34,690. And do you think that it was perhaps the most important question at the County Council election time?—Oh, I think so. About my return, do you mean?

34,691. Yes, in determining the votes at the election?—I don't know that it had so much to do with that.

34,692. But they looked to the County Council, did not they, to afford them opportunities of getting upon the land through the carrying out of these Acts?—They did, and I certainly believe that some may have supported me strongly on that point.

34,693. Was there any action taken by your District Committee here with regard to that?—Yes, there were petitions got up and presented and passed by these committees here, that we were of opinion that there was a sufficient demand in this district to put the Acts into force. They were passed by the District Committee here.

34,694. Unanimously?—Unanimously.

34,695. How many applications for land were sent in from your district to the County Council?—I think there would be about eighty.

34,696. From this parish itself?—From this parish. I quote from memory, and the figure may not be exact, but a great number appeared in the list brought before the County Council.

34,697. What action did the County Council take in the matter?—On receipt of these applications the County Council appointed a special day for discussing the question as to the advisability of putting these Acts into force: and, I believe, they were rather strongly of opinion that the Acts being so complicated, the expense would be so great, that it would cause a very heavy rate, and the people might not be able to pay their rents and live honestly upon the farms.

34,698. The County Council communicated, did they not, with each of these individuals, sending them a circular asking them to state the quantity of land they wanted, where it was situated, and the price or rent which they were prepared to pay for it?—Yes, that is the case.

34,699. And did the applicants answer these questions accurately and specifically?—I consider they did.

Bridgend, Islay.

John A. Nicholls.

I was more than surprised to see them so accurately and specifically answered.

34,700. When the matter then came under the consideration of the County Council, did they resolve to inquire further into the matter, or did they send these replies they had got to the several landlords in the county?—The replies, I think, were not sent to the different landlords in the county so far as my knowledge goes. I don't know that replies to the people were sent either.

34,701. Is it not the case that the County Council rejected the report of the committee?—Yes; at the final stage.

34,702. Was it not part of that report that these replies should be sent to the different landlords?—It was.

34,703. And after communicating with these applicants, asking what they wanted, did they send any reply to them?—No, I don't think there was any reply at all given to them.

34,704. And is it the case that the County Council have absolutely refused to carry out these Acts?—They decidedly did, by a majority, 17 landlords and factors voting against the proposal.

34,705. On what ground, to state it shortly?—I think the great obstacle was the rating interest, or something of that kind.

34,706. The expense?—Yes, the expense that would be incurred in putting the Acts into force, and the rates that would have to be levied.

34,707. What expense did the committee recommend in order to set the Acts in operation?—The committee recommended that a delegate or an expert should be appointed to go through the country, and communicate with the different parties, and report accordingly, which was objected to by the landlord.

34,708. At what expense was it proposed to do that?—I forget the exact sum, £100 or so.

34,709. Suppose it was £100, would that not be an infinitesimal increase upon the rating of Argyllshire?—It would not be very much.

34,710. It would be quite imperceptible?—Yes, it would not have been felt. A penny of rate brings in £1600 or £1700, so that £100 would not perhaps cost the fourth part of a farthing on the whole county of Argyllshire.

34,711. In your opinion, do proprietors generally show any desire to meet the demand there exists for small holdings?—I have not seen it: I think if they had such a desire, they would come to the front and offer their services to meet that demand, without putting the country to such an enormous trouble and expense as it will be put to by enforcing the Acts. If the proprietors were as willing to give as the people are to take, I think all these things might be abandoned.

34,712. Is there a large number of proprietors in the County Council of Argyllshire?—Yes, there is a very large percentage.

34,713. Did any of them vote for putting these Acts into operation?—Not to my knowledge; all voted against it.

34,714. In your opinion, would the proprietors' rents be reduced if the uncultivated land in their possession were divided into small holdings?—In my opinion the rental would be greatly augmented: because if you take the large farms to-day and compare their rent with that of the small farms, you will find, I think, that the small farmer pays in some cases four or five times the amount per acre that the large farmers are paying. It is my opinion that the proprietor would have his rents increased by cutting up the land.

34,715. Do proprietors show by their actions that it is their desire to have as few tenants as possible on their land?—That seems to me to be the case, because when the small leases have expired, the lessee has been told to move on to make room for the larger farmer.

34,716. That has been the policy of the proprietor?—That has been the policy of the proprietor in the island of Islay, and still is; for example, Storakaig has been joined to Knocklearach, Robolls to Keppols and Tirvagain to Kilmeny.

34,717. Is it a common thing to see it stated in advertisements for the sale of estates that there are few crofters or no crofters on them, as the case may be?—It is quite a common thing: you can scarcely look into a paper without seeing such an advertisement, "without cottars" or "without crofters," as if they were a great pest.

34,718. Have you noticed any such advertisement recently?—It is continually happening: I scarcely take up a paper but I see an advertisement of that description.

34,719. Can you specify any?—I see it continually in the *Oban Times* and in the *Mail* and *Herald* and different other papers that I read from time to time.

34,720. But can you not specify any particular case?—No, I cannot particularise anything of the kind; I now recollect, however, Dunlossit Estate, Islay.

34,721. That clause is put in advertisements as an inducement for buying these estates?—Yes, I think that must be so, for it is put very prominently in advertisements, and that is the conclusion I have arrived at.

34,722. Does that suggest to your mind that the proprietors are desirous generally of turning their lands into sporting grounds?—It certainly does.

34,723. That is the reason why that statement is made?—Yes.

34,724. Still you think that some of the estates, regarding which that statement is made, are fit for cultivation and habitation by the people?—Yes, none better in Argyllshire.

34,725. Have there been any extensive reclamations of land in this parish recently?—Not to my knowledge: some has been reclaimed on certain farms, but very little.

34,726. Is there much land that could be improved by drainage?—Large tracts of land. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Do you mean for pastoral purposes?—Yes.]

34,727. And also for cultivation?—Yes, it applies to both, I suppose.

34,728. Speaking of the island generally, are you aware of reclamations having been made since you came to reside in it?—Very very little, if any, so far as I remember.

34,729. When landlords set about reclaiming land, what is the first thing they do?—The first thing they should do is to start and fence it and drain it, and so on.

34,730. But what do they do with the people that are on it?—The first thing they do is to clear off the people.

34,731. They first of all reclaim it from the people, don't they?—Yes.

34,732. And then improve it?—Yes.

34,733. Do you think that is the cheapest way of improving the land?—No, I don't think so; I think that the people would improve it very much cheaper themselves if they got the chance.

34,734. You think that tenants can improve land very much cheaper than the proprietors?—Yes.

34,735. Then you think the first step in reclaiming the land should be to settle the people on it on favourable terms?—I think so, with a fair rental and fixed tenure.

34,736. And in stating it as your opinion that the exports from the island would be increased, that greatly depends upon what happened in the past?—Yes.

34,737. There were exports in the past, even when there was a population much larger than at present?—Yes.

34,738. Then it was put to you that when the population would be increased and settled on the land, the importation of groceries, tea, &c. would be increased?—Yes

34,739. Do you think that that necessarily follows?—It does not necessarily follow, because the people were better and stronger when they used to live on the products of the island.

34,740. Why do they take tea just now so much as they do?—I suppose because they have not so much homegrown stuff to consume as they formerly had.

34,741. Because they have not so much milk?—

They have not so much milk, or meal, or potatoes. It is a very difficult job for a cottar to get ground.

34,742. Do you think working people take tea from choice or from necessity?—That is rather a critical question; it may be in some cases from choice, and in others from necessity.

34,743. What is your own opinion about it: is not milk a much better article of diet than tea?—Yes, I would say the less tea one uses the better; if milk can be got, tea should be abandoned to a very great extent.

34,744. And the physical condition of the people has deteriorated on account of the great consumption of tea?—Very much indeed. As to the question of potatoes, I may perhaps mention that sometimes a man is obliged to drive his manure no less than three or four miles, which swallows up the whole benefit to be derived from planting a few potatoes, the cost is so high. Then again in bringing in the crop, there is cartage, which swallows up the profit; whereas, if he had a little ground near his door he certainly could derive great benefit from his potatoes.

34,745. And you think there is so much land round about that it would be perfectly easy to meet all the demand there is for the land?—I think there is enough to meet it over and over again.

34,746. And that the people are quite qualified to work the land to advantage?—I believe they are, and to pay for it if they got it.

34,747. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated that, in your opinion, the small farmers were paying more per acre than the large farmers?—Yes, I think that is the case to-day.

34,748. You have no doubt whatever about it?—I have no doubt whatever that that is the case.

34,749. The instance you gave showed a rental of nearly £2 an acre?—Yes.

34,750. Do you know any large farmer who is paying anything like that?—Oh, no. On the other hand, I know large farmers whose rent averages about 1s. 6d. to 2s. per acre. Of course, that is taking the good and the bad land together. But some of the land in this little croft when let at £2 an acre is not very good land.

34,751. But in any re-distribution of the land, you would not anticipate that the rents would be forced up to that standard?—Decidedly, that is too high: it is an exaggerated rent, in my opinion.

34,752. Then is it your opinion that means ought to be taken to prevent anything of that sort in any re-distribution of the land?—I think so. I think a fair rent should be fixed by an independent court.

34,753. Independent of parties?—Entirely independent of parties.

34,754. Now, in answer to a question put by Mr Maccallum, you pointed out the policy of consolidation of small holdings into large holdings that undoubtedly has gone on,—I presume it cannot be denied that it has gone on?—No, it cannot.

34,755. Are you of opinion that it is still going on?—Not so much as formerly. I don't see where they can make very much more havoc to-day, so much having been done in the past in that direction.

34,756. And, in your opinion, does the failure of the large farming system contribute in any degree to that state of matters?—Yes, the large farming system certainly has failed to prove conducive to the interest of the country.

34,757. Yes, but do you think it has failed to be conducive to the interests of the proprietor of the land as well?—Well, that is a matter for his own determination. I am rather of opinion that it has, for if land degenerates, it at the same time deteriorates in letting value.

34,758. Have you heard the large farmers are getting enormous abatements of rents?—Yes, I have heard that.

34,759. Have you the slightest reason to suppose that that is not a true statement?—Not the slightest.

34,760. And do you hear of the small holders getting reductions to that extent?—No, I have not heard anything of the kind. Take my own case. I hold a small park opposite my house, and when the estate was giving a ten per cent. reduction I asked for it but it was refused.

34,761. Supposing that to be the general case all over, do you think it is not a reason why the consolidation of small holdings into large ones should cease, in the interest of the proprietors themselves?—Yes, I hold that it would be for their own interest.

34,762. That amounts, in your opinion, then to this, that economically the large holdings have been a failure?—Yes; most decidedly.

34,763. And you are also of opinion that from the wider aspect of the good of the country generally they have failed?—Yes.

34,764. You were asked questions as to the importation of certain necessities of life. You do not positively look upon the increase of such imports as an injury to Islay?—Not as an injury altogether.

34,765. Looking at it from the country's point of view, do you think it would be a loss to the country that the people of Islay should import some of the necessaries or even of the luxuries of life?—It would not be a loss to the country; but I think the less we can import the better for ourselves or for the island at large, because we could then keep the money in our own midst, and become richer in consequence.

34,766. But you would not look upon the increase of such imports as a positive evil?—Certainly not: it would be good to the country.

34,767. Are you not rather of opinion that if the population were increased at the same time, it would be a good thing both for the country and for the people of Islay?—Oh, it would be a good thing both for the country and for the people of Islay.

34,768. You are no doubt aware that the complaint with regard to our foreign trade is that the foreign market has to a large extent ceased to exist?—Yes.

34,769. Would it not, in your opinion, be a good thing that there should be a market got at home for the manufactures of the country?—Yes, if we could get it, and I believe the greater cultivation of the Highlands would be one channel.

34,770. And you are of opinion that the policy of settling the people upon the land would tend to create a market at home?—I think it should, to a great extent.

34,771. You are aware of what has actually happened in the case of America and in other new countries: they take their manufactured goods from our country until they have settled in their own country and manufactured for themselves?—Yes.

34,772. And are you not of opinion that the same good result might follow from this country?—Yes, it might.

34,773. Am I right in supposing that you stated that there were families in Islay who used tea because they could not get milk?—I think I am quite justified in saying so. I have been told again and again by a number of families, that they were obliged to use tea because milk was not to be got. Even this last winter I have again and again observed in visiting a number of houses that the people were drinking their tea without milk: they could not get enough of that luxury to put into their tea.

34,774. Are you aware that all over the Highlands of Scotland, and indeed all over Scotland generally, Islay was famous as being a cow country?—Yes.

34,775. And do you state to me that there are families in Islay that cannot get milk for their own use?—There are families in Islay who could not get milk during last winter to put into their tea.

34,776. Has it come within your knowledge in any way that milk in the form of condensed milk or other preparations is imported into Islay?—Yes, very largely.

34,777. Have you seen it?—Yes, I have seen it, and I have seen the people using it in different places in Islay, and I maintain that that is not a state of things that ought to exist.

34,778. *Mr Ballingal, factor for Mr Morrison of Islay.*—You made some strong remarks about a certain croft rented at £12. May I ask whether you are aware that the proprietor was offered a rent of £20 for it?—

Bridgend, Islay.

John A. Nicholls.

No, not till now; but the reason is that the land is in the hands of so few, and there is such a demand that they almost seem willing to give anything; I maintain that if the land were broken up and made into small farms, the people would not make such outrageously large offers for land which they know perfectly well could never pay them at the figure.

34,779. There is an old saying that the value of a thing is just the price you can get for it. Have you any experience whatever of the reclamation of land or the expense of it, seeing that you talked of Ardnahoe and Bunnahabhain as being good arable land and well worth reclaiming?—In reply to that question I may say that practical men made an offer to the County Council to reclaim that land and to give 2s. per acre for it after a certain period of years. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Both to reclaim it and to pay a rent of 2s. an acre first?—Yes, and I think some even went so high as 3s. 6d. But Mr Ballingal's question was, have you any knowledge by experience or otherwise of the reclamation of land?—I have not; I have outside, but not direct knowledge.]

34,780. You mentioned that the proprietors had carried out a system of consolidation by knocking a good many small holdings lately into one large one. I would ask you to name an instance of such having happened, say within the last ten or twenty years?—Not within the last few years.

34,781. Do you know of any such thing having been done at all?—Not lately: but I may say there is one just now; I refer to the case of Tirvagain and Kilmeny: I believe these two farms are now going into the hands of one man.

34,782. Do you know of any instance where a consolidation of holdings has taken place within the last twenty years, or since you came to the island?—I have not been here twenty years: eighteen years is the extent of the time I have lived on the island.

34,783. And have you known a case during that period?—No, further than the prospective one I now refer to—Tirvagain and Kilmeny. Robolls and Keppols, two large farms, have been joined.

34,784. You also mentioned that you have heard of people being removed. Have any been removed for the purpose of knocking small farms into big ones during your residence in Islay?—Not to my knowledge. I think it had previously been carried on to the utmost possible extent.

34,785. So the system has ceased so far as Islay is concerned?—When you cannot go further the process stops itself.

34,786. In reference to the question of exports and imports, have you got any statistics to show that the exports fifty years ago were larger than they are now?—I have none, but I should judge so from the population then and now and from what the old people have told me.

34,787. Can you tell me whether you, having land in your own possession, go as far, I think, as Eskinish to have potatoes planted?—I have not land of an arable nature, and so I am forced to go there.

34,788. *Mr Maccallum.*—Mr Ballingal has brought out the fact that there was an offer of £20 for the croft you spoke of, is that so?—Yes, Alexander Maclellan's.

34,789. A croft of six acres?—Yes.

34,790. I think that is a very important fact indeed. Does it not show that there is great competition for small holdings?—Certainly it does.

34,791. A great hunger for small holdings?—Yes.

34,792. A man would not offer that unless he thought there were many others who would be competing with him?—He certainly would not.

34,793. Does it not also prove very clearly that if small holdings were formed out of land presently uncultivated they would be readily taken up?—Yes.

34,794. You stated that during the eighteen years you have been on the island the policy of consolidation has not been carried out?—No, because they had previously carried it out to its utmost limit.

34,795. But is it the case that these large farmers are leaving out of cultivation the land in their possession?—That is so.

34,796. Was it the case when you came to Islay that the lands were cultivated to a much greater extent than they are to-day?—Yes; and I may say moreover that there have been farms added to Knocklearach on the estate of Mr Finlay, Airidh-Ghuairidh and Storakaig for sheep shearing.

Bridgend, Islay.

John A. Nicholls.

34,797. Was Knocklearach a large farm before these additions were made to it?—It was a large farm, covering a space on which twenty-four families formerly existed, so I have been told. Other ten or eleven were on Storakaig and Airidh-Ghuairidh, making thirty-five altogether on what is now occupied by only one man.

34,798. The remains of the houses are still to be seen?—I suppose that will be so: I have not been over them, but I was told so.

34,799. And with the exception of the one croft you have mentioned and the few acres that were given to these cottars, have you known any breaking up of a large farm into small holdings?—I have not; when Mr Greenlees' lease of Robolls and Finlaggan farm expired it was then divided into two, one part being given to a farmer who already had a farm (Mr Fletcher) and another part to Mr Alexander Weir who is now in possession of it, and is considered a large farmer.

34,800. *Mr Ballingall.*—May I ask whether you are aware that the reason why a rent of £20 was offered for the small croft alluded to was principally on account of the good house it had?—No, I am not aware of any such reason, neither was the house worth any such money. It is an old infants' school, and certainly very badly divided for occupation.

34,801. How long is it since it was built?—Many years ago. The outside appearance is the best of it.

DONALD ORR, millwright, Starchmill (67)—*examined.*

Donald Or

34,802. *Mr Sutherland.*—Where do you live?—Most of my time I live in the parish of Kilharrow [Cill-Mhaol-Rubha].

34,803. And where are you staying now?—Just about a mile or so off this, in a place called the Starch-mill.

34,804. Why is it so called?—Because there was a starch mill erected there in 1847, but when it was given up, owing to the failure of the potatoes, the houses were converted into a farm steading.

34,805. How long was the starch mill in operation?—Not more than a year, I think.

34,806. It was built you say in 1847, and the potato disease occurred about that time?—Just the very same year.

34,807. Have you any land?—Not just now.

34,808. Are you living there in a house without land?—Not as much as a garden.

34,809. Would you like to get land?—I would.

34,810. And is there plenty land suitable within easy reach of where you are?—Plenty.

34,811. How is that land occupied at the present time?—It is occupied by sheep graziers.

34,812. As a sheep grazing farm?—Yes, many of them.

34,813. But the one you are living on, is it a sheep farm?—It is a sheep farm at present. It is divided between two farmers, and I believe one of them farms and the other does not.

34,814. What is the name of the farm?—Killinan [Cill-Fhianain].

34,815. Is it a large farm?—It is a very large farm; one of the largest farms in Islay.

34,816. Is it on the Kildalton estate?—No, it is on Mr Finlay's estate. It may go under the name of Avenvogie as Mr Ballingal says.

34,817. Are there many others in the same position as yourself on the farm, I mean people without land who have houses on that particular farm?—Yes.

34,818. How many?—A family of Maccallums, and a mason, Macculloch; and there is a smith on it, but perhaps it may be that he got a piece to himself.

34,819. Then leaving the farm you live on and going to another farm, do you know any other people in the

neighbourhood who are in a similiar position?—Many: too many of them.

34,820. Living in houses without land?—Yes.

34,821. And is there a desire on their part to get land?—There is bound to be with some of them; but some maybe are not fit for land even if they got it.

34,822. Have all these people a desire to get land?—I am bound to say they have a desire to get land.

34,823. Supposing land were to be had on reasonable conditions, would these people take a small holding?—They would.

34,824. Are the houses that you say are occupied by them several houses close to each other, or are they scattered up and down?—Scattered here and there.

34,825. And is there land at present uncultivated round about these houses?—Not on this farm. There is no land for them near their houses on the Starch-mill farm.

34,826. You would have to remove then?—Yes.

34,827. And have you any objection to doing this if you had a reasonable opportunity of getting a new holding?—I would have no objection.

34,828. Would you have any difficulty in getting a new house if you got a new holding on reasonable terms?—Certainly, I would have that, unless I fell in with a place that has a house on already, as some have.

34,829. You know some places with houses on them already?—Yes.

34,830. Are these houses occupied at present?—I believe they are.

34,831. That would be a difficulty, you know?—Some are occupied and others are not.

34,832. Do you know any that are not?—I know some that are not.

34,833. You know steadings upon farms that are not occupied?—I know a few of them.

34,834. *Mr Nicholls, mines manager, Robolls.*—How many families have been put off the Avenvogie and Killinan farms in order to make way for the large sheep farm?—I counted twenty on one farm, and I counted half a dozen in the next farm, and I could count more following down to the shore. I have the names of the twenty here.

34,835. Did you know them yourself?—Some of them are away to America, and others are dead.

34,836. Did you know them?—I knew them in my time: I knew them when they were in it.

34,837. About what year was that?—It did not take place in one year. It was after the year 1850, or perhaps before that year in some cases.

34,838. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—On what farm would you like to get a holding?—On the same farm I had before.

34,839. Which farm was that?—Part of Killinan.

34,840. Can you state specifically how many families you remember occupying Killinan?—I said twenty.

34,841. That was in your own recollection?—I recollect them well: my father was one of them, and my uncle was another.

34,842. And can you give us the names of these?—Yes, I have a list of them.

34,843. Had each of these land in his possession? Were they tenants of land?—They were tenants of the land; not sub-tenants.

34,844. With houses and lands?—Tenants to the land.

34,845. What has become of the houses that those people occupied?—They were let down. The houses were thatched houses and were just allowed to go into ruins.

34,846. Are the remains of those houses to be seen on the farm yet?—Yes, the old stone walls.

34,847. Was there much more cultivation in those days in Killinan farm than there is to-day?—Certainly, twenty times as much. There is no cultivation at all now, and there was a great deal then.

34,848. As this occurred in your own memory I would like to get the names of the former tenants?—The names were as follows:—Archibald Macdougall, John Macdougall, John Clark, Donald Macqueen, Alexander Currie, Hugh Sinclair, Archibald Macdougall, Ronald Maccuaig, James Macdermid, Ronald Macarthur, John Orr (my father), Gilbert Macinnes, Duncan Brown, John Brown, John Macinnes, Alexander Maccuaig, David Spence, Peter Spence, John Smith, Duncan Orr (my uncle).

34,849. Do you remember why these people were removed?—I think they were distressed with low markets and the failure of the potatoes, and it was not easy for them to keep going on. They never knew whenever markets would improve.

34,850. Was there any failure in the crop at that particular time?—Certainly, there was in the potato crop, as everybody knows.

34,851. Do you remember what rent they were paying in those distressed times?—Most of them were paying £18 or £19. The smallest rent among them was £2, 10s., which two of them paid, and the rest up to £19.

34,852. Did you sum up what the whole amounted to?—It would take time to do that, but I could do it.

34,853. Do you know whether the rent was then as high as it is now?—The rent of the farm was increased greatly at the time when the small tenants left it: and afterwards it was reduced, till it is now, I think, no higher than it was on the small tenants.

34,854. Do you think that the grazing tenant, when he entered, derived a good deal of benefit from the old cultivation by the former tenants?—I could not say, I think not. For the first years it would be very unproductive in grass, but maybe after a year or two it would yield better grass.

34,855. But when the people were cleared away, was the land then in better order than it is now?—No, I don't think it was, for, as I am saying, when they were cleared out the land was reduced; it was not under grass as it is now. It is now going under fog and water.

34,856. Then is it your opinion that the land has deteriorated under the large farmer? If you say that it has gone under fog and rushes and water, is it not the case that the land has got worse than it was?—Yes.

34,857. Do you know whether these people removed of their own free will?—I know well enough they would rather stay there if they could.

34,858. Was there any offer of help made by the proprietor in those times of distress?—No; except that when the people left another farm they call Kyngarry, I believe they got assistance for Mr Child to emigrate to America.

34,859. But no reduction of rent in order to enable them to remain on their holdings?—I think they would.

34,860. Did Mr Child offer them help simply to emigrate or would they be allowed to use the money which he gave in order to carry on their holdings?—No, it was to carry them away to America.

34,861. Was there any reduction of rent offered to them?—No.

34,862. Although the markets were low and there was a failure in the potato crop, on which the people so much depended?—No reduction was offered.

34,863. Are the large farmers treated in that way now by the proprietors, or do they now get reductions?—I believe some of them may.

34,864. What other farm in the neighbourhood of Killinan did you speak of?—I said Kyngarry.

34,865. How many tenants do you remember on the farm?—I counted six.

34,866. You remember these yourself?—Yes.

34,867. What was their general condition; were they fairly comfortable?—I may say that they were.

34,868. Were they better off than the cottars now are who have no land?—Oh, certainly they were.

34,869. Do you remember the occasion of their leaving Kyngarry?—I think it was for the sake of clearing it to put it under one tenant: at all events the proprietor offered them assistance to emigrate to America for leaving it peaceably. I think the main reason was to clear the place for an extensive farmer.

Bridgend, Islay.

Donald Orr.

34,870. The number of tenants you say who were there were six?—Yes.

34,871. Do you remember the size of their holdings, or what rents they paid?—I may say about £18 each, or £18 and the half of £18, say £27 each on an average. Some were higher and some lower, but that would be the average.

34,872. And you think that to introduce the same sort of system now would be for the benefit of the people?—I think it would.

34,873. To have farms of a graded size?—Yes, I think that will give the poor a chance.

34,874. Can you give us also the names of the tenants of Kyngarry in the same way?—Yes they were these:—John Brown, Archibald Brown, John Macfayden, Alexander Macneill, Robert Mackenzie, Malcolm Mackinnon, Malcolm Macpherson; that makes seven in all.

34,875. What is the next farm you referred to?—There is a farm down the river Laggan called Couralach where there used to be three families of the Macqueens and a Maclean.

34,876. These three tenants removed from that place?—Yes.

34,877. And who occupies it now?—It was added to Corrary.

34,878. Is there any cultivation on this Couralach?—No, but there is on Corrary.

34,879. What is the next farm you mentioned?—No other.

34,880. Are these all the farms you know?—Some people may know them better than I do: I only speak of those I know best myself, and others may know better about others.

34,881. Can you tell us about the place they call the Glen?—This is it. The Glen is a district in Islay, and all these farms are in the Glen and a good many more.

34,882. Can you tell us about Mullindry?—No, I would not venture to speak about it.

34,883. Did the removals from the other farms occur in your time?—Yes.

34,883*a*. Then these are all the places that you want to refer to?—I can answer any question you may put to me.

34,884. But you have no further statement of your own to make?—No.

34,885. Are you of opinion that if these large farms were subdivided there would be plenty people willing to take them up?—Certainly, it would give a chance to the poor people to make a living.

34,886. And do you think there are people who would be very glad to get an opportunity?—Yes.

34,887. And would they be able to stock such farms?—I am bound to think that they would take the farms quite willingly; and plenty would be able too.

34,888. And if they got these lands on favourable terms would they be able to get help from friends, those who may not have the money in their own possession?—There would be no need to apply to friends for help: I think they have the means themselves in some cases.

34,889. *Mr Sutherland.*—Were you asked to appear here on behalf of others?—I got a letter to appear before the Commission to give evidence as a delegate. That means for myself and for others.

34,890. And were you chosen at a meeting held for the purpose of selecting delegates?—No.

34,891. It was just arranged between yourselves that you should give evidence?—I don't know who appointed me. [*Mr Nicholls.*—I may explain that it was moved at a meeting and unanimously carried that this witness should be requested to come forward and give evidence.]

Hugh Carmichael.

HUGH CARMICHAEL, crofter, Keills (Cill-Chaluim-Chille-a'-Chaoil) (54)—*examined.*

34,892. *Mr Sutherland.*—You are described as a crofter?—Yes.

34,893. What is the size of your croft?—Three acres.

34,894. Are you under the Crofters Act?—I think so.

34,894*a*. Did you apply to the Crofters Commission to have your rent fixed by them?—No, I did not apply.

34,895. What rent do you pay for the three acres?—£6, 2s.

34,895*a*. Who built the house?—The proprietor.

34,896. Is it a good house?—Just middling.

34,897. Has it a slated roof?—Yes.

34,898. And how many apartments?—Three small ones.

34,899. Have you any written statement?—No.

34,900. Did you hear the evidence given by Mr Nicholls and Mr Orr?—Yes.

34,901. Do you agree with the evidence generally?—Yes, I quite agree with all that I have heard as yet.

34,902. We can take it then that you agree as far as you heard it with the evidence, and can corroborate it?—Yes.

34,903. Have you anything to submit to us that has not yet been referred to?—There is a farm fornent me where I have seen six tenants.

34,904. What is the name of the farm?—Kilslevan.

34,905. Is that land, in your opinion, fit for making small holdings?—It was in small holdings before.

34,906. And there is no cultivation on it now?—Not a bit.

34,907. Are there many people about Keills who would be very glad to take holdings on that if an opportunity was given at a fair rent?—They would not need to go so far: they could have them there.

34,908. And if new holdings were wanted, they could be got in Kilslevan?—Yes.

34,909. In your opinion are there many people in this part of Islay who would be willing and able to take such holdings?—Yes.

34,909*a*. *Mr Maccallum.*—How many crofters are there in Keills?—Nine.

34,910. Does each pay the same rent?—No, I have three acres, but the others have only one acre apiece.

34,911. Are you the only one who has a croft of that size?—Yes.

34,912. What stock do you have?—I cannot keep any stock: I pay for grazing forbye that.

34,913. On what farm do you get the grazing?—Mr Morrison's.

34,914. Could your holdings be extended out of Keills farm itself?—Yes.

34,915. Is the rest of Keills farm cultivated?—Yes, there is a part of Keills on each side of the road, but there is no cultivation above our lots.

34,916. And is there land suitable for cultivation there?—Yes.

34,917. What rent do the other crofters pay?—£4.

34,918. Do they each have a cow?—No, they pay grazing also. They have only four cows altogether in the park,—a very inferior park too.

34,919. And are they all desirous of getting an extension?—Well, some of them.

34,920. How many?—I could not say.

34,921. Are you aware whether they applied to the Crofters Commission?—No, I am not aware.

34,922. Did you yourself apply?—Yes.

34,923. *Mr Forsyth.*—I think you said you pay £6, 2s. for a house and three acres of land?—Yes.

34,924. And the house is a slated one?—Yes.

34,925. Have you had any separate rent put upon the house?—Yes, they put a separate rent of £3, 2s. on the house, and £1 an acre for the land. I have been at a great deal of trouble quarrying stones.

34,926. Do you keep the house in repair?—No.

34,927. Does the estate do so?—Yes.

34,928. Did the estate build it originally?—Yes.

34,929. And slated it?—Yes.

34,930. Is it plastered inside, and well divided?—Yes, it is plastered inside.

34,931. Could you put up a similar house for the same rate? Do you think you could manage to erect a

house with capital on which the interest would come to only £3, 2s. per annum?—I think I would.

34,932. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to the pasture, is it on the farm of Persabus that the pasture is?—No, it is on Achnanclach that we pasture our cows.

34,933. But the land that you refer to as suitable?—Yes, it is on Persabus.

34,934. Is there any cultivation on Persabus?—Yes.

34,935. And grazing away to the back of it, up north?—Yes.

34,936. And is there part of that grazing that would make pasture for the crofters of Keills adjoining their present land?—Yes.

34,937. Could you point out that land to us if we went to see it?—Yes.

34,938. Is there anything else you would like to say?—No.

34,939. *Mr Nicholls, mines manager, Robolls.*—What do you pay for the grazing of a cow?—£2.

34,940. You said, I think, that your house was built recently. Was it not built long before I came to the island?—I could not say.

34,941. Would it be twenty-five or twenty-six years ago?—Mr Campbell of Islay built it.

34,942. You do not know the date?—It is fifty years ago, and more.

34,943. *Mr Maccallum.*—Are the houses kept in good condition by the proprietor?—Just middling.

34,944. Is there something done to them every year?—Yes; they are at them just now.

34,945. *Mr Nicholls.*—Is the house in a good state of drainage?—Just middling. They have not come to mine to do it yet.

34,946. Is not the house very damp?—Yes, it is damp enough.

34,947. The whole of the walls?—Yes.

34,948. *Mr Maccallum.*—You stated that you pay £2 for the grazing of a cow. Are you able to winter it from the produce of the three acres?—Yes, with the assistance of draff and other bought feeding stuff. But the park on which we graze our cows is not fit to keep a cow. We have to feed them with draff till June is nearly out.

34,949. Can you state how much you are out for feeding stuffs?—I could not say off-hand.

34,950. But you have to buy a considerable amount?—Yes, it is handy to get the draff from the distillery.

34,951. Without that your cows could not be kept?—No, they would not do.

NEIL MACARTHUR, crofter, Mulrees (54).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

34,952. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did you make an application to the Crofters Commission?—No.

34,953. Did you get your rent reduced?—We got a reduction of 2s. in the £.

34,954. When did that commence?—Three years ago.

34,955. Do you wish to read a statement to us?—Yes. I am 54 years of age and reside at Mulrees, in the parish of Kilmeny, Island of Islay, county of Argyll. I know Mulrees and Portnellan well, and have for the past thirty-five years lived on it. When I first knew it, it was in the possession of six small farmers, viz.:—Mr Gilbert Lamont, Mr Neil Bell, Mr Godfrey Lamont, Mr Malcolm Bell, Mr John Smith, and Mr Archibald Bell. All these lost their farms, but how, I am not in a position to say. The whole of these holdings were put into one large farm. At the expiration of the lease held by Messrs Greenlees, we applied to Mr Ballingal, factor, for a small park which was at that time overgrown with rushes, heather, and rough grass, with a lot of lime rock jutting through here and there, and all brought about for the want of turning over. I am now in possession of about three acres of aforesaid park, from which I derived a fair return, on account of the way in which I work and manure it. Only part of my time is now taken up with the cultivation of the land I now hold, it being so small: other parts of my time are occupied in working for other people when I can get it. Sometimes I have nothing to do, and would like a little more land to occupy my spare time. I could easily manage twice or thrice the quantity of arable land if I could get it. I find it a very serious drawback in consequence of having no hill pasture on which to graze my beasts. I would be quite satisfied if I could get the matter of a few acres more of arable land along with some hill pasture, which would enable me to keep a sufficient number of cattle to make dung to manure the land and keep up its strength. I have cows already and money to buy more could I get grazing for them. I have to send those I now have away for grazing, which is very expensive and difficult to get. In fact, I consider it a great favour to get it at all, and feel myself more or less under an obligation to the party granting it. I am fully persuaded that the land we ask for might be granted beneficially to me and the like of me without injuring any party.

(Signed) 'NEIL MACARTHUR.'

9th April 1894.

34,956. How many crofters are in Mulrees?—Six.

34,957. Have they any pasture?—No, no hill pasture.

34,958. Are their holdings surrounded by the Finlaggan farm?—Yes.

34,959. On every side?—Yes.

34,960. Is there any cultivation on that farm?—Yes.

34,961. Is the cultivated land on Finlaggan adjacent to your holdings?—Opposite our houses.

34,962. Does it surround your houses altogether?—Yes, except some portions away to the west which are not cultivable.

34,963. How far does that part extend before it reaches the boundary of Finlaggan farm?—This open land lies to the west: our land lies to the east of it below the road, and the tenant farmer cultivates on both sides of us.

34,964. But there is an open side, is there not?—There is some at the west.

34,965. Are all the crofters at Mulrees willing to get an extension of their pasture? Is that what they want?—Yes; they want two things: ground to cultivate and ground for pasture.

34,966. And they are willing to pay a fair rent for that if they get it?—Yes.

34,967. How many cows each have the crofters of Mulrees?—There are only three in the township who have got cows: the other three have got no cattle. Those who have cattle have either one or two cows.

34,968. And you say there are three crofters who have no cattle at all?—Three of them.

34,969. How many have horses?—One.

34,970. And how many have sheep?—None of them have any sheep.

34,971. *Mr Maccallum.*—When were these crofts made?—I cannot give the date, but I think at least seven years ago.

34,972. What extent of grazing has the township got?—They have no grazing. Those who have cattle have to send them to graze on a farm, and not only do they pay but they are obliged to the farmer for giving them the grazing.

34,973. What is charged for the grazing of a cow?—£2 for the summer grazing, and if the cow is out during the winter there is another £1, making £3 for the whole year.

34,974. Is it an equal extent of arable land that all the crofters have?—No, not the same extent. There are two of us, myself and another, who have got the shares of two tenants who left the place.

34,975. What is the nearest arable land that is uncultivated?—Laogainn, part of Persebus farm.

34,976. Can you give us any idea of the amount of uncultivated arable land in that farm of Persebus?—In this place, Laogainn, there are four *cota-bàns* or groatlands, and there is not one bit of that cultivated now.

34,977. Do you remember that land being occupied by tenants?—Yes.

Bridgend, Islay.

Neil Macarthur.

34,978. How many?—Two were there in my recollection.

34,979. When did they remove?—I cannot tell the date, but it is a long time ago.

34,980. *Mr William Rounsfell, tenant of Persabus farm.*—Do I cultivate the nearest arable land to your lots?—You brought it in, but that is a long time ago. I don't say but what you brought it in.

34,981. Did I build a dyke round part of it?—Yes, round a piece of it.

34,982. Do you know that I put cattle in there in the summer time?—Yes.

34,983. Is there any other part of the farm on which I could put them and keep them safely except that one field?—You have not a park in this whole township I referred to but the one park.

34,984. Did I improve any of the rest of the land near your holdings?—You brought it in a long time ago, but it has now gone back to rushes again.

34,985. Seeing the experience you have had in your own holding, can you tell me if it would be more profitable for me to crop the land than to graze it?—I cannot say. We cannot do without something to eat, and as our ground is weak we require to cultivate it.

34,986. Is not your ground as good as the adjoining ground on the farm?—I cannot say.

34,987. Did you ever see heather on your lot?—Yes, I have seen that.

34,988. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Mr Rounsfell, I think, asked you a question as to the land being cultivated by him. What is the extent of that park he cultivated?—I believe it is about a *cota-bàn* or groatland in extent.

34,989. When was it cultivated last?—I cannot give the date, but it is a considerable time ago.

34,990. Can you give any idea of it?—I think it is, at any rate, ten or twelve years since it was cultivated.

34,991. Where did he put his cows when that park was under cultivation in the summertime?—He has the two farms beside each other, Persabus and Laogainn, and he could move his cattle from place to place as he chose.

34,992. So that it would be no greater difficulty for him to get grazing for his cattle if it were cultivated by you than it was when it was cultivated by himself?—It would be just as easy as before.

34,993. So you do not think it is necessary for the carrying on of the farm of Persabus?—I cannot say, but he has room enough supposing that park were taken from him.

34,994. *Mr Rounsfell.*—Where would I spean the lambs at speaning time?—I don't know where you could put them; could you not make another park? Another could be made as well as that one.

34,995. *Mr Maccallum.*—Where did he spean the lambs when the park was cultivated?—He had a park in the other place, Persabus, into which he put them when this park was in cultivation.

34,996. Could he not put them there again?—Yes, if he chose.

34,997. *Mr Rounsfell.*—Are you aware that we had to watch the lambs night and day for a whole week?—Yes, but they had to do that everywhere else as well.

34,998. *Mr Nicholls, mines manager, Robolls.*—Was Persabus a farm entirely apart from Loagainn farm?—Yes, they were two separate farms.

34,999. What did the tenant do with the cattle and the speaning of the lambs at the time when they were made into two separate farms?—Persabus kept the cattle and sheep for him.

John Macdonald.

JOHN MACDONALD, cottar, Keills (57).
(Examined in Gaelic through an interpreter.)

34,999*a*. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you reside at Keills?—Yes.

35,000. How many cottars are in Keills?—Eight.

35,001. Have none of them got any land at all?—The whole of them.

Bridgend, Islay.

John Macdonald.

35,002. Is Mr Carmichael, who gave evidence, in the same position as yourself?—Yes.

35,003. Did you hear his evidence?—Yes.

35,004. Do you agree with it?—Yes.

35,005. Is there anything in addition to what he said that you would like to bring before us?—I would like to get the grazing of a cow.

35,006. Is it easy to get that? Is the necessary land near?—Yes.

35,007. Is it on the farm of Persabus?—There is no place where they will give it to me.

35,008. What is the nearest farm to your house?—Persabus.

35,009. Would these eight cottars whom you have mentioned be also glad to get the grazing of a cow?—Five of them have a cow's grazing already; three others have cows but no right to graze, and they pay some one else for it.

35,010. *Mr Maccallum.*—Are you one of those who applied for land to the County Council?—Yes.

35,011. And your application was for how much land?—Fifty acres.

35,012. Where did you point out a place where such land could be got?—I did not point out any place, there are plenty places.

35,013. In applying for 50 acres, did you mean 50 acres between arable and pasture?—Yes.

35,014. Did you contemplate leaving your present place and building a new house on your new holding?—Undoubtedly.

35,015. And you would be prepared to pay a fair rent for such a place?—Yes.

35,016. In your opinion there is plenty land in the neighbourhood suitable for such holdings?—Yes, plenty.

35,017. *Mr Nicholls, mines manager, Robolls.*—Is not Scalastle a very appropriate and suitable place for small holdings?—Yes.

35,018. Would you like a small holding in that locality?—Yes.

35,019. Is it under cultivation at present?—No.

Gilbert Lamont.

GILBERT LAMONT, retired crofter, Crowbush.

35,020. Mr Chairman and Gentlemen, I am sorry that I have been called upon to give evidence as a delegate, because I objected to do it.

35,021. *Mr Sutherland.*—Very well, we do not want to hear you?—Well, I am willing, but I got the intimation only on Saturday evening, and I have been unwell.

35,022. Then we won't trouble you.

Duncan Macindeor.

DUNCAN MACINDEOR, roadman, Kilmeny (75)—*examined.*

35,023. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you live at Kilmeny?—Yes.

35,024. Have you any land?—Not now, but I had before.

35,025. Where had you it?—At Airidh-Ghuairidh, in the Glen farm.

35,026. But you are now a roadman living at Kilmeny?—Yes.

35,027. You appear to have a written statement?—Yes.

35,028. Would you kindly read it to us?—I am seventy-five years of age, and reside at Kilmeny, in the Island of Islay, county of Argyll. I never lived out of the island. My family carried on farming in the island of Islay for generations: my great-grandfather, grandfather, my father, and myself all had farms in Islay, and always were able to pay our way honestly. I was a farmer and carried on farming in Airidh-Ghuairidh successfully for twenty-three or twenty-four years. I was always able to pay my rent, as my receipts will show. Mr Webster, the under-factor at this time, had put out a lot of small farmers and had taken the land into his own hands. He wanted my farm as well at

the time, promising me another if I would give it up quietly. I refused to do so, and then he noticed me out of the farm. Nevertheless I had paid my rent, I protested against such unjust actions. He compelled me to leave my farm. I next wrote Mr Dickson, and laid my case before him, but was too late in taking steps in this line of action. Mr Webster had so falsified matters to Mr Dickson that before he knew the truth of the whole case the lease had been signed and Webster got the farm. Notwithstanding his fair promises about giving me another farm when he got possession of mine, I could not get another worth anything under him. Moreover, after my corn was sown and just coming through the ground, he sowed rye grass seed, and in harrowing it spoiled my corn crop, and I could not get compensation from him for it. There were many others as well as myself put out or deprived of their farms about this time to make way for Webster. Four tenants got notice to leave Airidh-Ghuairidh; six or seven got notice to leave Strongaig. At or about that time, Rostern contained four who had to be moved from their holdings. Nosebridge had eight tenants who were also moved; Conegarry also contained eight tenants; Benveridle also contained seven tenants; and four farmers got notice to quit Kilbranan and three to quit Dranich; in other words no less than forty-four or forty-five had to leave their holdings to give scope to Webster and sheep.

(Signed) 'DUNCAN MACINDEOR.'

35,029. As you have given us all the facts so clearly in your statement, I need not ask many questions of you. You are one at any rate that was put out of your holding?—Yes, and put out much against my will.

35,030. You were not willing to go?—I was not willing to go if I could have stayed.

35,031. If you got an opportunity of getting a holding again, would you like to take one?—I would, for my family is strong and could work it, and I have means at my command to stock a small holding.

35,032. Did you speak of your own knowledge of Nosebridge?—Yes.

35,033. Do you remember seeing tenants in Nosebridge?—I have seen tenants there.

35,034. Then you speak of your own knowledge regarding them. How many tenants do you remember there?—Seven at any rate.

35,035. In your opinion, is Nosebridge a very good place to make small holdings?—It is a good place.

35,036. Do you know the Glen all the way up?—I know it for sixty years.

35,037. All the way up to the loch?—Yes.

35,038. Is that tract of land, in your opinion, a place where small holdings could be made successfully?—I would think small holdings would do well enough in that place. I am sure they could be made to work profitably there.

35,039. In what condition were the holders you remember there; were they comfortable?—They were doing well enough in the meantime.

35,040. And do you think if they had been left there they would improve?—They were coming on when they were put off.

[ADJOURNED.]

THIRTY-EIGHTH SITTING.

Tarbert, Lochfyne.

TARBERT, LOCHFYNE, April 17, 1894.

Present:—

ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P. (*acting as Chairman.*)
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*

PETER WHYTE, Silvercraigs, Lochgilphead (60)—*examined.* Peter Whyte.

35,041. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your profession?—Fisherman and crofter.

35,042. Have you any written statement to make to us?—Yes.

35,042*a*. Would you kindly read it?—It would suit me to give you first a few words of explanation about the statement.

35,043. Very good, we shall be glad to hear them?—I was born in the parish of Glassary, in the county of Argyll, at a place called Aird in the district, and in a house called Tigh-an-achaidh. We remained there for a good many years: my father then left it and went to work in another place, but after a while, when the family grew up, he returned to the old croft. When we were there last, there were over thirty crofters on that estate; they had all been evicted in three different batches, and we were about the last that were put out. I have taken the names of the crofters that were in that place just about the time Sir John Orde came into possession of the estate. The names are as follows:—*Achnaba*, Malcolm Maccall, Dugald Ferguson, Alexander Crawford, Archibald Ferguson, Andrew Kerr, Malcolm Ferguson, Widow Macewan. These are seven in number, but there was also one Robert Mactavish, who left the place a little before that and went to Aird-na-h-airir. I have his name down in another list. In *Cossack Inn*, John Crawford; in *Ach'-an-leth-Pheighinn*, Widow Campbell, Peter Macfarlane, Charles Campbell; in *Druimfuar*, Widow Campbell, Duncan Dewar, Hugh Macewan, John Maclarty; in *Druim-garbh*, Kenneth Brodie, Duncan Macewan. The last-mentioned only came there a few years when he was put out of Aird-na-h-airir. I have his name again under the latter place. In *Tigh-an-achaidh*, Alexander Whyte, Donald Gillies; in *Aird-na-h-airir*, Duncan Macewan, Archibald Macewan, Donald Morison, Alexander Crawford, Neil Dewar, Robert Mactavish. This is the Robert Mactavish that left Achnaba. After being in Aird-na-h-airir, when cleared a long time, he was evicted along with the rest. In *Allt-aidh*, Lachlan Sinclair, besides four or five cottars on the estate. *Lag-na-h-Ullaidh*, this was a township close to the shore, and the people mostly lived by fishing; but when Achnaba mansion house was built for Col. Macneill, their crofts were taken away. They have remained in the township, but they had no land except a small field for potatoes. The tenants were Archibald Macmillan, Archibald Macewan, Duncan Maclarty, Duncan Maccall, Widow Dewar. These are all the people who were on the estate when Sir John Orde, the father of the present proprietor, came into possession of it.

35,044. How many families were there altogether?—Thirty-one.

35,045. And how many are there now?—There is not a single individual that I know of, either a tenant or a crofter.

35,046. You said these people were cleared out at three different times?—Yes.

35,047. Can you give us any idea of the dates?—Yes, the last clearance would be about thirty-two years ago; the earlier dates I cannot state.

35,048. What happened to these people generally?

Tarbert, Lochfyne.

Peter Whyte.

—They have scattered to every part. Some went to Lochgilphead, others have gone in all directions, and there are very few of them to tell the tale of the past.

35,049. Then as to the land upon which these people lived, is it, in your opinion, fit for maintaining people still?—Yes, quite fit for maintaining people still. The people who were in it were very sorry to leave it.

35,050. How is the land occupied now?—The land is now under rabbits, sheep, and every sort of trash: you would hardly think anyone had ever lived on it.

35,051. Do you say there is no tenant on the land formerly held by thirty-one families?—Not a single individual that I know of.

35,052. Does the landlord hold it in his own hands?—Yes, he lets the mansion house and shooting, and all the rest is in his own hands.

35,053. Have you any further statement to make to us?—No, that is all.

35,054. You have advanced these facts to us as evidence, I suppose, that the land that these people once occupied could be occupied again?—Most certainly, people could occupy it now as well as those in the past.

35,055. What is your knowledge with regard to the circumstances in which these people were at that time?—At that time there was neither poorhouse nor anything else in Lochgilphead, and the people did not want anything to help them. If there was one in need of help, there were people to help him; but there are very few to-day who are exempt from the rates.

35,056. With regard to the desire of the people to get back to the land, does such a desire exist largely in this locality?—That is a thing I cannot say: but I believe a great many of the people who left that place are just like a ship on the ocean, or say a steamer with a full crew, well equipped with engines all in order, but without coals. The people want money, but they have everything else they require, a great many of them.

35,057. Before passing to that, these people I suppose were cleared for the purpose of making this large holding which exists now?—Yes, for nothing else. As far as I know they were due no arrears of rent.

35,058. That happened thirty years ago?—Yes, more than that.

35,059. Now is this tendency to consolidate small holdings into large holdings still going on?—I don't know: I don't see that this man offers to make any holdings, large or small. He cultivates some small patches, but even though he does that, what good does he do to the nation or to the country?

35,060. With regard to consolidation in this locality itself, was the process not something like this,—that the small holders were first of all cleared out to make large holdings, after which the tendency set in to make these large holdings larger still? Have you seen that in operation?—Yes, but in the case I refer to there is nothing done to make them larger.

35,061. But talking generally, would you describe that as a rule?—Yes, that is generally the way: to make large holdings out of small ones, and then knock two or three together and make them still larger.

35,062. I think you were going to add something with regard to the ability of people to take small holdings, supposing them to be formed?—I say there are some who could take them: but the young people of the present day grow up and go into towns, and as to the old people, many of them are not to the fore. Even if the young people were put on the land, I doubt if they would be fit to cultivate it, and they have no mind to go to the land. It is no use for a man to try it who has never been on the land. The young men of this quarter are all bred to the sea and to the fishing, and their minds are taken up with that more than anything else.

35,063. In your opinion, they have lost the skill necessary for the cultivation of the soil?—Yes, the young people.

35,064. Have you any knowledge of how farming is carried on in this neighbourhood? Does it require much skill to carry on farming such as is now carried on here?—Well, a stranger could not do much at it. I may say that I have been farming from my youth.

35,065. Could not you farm a grass farm?—Yes, I could farm a grass farm and an agricultural farm.

35,066. You think that among the descendants, let us say, of the people who were on the land at the time you refer to, the desire has not been shown very much here, because the people have been divorced so long from the soil?—Just divorced from the soil.

35,067. Now as to the means: supposing you got a person here and there who was willing to take land, would they have the necessary means to start new farms?—I think some of them would, but a great many who had it when on the land cannot return to-day.

35,068. But would there be, in your opinion, a sufficient number to make a beginning, supposing the opportunity were given?—In my opinion, if they had a mind to go, there are plenty who have the means to make a beginning.

35,069. *Mr Maccallum.*—On what estate is your holding situated?—On the estate of Mr Graham Campbell of Shirvain.

35,070. How many crofters are there on that estate?—Between crofters and cottars I think about thirty-four or thirty-five.

35,071. Could you distinguish between crofters and cottars?—These are crofters who could come under the Act if they were allowed. If you make a new engagement since the Act came out, then you are done; but of those who would come under the Act when the Act came into operation, if they had thought of doing so, there were in all eleven.

35,072. Did they apply for a fair rent?—No, only four applied for fair rent.

35,073. Have their rents been fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Yes, the rents have been fixed.

35,074. What was your own old rent?—£11.

35,075. And what is your fair rent?—£8.

35,076. Are the other crofts about the same size as your own?—Just about the same size. Well, there is one that is not the same size, but the other one is bigger. The fair rent is £12, and the old rent was £15.

35,077. Then on the estate on which you live yourself, are there large holdings?—There is one.

35,078. What is the name of it?—Castleton.

35,079. How is it occupied?—By a tenant farmer.

35,080. Is it cultivated?—It is cultivated, but the crofts used to be far bigger than they are now. They have now only about an acre, or between an acre and an acre and a half, along with a cow's grass, and they pay rent to the landlord, but their cows feed on the big farm, the hill farm of Castleton. That is an arrangement made with the tenant when he took the farm.

35,081. Then do you pay for grazing in addition to your fair rent?—We do not pay if we do not put out any beasts; if we have more than our own place can hold, and put out any, we must pay for the grazing wherever we get it.

35,082. What stock have you?—Three cows and followers. That is the stock we ought to keep, but we are curtailed. Sir John Orde has put a march between himself and Shirving; that march was cut straight and it cut a great deal of land from the crofters. And again, there was one Captain Cole, who was a farmer or a manager in Castleton, and he has taken from them the peat moss that was there and has made it into a big park. So that the township now is curtailed, and it will not keep half the stock they ought to have. But you would never dare say a word when paying your full rent to the laird, or else you were away.

35,083. Then is there in the township a desire for enlarging the holdings?—Well, in our township, I had no conversation with the people as to these affairs, but I know there are people who could take them.

35,084. And is there land adjacent that could be conveniently added?—Not without taking it from another estate.

35,085. Just so: but on the other estate, is there land suitable?—Yes, with just a march dyke between; some of the old arable land of Silvercraigs even is into

that estate: how they agreed about it was none of our business, but the two landlords.

35,086. You think that the township would be better of an enlargement?—I am sure of it, and would be glad to get it.

35,087. You state that you are a fisherman as well as a crofter. Do you find that your croft interferes with the proper prosecution of the fishing?—Sometimes the fishing does not do but very little: and even what we do on the croft is always a sure thing, but the fishing is not a sure industry in this country; it is just a thing of the past.

35,088. You think that it is an advantage for fishermen, in your particular district, to have crofts?—There are no fishermen right without it.

35,089. You were stating that you got grazing occasionally. What do you pay for grazing when you take it off the farm?—It is very often a horse we put out, and for putting out other cattle we pay about £1 for young cattle—stirks.

35,090. Is that for the whole year?—For the half; for the six months in summer. We have to winter them ourselves.

35,091. Have you any experience of what they charge for the grazing of a cow? Do you know what the rate is?—Some of them make it dearer and some cheaper, but you will not get them any place much under £2.

35,092. For the summering?—Yes, for the six months' summering. That is about the average charge, 30s. to 40s.

35,093. The number of crofters you gave refers only to the estate of Achnaba?—Achnaba alone; I was young when all the other lands and estates were cleared, and I cannot give a detailed statement about them.

35,094. But what other lands has the proprietor of Achnaba besides Achnaba?—He has the estate of Dunholgon, and he has the estate of Kilmory; he has the estate of Monydrain, and also part of the estate of Castleton—Blairbuie and Ballymorehill.

35,095. Do you know the number of tenants he has on these other estates?—No, I cannot tell for certain, but in Dunholgon I think there were eight half quarters. They count by half quarters there. That was before my day, however. In Blairbuie there were six, but I cannot tell how many were in Kilmory, for it was cleared before I was born. The estates owned by Sir John Orde in Argyll are Kilmory, Dunholgon, Blairbuie, Achnaba, and Monydrain.

35,096. If they were cleared then there are no crofters there now?—There are no crofters on all that I know belonging to that gentleman after he took possession of it.

35,097. Cannot you give us the number of tenants he has got at all?—He has not got one.

35,098. Has he no tenant farmer on the estates about Lochgilphead?—None.

35,099. All these estates you mentioned, are now in his own occupation?—Yes, and Monydrain as well, and Blairbuie, and all these.

35,100. When were they cleared from these other estates of Kilmory?—I cannot tell the date.

35,101. Do you know when the lands were purchased by the proprietor, Sir John Orde?—No, I cannot say; but I remember well enough of the people being in the townships, though I have no remembrance of any person being in Kilmory, except one man.

35,102. All these were cleared before your recollection?—Yes, these estates are in the neighbourhood of Lochgilphead.

35,103. Do you know whether the people of Lochgilphead would like to have allotments in the neighbourhood of the town?—Indeed, I am sure they would if they could get them; anything that would repay them for their labour: but to get a thing and have to pay and be taxed so dearly for it,—I think no person wants to get that unless it will remunerate him for his work.

35,104. Whatever desire there may be in Lochgilphead for land, you think there is no desire on the part of the proprietors to meet it?—Not that I know. On the contrary, they do not want it; they do not want to see any person even putting his foot on their land.

35,105. With regard to the formation of new holdings, you said there would be a difficulty on account of the poverty of the people?—It is the only thing that keeps the people back.

35,106. But if these lands were made available for small holdings under similar conditions to those of the Crofters Act, don't you think they would venture to build?—I am sure they would venture to try it, at anyrate. It would be far better for a man with any money to get a house and lay out a little on his croft than to build a house in the village, where he is hampered by other people.

35,107. Were not the buildings on crofts generally put up by the crofters themselves?—There were not any buildings put up before this, and it is not very long since we had the Crofters Commission here, so we have had no chance of doing it yet, for we have not had time to look about us.

35,108. Yes, but take the buildings that are now on the crofts, and consider whether these buildings were put up by the proprietor or by the tenant?—They were put up by the tenant. Even our own house where I was born,—a few years after we went there last, it took fire through the night and burnt down: we paid for the carting of the stones and paid for the wood and built the house of our own accord, and did not get a penny for it when we left.

35,109. That was done when you had no fixity of tenure?—Yes.

35,110. And no fair rent?—No fair rent, or anything like it; there was no mention of it at the time.

35,111. You did that with all these uncertainties?—Yes.

35,112. Don't you think now, that if the land were given under conditions of fair rent and fixity of tenure, the crofters would find some means of putting up the necessary steadings?—Yes, they would do their endeavour to erect them, in my opinion.

35,113. Can you not account for the present unsatisfying condition of the crofter holdings by the fact that they had no security if they built houses that they would enjoy the use of them?—Well, there is no person would wish to put up a house or lay out money with such a prospect. Before the passing of the Act it might be that you had made an improvement on your croft, but another man would come and offer more for it and put you away.

35,114. But, I suppose, the large farmers did not build the steadings that are on their farms?—No, these are all built by the landlord.

35,115. Can you tell me about the cultivation of the crofts in your district? Are they as well cultivated as the large farms?—There are very few crofts about us: but, such as they are, we take more crop off our crofts than the farmer takes off his holding, in proportion.

35,116. Do you find that the large farmers now allow their land to get back into a state of nature?—A great many of them, because they do not work them but look to sheep. The ground that was worked for the good of the people is now under sheep.

35,117. And is the condition of the land itself as regards fertility improved?—If it is well worked it will give good results: but if it is not worked it will not give anything.

35,118. And they do not work it?—They do not work it: they allow it to lie in a state of nature.

35,119. And you find the arable fields covered with moss?—Rushes and brackens and moss,—soft, wild moss.

35,120. Can you tell me as to the rate of rent paid by the small holder as compared with the large holder? Does the small tenant pay at a higher rate or a lower rate than the large farmer?—He pays at a higher rate,—twice higher: any person who sees it knows that.

35,121. Then, do you think that there would be any loss to the proprietor himself if the land were divided into small holdings?—If he had a mind to give it, it would be a source of profit to him and a God's blessing besides.

Tarbert, Lochfyne.

Peter Whyte.

35,122. Then how do you account for their giving the preference to large holdings and non-resident tenants in many cases?—Well, I don't know; but there seems to be an enmity between man and man, and he hates to see his fellow creature getting on.

35,123. But they must have some reason, no doubt; do you think it is that they wish to make their lands into sporting grounds?—There are no two ways about that.

35,124. And they take the view that the large farms are more favourable for sport?—Yes. When people are on the land, they are counted as vermin, and spoiling the sport.

35,125. And you think that is the main reason why the proprietors prefer large holdings to small?—In my opinion, it is.

35,126. That they want to have the land as sporting preserves?—Just as sporting preserves.

35,127. *Mr Gordon.*—I would like to get a little information from you about the fishing. How far is your croft from the sea?—About 20 or 30 yards.

35,128. Is it near Lochgilphead?—About three miles from it.

35,129. North or south?—It is to the east.

35,130. Have you a natural harbour there?—Yes, there is a natural harbour there.

35,131. What sort of fishing do you generally follow?—The herring fishing.

35,132. Not the white fishing?—Not now.

35,133. Can the white fishing be prosecuted in Lochfyne there?—Yes, it is prosecuted in Lochfyne.

35,134. Do you get cod fish, and ling, and haddocks?—Not very much ling; but cod fish and haddocks.

35,135. Pretty plentifully?—Very scarce, I believe.

35,136. How are you off in respect of communication with Glasgow?—Good enough communication if they got plenty of fish.

35,137. How do you account for the fish not being so plentiful,—they are not trawled there, are they?—They are trawled all the year round.

35,138. Do they use trawl-nets there?—It is all trawl-nets that are worked there.

35,139. But you do not find fishing now so profitable as it used to be?—No, nor anything like it.

35,140. You are not a line fisherman yourself?—Well, I may say I am. I have often fished with lines.

35,141. But you do not now fish with lines regularly?—Not regularly.

35,142. You told us there were thirty-one crofters evicted; did that happen within your memory?—Yes, I remember everyone personally.

35,143. Were they in your district?—Yes, under the same laird.

35,144. Were they upon the banks of Lochfyne?—Yes.

35,145. And were they fishermen as well as crofters?—Yes, they were fishermen as well as crofters, even the old men: they were not fishing much, but the young people went to the fishing while the old people looked after the crofts.

35,146. With reference to your statement that there would be difficulty in the young men taking to farming as a trade, are they at present following the occupation of fishermen?—Yes.

35,147. And where are they generally located?—About Lochgilphead, those who follow the fishing.

35,148. But so far as your knowledge goes, you think they would not be inclined to go back to the farming?—There might be odd ones who would, but a great many of them would not be so inclined, for they know not the use of the land.

35,149. Do you think it would be possible to replace these thirty-one crofts in that quarter? Would there be ground for them?—Oh, yes, the ground is yonder still, and though it has gone out of cultivation it could be turned back again by labour.

35,150. What is the general idea of crofters there: is it for big crofts, or little crofts,—fisherman's crofts, or self-supporting crofts?—The crofts that were there were not very big, but most of them had a horse.

35,151. A man prosecuting the trade of fisherman would not advisedly take a very big croft?—Well, I daresay if they were to follow both trades, that would be so; but I would rather have a big croft and pay rent for it than a small one that would yield next to nothing. If I had a croft and was able to stock it and keep it, I would rather have a croft that would support a family than a small croft, even if I got it for nothing.

Tarbert, Lochfyne.

Peter Whyte.

35,152. Then you would propose that there should be certain crofts that should be self-supporting, and the occupants of which would not be fishermen?—Just so.

35,153. And that for the fishermen and those who followed the trade of fishing there should be small crofts?—Yes.

35,154. With cow's grass and potatoes?—Yes.

35,155. At a convenient place near the shore?—Yes, that is my idea, that we should have something to do in the winter, when it is dangerous to go to sea.

35,156. These would devote the principal part of the year to fishing and not to farming?—Yes.

35,157. Do you suppose that, in your neighbourhood, there would be a demand for these small lots?—That is my opinion.

35,158. More likely than for the bigger crofts?—More likely.

35,159. One reason being, no doubt, that they could stock such crofts without assistance?—Just so.

35,160. And is there land in the neighbourhood of these fishing stations that would be available for such small lots?—Thousands of acres.

35,161. Will you show us the land if we go there?—I would, but I am not so good at walking now as I used to be; I met with an accident and got my thigh broken, and am not very good at walking.

35,162. But somebody could show us the land you refer to?—Yes, and even I, myself, could show you the land in the immediate neighbourhood. It is not difficult to see it: there is plenty of land.

35,163. Supposing, now, that most of the land formerly occupied was again allocated for crofts or allotments, do you believe there are as many people in your place as would occupy that land without taking in others?—I believe there are, and they would be glad to get it.

35,164. You have spoken very clearly, Mr Whyte: may I ask whether you speak only for yourself or whether you are a delegate?—No, I had never a meeting with another man. There is not one about our place who knows I am here.

35,165. Then I may take it that what you have said is merely your own opinion?—Just my own opinion: I took no man's opinion.

35,166. And therefore you cannot say positively whether there would be a real desire for land in your district or not?—No, but I am sure there would be some that would be glad to get it.

35,167. *Mr Sutherland.*—You expressed a very strong opinion that every fisherman ought, if possible, to have a plot of land?—Yes, I am of that opinion; while we were without it we missed it greatly.

35,168. And now that you have had it you find yourselves very much better off, do you?—I do. I get some work in the winter, whereas if I had no land I would have to go to every quarter of the world seeking work.

35,169. You have tried both ways?—I have.

35,170. And you have found the land combined with the fishing the better way?—I do, in this quarter.

35,171. Does that apply to every one in your neighbourhood?—Yes, to every one. They have always a help.

35,172. Did you ever know landlords to offer small holdings that were not taken up?—I did not hear of them: I did not hear about this quarter.

35,173. You never heard of facilities being offered and refused?—No, I never did. They may have done so, but I never heard of it.

35,174. So that, if there is no experience of taking small holdings, it is because the people never had the opportunity?—To my opinion, I never heard of it, and if there had been such a report about our quarter I would have heard something about it.

35,175. You have stated your own case, where your holdings were made smaller by taking away your pasture?—Yes. Tarbert, Lochfyne.

35,176. Was that done with your consent, or against your will?—We were not there at the time: it was before we went there.

35,177. Who were there before you, then?—It was one Peter Macintyre. We have been here twenty-five years this term, but it was done before we came there.

35,178. You stated also that while these families were in the places you have indicated, they still carried on fishing?—Yes, still then, and still yet.

35,179. And is it your opinion that they simply carried on fishing because they thought they could make some extra money out of it?—They required to do that before they could pay such an exorbitant rent for their small bits of ground that would yield them very little. A small croft does not support a family.

35,180. They were there on the land, but had to take the rent of the land out of the sea?—Out of the sea.

35,181. *Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the larger holding, you expressed some doubt whether it would let as readily as the small fishing holding?—Well, about our quarter it would let with some, but as for the small holdings, they would let, I think, very readily.

35,182. Did you ever hear of any difficulty in letting a small farm?—I never saw much of that about our place. I have seen many a flitting leaving the farms, but I have not seen much turning back, because they would not get the chance. The land would be made into a big farm, or kept in hand.

35,183. But it is a notorious fact, is it not, that there is a difficulty in letting large farms?—Yes, because of the men who are now left in the country: those who are rich are over-rich, and those who are poor are too poor.

35,184. But you never heard of any small farm being left on the proprietor's hands because a tenant could not be got for it?—No: but if it was a big one he might take a while to get it let.

35,185. And do you find that the rent of small holdings in this county is coming down?—Those of the crofter class are coming down, but as to the other ones—

35,186. I refer rather to small holdings that are not under the Crofters Act. Are their rents coming down?—Yes, they are coming down. They will not take them because they can no longer get the money they used to get for their cattle.

35,187. Do you find that the rents of the small farms are coming down?—About our place I don't think they are coming down so much as the big farms. There are always more after the small ones.

35,188. In your neighbourhood all the land is held, I think, by the proprietor,—that is on the estates of Kilmory and Achnaba?—All that I know: I don't know of a tenant or a crofter.

35,189. So the process of consolidating the small holdings into large ones could not go farther than it has gone in your neighbourhood?—It never could go farther.

35,190. Considering the desire there is on the part of the proprietors to have sporting grounds, do you think there is any great hope that they will of their own accord ever break up the large holdings into small ones?—Indeed, I do not think so; while we live I do not think they would do so of their own accord, unless something of a harder thing came on them than what we are aware of.

35,191. You have not experienced any desire on the part of the proprietor to meet the requirements of the people?—No.

ARCHIBALD MACTAVISH, Arivore, Whitehouse, Kintyre (Archibald Mactavish.)

Sir, I am not prepared to give evidence: I have been only two years in the place.

35,192. *Mr Sutherland.*—If you do not wish to give evidence we shall not trouble you?—Some one may speak who knows better than I do.

35,192*a*. Very good: we do not wish any person to give evidence against his will. Archibald Mactavish.

DUGALD MACKINNON, Crofter, Whitehouse, Kintyre (48)—*examined*. Dugald Mackinnon.

35,193. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

35,194. Have you applied to the Crofters Commission to fix a fair rent?—No.

35,195. May I ask what is the rent of your present holding?—My present rent is £9; but there is an extra horse between myself and my brother, so that my rent in all is £10.

35,196. Are you rented according to the stock you have? Is it a souming you have?—We have a common.

35,197. And you pay part of your rent according to your share of the common?—Yes, according to the number of cattle I keep on the common.

35,198. Is your common down in the triangle between the two roads?—It is at Whitehouse.

35,199. Where the two roads separate?—Yes; it is on the left hand side as you go to Campbeltown.

35,200. Were you born at Whitehouse?—Yes.

35,201. And have lived there all your life?—Yes.

35,202. Was your father there before you?—Yes.

35,203. Your people have been there for a long time, have they?—Upwards of fifty years.

35,204. You have, I suppose, an intimate knowledge of the opinions of the people in your neighbourhood?—I have not any particular knowledge beyond my own views.

35,205. But I mean as regards the opinions of the people at the present time: have you had plenty opportunity of knowing their opinions?—Oh, yes, I can give a good guess of that.

35,206. Have you a written statement to offer to us?—No, I just came to see and hear what was said.

35,207. You know the object of our inquiry, I suppose?—Yes, I do have a little understanding of it.

35,208. In your opinion, then, is there in your neighbourhood land at present used for the purposes specified in our remit that could be used with advantage for the formation of small holdings?—Yes, any amount.

35,209. What place do you wish more particularly to refer to?—The most convenient to our place is in Mr Turner's land just above our house.

35,209*a*. What is the name of the place?—Whitehouse; it was going with Whitehouse, but it is now in another holding.

35,210. Was Whitehouse a farm itself before?—Yes.

35,211. And the house we see by the roadside, was that the farm house?—Yes.

35,212. What has happened to Whitehouse farm?—I cannot say, for it was before my time; but the lady who is there now has no land at all: she had no person along with her to work the land.

35,213. Are you aware whether it was added to another farm?—There was another farm given to them in another place.

35,214. What other farm is there besides Whitehouse that you would like to call our attention to?—There was a piece of common that was connected with our common: it is now in John and David Mundell's common.

35,215. What is the name of the farm that Messrs Mundell has got?—Arivore.

35,216. Your common was taken and added to the farm of Arivore?—Part of it,—the part that I speak of.

35,217. Which was the larger,—your common, or Arivore farm?—Oh, Arivore farm is a large farm, but I refer only to this piece that was taken off our common.

35,218. For what reason was the common taken off the small holders and added to the large farm?—I have not mind of that.

35,219. Does anything suggest itself to you why

Tarbert, Lochfyne. — Dugald Mackinnon.

that should have been done?—I cannot explain that. I only state the truth of all I say. I did not expect to be questioned on matters that were before my day, but since I am here I will give all the information I can.

35,220. But you would expect it as a natural question to ask, why it was taken from the small holders and given to the large holder?—I know there is not plenty of ground for cows pasturing: they have not enough of ground.

35,221. Any other farm that is a separate farm?—None that is convenient to the crofters of Whitehouse.

35,222. But whether it is convenient or not, what other farms are there in the neighbourhood?—There are lots of farms before you go on to Clachan.

35,223. Would you give us the names?—Kincraig is the next farm; then Achnacardan; but there was another holding in Kincraig farm as well as Kincraig itself, though it had not a house.

35,224. What is the name of it?—Duchvoic.

35,225. That holding is now merged in Kincraig?—Yes.

35,226. How many holdings were in Achnacardan?—I don't know how many holdings were there.

35,227. Was there more than one?—Yes, more than one.

35,228. Then, coming along the road from Achnacardan, where do you come to?—Eskart.

35,229. Is that the last?—It is the last till you come to West Tarbert.

35,230. Now going down towards Campbeltown from Whitehouse?—I don't know the country very well down by Campbeltown: I am only telling about the locality I know of.

35,231. Don't you know the names of any of the farms to the south of Whitehouse?—Grassfield, Kilchamaig, Achnaclohan, Gartnagreunach and Scotmill—all on Stonefield estate; Leum-na-muic, Loup, Achvraid, Ach-a'-bheallaich, Achaglass—all on the late Sir William Mackinnon's estate.

35,232. Are there any tenants in these farms you are mentioning?—It is under one tenant.

36,233. Are they all in Mr Turner's hands?—Yes.

36,234. But Achnacardan and Kincraig?—These are Mundell's again. Mr Turner did not get the use of these farms; it was Sir William. We are told that he has got them now, but I am only giving the rumour that is going round.

35,235. How many of these farms are in cultivation?—They could be all put to cultivation.

35,236. But how many are cultivated at present?—I could not say. Kilchamaig is cultivated to a certain extent.

35,237. Is any other cultivated to a certain extent?—I don't think there is much cultivation on the others.

35,238. In your opinion, are these farms suited to be made into small holdings such as they were before?—I don't know how they were before; but I know positively that they could be put into small holdings.

35,239. They could be made into smaller holdings than they are?—No mistake about that.

35,240. Are there people who, in your opinion, would take them if they got them in small holdings?—Well, I would think so: but it is questionable, the like of those things.

35,241. What is your opinion, if I may ask the question regarding yourself,—would you be glad to get a bigger holding than you have?—I would.

35,242. And would you take one if you got it on reasonable terms?—Yes.

35,243. And I suppose we would be justified in taking your opinion as an average one?—I can only speak for myself, but I hear the voices of the people saying they would be glad to take more land if they could get it.

35,244. *Mr Gordon.*—You mentioned one little farm there which, I think, is in occupation,—Kincraig?—Yes, but I was not questioned about that. It is cultivated.

35,245. But Achvraid, Ach-a'-bheallaich, Loup, and the other two bigger farms are all in Mr Turner's hands, and not cultivated?—Kilchamaig is cultivated on a small scale, and a portion of Gartnagreunach; but there is no cultivation on Achvraid, Ach-a'-bheallaich, Loup, Leum-na-muic, and Achaglass.

Tarbert, Lochfyne — Dugald Mackinnon.

35,246. Are there houses now at Loup? Are there buildings there?—Yes, there was a farmer there till a few years ago.

35,247. There are no buildings on Achvraid?—Yes, there was a farmer there; this Mr Mactavish was there not long since.

35,248. And Achaveallich?—Yes, there was a farmer there too lately.

35,249. You mentioned Eskart, I think: is that a place near this?—Yes, Mr Turner has that.

35,250. Is there any cultivation there?—I think there is, but I could not exactly say; I never left the road at that place to see.

35,251. Would there be people about Tarbert who would take the whole or a part of that place of Eskart?—The Tarbert people can speak for themselves; I cannot give their views, because I am not often among them.

35,252. Does Mr Turner's pasture come in above the village here?—I cannot give the boundaries.

35,253. *Mr Maccallum.*—Generally speaking, there is not much cultivation now in your neighbourhood?—Very little.

35,254. Is there a meal mill working?—There is a meal mill, but it is not working.

35,255–56. It exists, but you do not think it gets much trade?—I don't think so.

35,257. But are there not evident signs that there was a good deal of cultivation at one time?—Yes, there is no mistake about that.

35,258. The land seems to be consolidated very much into one holding now?—That is the case.

35,259–60. Occupied by Mr Turner, I think?—Yes, except Whitehouse itself: it is a crofting village.

35,261. But can you give us any idea of the extent of cultivation? Is there enough cultivated land on the holding of Mr Turner to meet the requirements of his own house and of the shepherd's?—I could not exactly tell.

35,262–63. And does he make meal?—He makes no meal at all in Whitehouse.

35,264. Are you aware of his making any meal at all on any of the farms?—Not in our mill at anyrate, to my knowledge.

35,265. Did you mention all the holdings that are included in that one large holding?—There were more; I honestly believe there were more: and there may be older people here who could tell.

35,266. The names are now being forgotten?—I suppose they are.

35,267. But going farther south again you come to Stuartfield, do you know that?—That is Mr Pollok's estate.

35,268. How is it tenanted?—Mr Turner has it too.

35,269. Is there a steading upon Stuartfield?—A splendid one.

35,270. Made for an agricultural holding, I suppose?—Yes, it was that all along.

35,271. And now it is a pastoral farm?—It is under sheep and cattle.

35,272. Can you tell us the number of steadings,—good steadings,—that are upon Mr Turner's holdings?—Well, it would take a little time: as I said already there are some steadings where nothing is to be seen but the walls.

35,273. But can you tell us the number of good steadings he has?—Yes; at Kilchamaig and Grassfield and Gortan-Granach: these are three good steadings in what we now call Kilchamaig farm. The farms of Leum-nam-muc, Loup, Achavraid, Achaveallich and Achaglass will all be tenanted by Mr Turner at Whitsunday, 1894.

35,274. And Taltol, how is it occupied?—It goes with Stuartfield.

35,275. Was there a house there?—It is a shepherd who is there.

35,276. Was the house built as a shepherd's house?—I rather think it was built for a farmer at one time.

35,277. We have been told in some parts by some witnesses that the process of absorption of the small holdings by the large has virtually ceased: is that your

experience in this district?—It has ceased, for the good reason that the people were all going away; they could not make a living, and another one would take their place.

35,278. But I am speaking of the small farms being absorbed into large ones; is that process still going on in your district?—I cannot say much about those.

35,279. You mentioned Loup, I think, as a farm; how is it let?—There was a farmer in Loup, and I am told that it is let for this year along with these other farms.

35,280. You find it then absorbed into the large farms?—It seems so.

35,281. So in your neighbourhood the process of absorption is still farther going on: is not that the case?—Well, I cannot say that there is anything wrong with our village of Whitehouse in that respect.

35,282. I am not speaking of your crofts just now, but of the small farms being absorbed into larger ones: that process is still going on, is it not?—Yes, but this farm of Loup was in the laird's hands before Mr Turner had it.

35,283. But they are not let now as separate farms but added to other farms?—Yes, added to other farms.

35,284. Can you give us the number of crofters at Whitehouse?—I can go through the names of the crofters themselves.

35,285. Just give us the number, if you can.—Seven or eight.

35,286. What extent of arable land is held by these?—Between two and five acres apiece.

35,287. And what rent do they pay?—I would say from 30s. to £5 or £6.

35,288. Can you say whether some of these would desire to leave these crofts and take larger holdings elsewhere?—I think some of them at anyrate would take larger holdings, perhaps others would not care to do so. There are some widows who could not take more land.

35,289. What is your view with regard to the letting of small holdings: supposing they were provided out of these large farms, do you think there would be any difficulty in letting them?—I would think not. Some of us have to put away our young cattle to other places to graze; when we do have a young beast we have no place for it about our own locality.

35,290. Can you give us now your opinion as to the effect that the removal of the people from the land has upon such a town as Tarbert here? Is it for the good of Tarbert that all the land round about should be held in one holding?—I cannot speak for Tarbert at all, because they are mostly all fishermen.

35,291. I do not wish you to speak for Tarbert: but what effect will the consolidation of the land into one holding have upon a town,—how will it affect the business of the town, for instance?—Well, my opinion is that a fisherman with a family would be very glad to have a piece of ground.

35,292. What effect must it have upon the shopkeepers of Tarbert, for instance, when land is put into one large holding: would there be as much trade as if the land were held in separate tenancies?—Not at all: I would think there would be more trading with a number of small holders.

35,293. Do you think one large holder would benefit the tradespeople to any large extent?—I would think not.

35,294. Do you think there is any large supply of produce such as eggs, &c. coming to the town from that one large farm —No, I don't think so. As for highland bullocks they would not benefit the town much.

35,295. These are not sold in Tarbert?—No.

35,296. *Mr Gordon.*—About the extension of your own grazings at the village there. You have the park at present immediately to the east of the township, I think?—Yes.

35,297. How many cows do you graze there?—I have two cows and followers, but I think the rent goes for twenty cows, the total.

35,297*a*. Now if you were to get an extension of your grazings, where would you suggest it being made?—Just about 60 yards above my house, on the other side of the road; there is plenty of pasture there.

35,298. Is that upon the farm of Arivore?—No, it is going with Kilchamaig farm; but the Arivore farm is on the other side too. Tarbert, Lochfyne.

35,299. The pasture you would suggest is part of Kilchamaig to the south or west of your house?—North-west. Dugald Mackinnon.

35,300. Across the road?—Across the road.

35,301. That is, between you and the sea?—Yes.

35,302. Now you spoke of a part of the farm of Arivore for which the pasture had been taken at one time off the township?—Yes, forty or fifty years ago.

35,303. Is that a square field of about 40 acres on the south side of the road leading over to the shore?—Yes.

35,304. It is next your own pasture?—Yes, on the right hand side going up to Skipness. But there was a lot of it that they took a great deal of pains to break in and fence; that was taken off.

35,305. Is that the kind of land you could cultivate?—No, except what Mr Mundell and his family took in and fenced. The rest could not be cultivated.

35,306. Is there part of the land of Kilchamaig that could be cultivated?—Yes, and it was cultivated.

35,307. That would be most convenient for the township?—Yes.

35,308. And if the people in the township there got some extension of grazings and some extension of their arable land you think that would meet their wants?—They tell me so, but they should come here themselves and say so.

35,309. But from your own knowledge, is that the case?—Yes.

35,310. Are you a tradesman?—I am a road contractor; I could not live on the small croft that I have.

35,311. Do you keep a pony or a horse?—A horse.

JOHN MACLEAN, Cottar, Grassfield, Whitehouse, Kintyre (69)—*examined*. John Maclean.

35,312. *Mr Sutherland.* — Are you a crofter at Grassfield?—No, I am a cottar, and I could not get a bit of ground in the country all round.

35,313. So you are in your own person an example of the desire for land?—Yes, of course, I want a bit of land.

35,314. How do you happen to be at Grassfield without land?—I have a cow's grazing and about three acres of land from Mr Turner.

35,315. How is it you are leaving?—Because I cannot live in the house.

35,316. Won't he repair it for you?—No: he told me he would rather let the house fall in than do anything to it.

35,317. So your landlord has refused to keep your house in tenantable repair?—Yes, that is the way of it. I think there is another excuse for it: I am too near the shepherd. Shepherds, as a rule, do not like anything near them.

35,318. How near are you to the shepherd?—The corner of his house and mine are only about four feet apart.

35,319. So you are as near as neighbours in Tarbert?—Yes.

35,320. You have heard the evidence that was given by Mr Mackinnon and Mr Whyte?—Yes.

35,321. Do you agree generally with the evidence so far as the circumstances are known to you?—I do.

35,322. And have you anything to say in addition to what they have told us?—Well, all that I can tell you is that I was born and brought up in that place, and I know the people who were there when I was a boy. I was away from it for about forty years, and I came back to it after I retired from service. I have been down there in the house four years now; and I was away at Strontian, at the manse there, for two or three years before that.

35,323. Is Grassfield on the farm of Kilchamaig?—Yes.

Tarbert, Lochfyne. — John Maclean.

35,324. How do they come to have two names?—Because Grassfield was once a farm by itself.

35,325. And it was swallowed up by Kilchamaig, was it?—Yes.

35,326. How long ago is that?—A good many years ago: I suppose since ever I remember, almost, it was in Sinclair's hands, who was Stonefield's factor. He had Kilchamaig and he had Gort-na-Gleuack.

35,327. But now the farm of Grassfield that once was a separate farm is part of the farm of Kilchamaig?—Yes, it is included in it.

35,328. Do you agree with the previous witnesses as to the fitness of the land in these farms for small holdings?—Oh, yes, I do.

35,329. Would you yourself be willing to get such a small holding as has been referred to?—Quite willing.

35,330. And would take one?—And would take one if I could get it, but I cannot get one; I have searched all the country side, from Skipness down by Clachan and through Sir William Mackinnon's estate and all down the country several times, but could find no place that I could put my nose in.

35,331. You are not one of the witnesses that have no knowledge of farming?—Well, I have been a farm servant: I acted as overseer at Dunmore for some years.

35,332. So you are pretty well qualified to take an arable farm?—Yes, I can do anything that a farmer can do, both plough and sow and reap and everything else: only I am not strong now.

35,333. But it is not because you have no skill in farming that you are not able to get a farm?—No, it is not that. I have plenty knowledge of that.

35,334. Are there any other additional places that you could mention to us, where there is land suitable for the purposes of our inquiry?—If you can get them down about Clachan, down by Sir William Mackinnon's ground; that is a good place, and there is plenty of land there.

35,335. What place in particular do you now refer to?—Well, Stonefield estate comes to Leum-na-muic, then there is Loup and Corran, Shirdrum, Drumleach and all these places down there. There are a number of farms there, but I forget their names.

35,336. In your opinion they are suitable for small holdings?—Yes.

35,337. And they were cultivated as small holdings at one time?—They were. At the place where I was born there were nine dwelling-houses, and there are none now.

35,337*a*. You can see the marks of cultivation up at the tops of the hills in some places?—Yes. Along the Skipness Road, after you pass the stone dyke you come to a wire fence: I saw all the place cultivated at one time.

35,338. You saw that?—Yes, I saw it all under corn and potatoes.

35,339. Do you mean the place round the little loch?—No, there is no little loch near it.

35,340. What is the name of the place?—Duchvoie; or between Duchvoie and the farmer Munro. It is at the left hand side before you come to Lonea.

35,341. In your own opinion that is suitable for small holdings?—Of course, and very good too.

35,342. *Mr Maccallum.*—You told us that you found it impossible to get a small holding anywhere?—I could not get a small holding anywhere. I even wrote to the Duke of Argyll's chamberlain and asked him, and he said there was a place there that was advertised: but it was taken up, and there was no other place near it. Poltalloch's factor also told me that there was no place on his estate vacant.

35,343. So that your experience is that the proprietors do not wish to break up their land into small holdings?—I do not know what they wish to do, but they won't do it.

35,344. You found it a very hopeless work trying to get a small place?—I had to take a house in Tarbert here: I could not get a place to put my head in.

35,345. May not that account for there not being a greater expression of the desire to get land,—that people have found it quite hopeless to try to get it? That it has been useless to apply to the landlord and they have given up the attempt?—It was only shortly since the laird was but a minor.

35,346. I do not speak particularly of any one, but of proprietors in general. You have tried more than one proprietor yourself?—Yes.

35,347. And have found them all of the same mind?—All of the same mind.

35,348. They prefer to put their land under grass?—Under grass.

35,349. There was mention made of the farm of Loup, for instance, as having been added to this other large holding of which we have heard so much?—Mr Turner took it.

35,350. Was there any attempt made to let Loup as a separate farm?—I cannot tell you: I never heard of it being advertised.

35,351. But if these farms were made into small holdings, do you think it would be easy enough to let them?—I think so.

35,352. Judging from the difficulty you have in getting one?—Difficulty, there is no hope of getting one at all.

35,352*a*. Do you find the rent of any small holdings coming down?—No.

35,352*b*. And for every place there is a very great competition?—Yes, there is a competition, certainly.

35,353. But not so in the case of the large holdings?—No. A good many of the large holdings are advertised to let, but cannot find tenants, as it requires people with enough capital to buy the stock.

35,354. So that there is a much greater difficulty in getting people to take the larger holdings?—They cannot get them: only a few can take such holdings, and these get them cheap.

35,355. Can you supply any further particulars, say with regard to the number of tenants that there were at a former time on Mr Turner's present farms?—On Achnaclaon there were four: that is a place you have not had mentioned; it was with Kilchamaig in my younger days.

35,356. Had they common pasture, or were they distinct?—These were what you call cottars: they were not crofters but cottars. It belonged to Sinclair, who was the tenant of Kilchamaig.

35,357. But how was it occupied before he took it?—I cannot say as to that: it was before I was born.

35,358. But in your own recollection there were more people on the land than there are now?—Yes. At Duchvoie there were nine tenants in my recollection: these were all cottars under the farmer Neil Macinvan: and there were others on the other farms.

35,359. And how many are in Duchvoie now?—There is not a house or a place in it.

35,360. How did these cottars make their living?—They worked to Stonefield at 1s. 4d. a day. In my young days there was only one who had more: he got 1s. 6d., but all the rest had 1s. 4d. a day—8s. a week.

35,361. The rate of wages has changed very much since you remember?—Yes.

35,362. Then you cannot give us any idea of the condition of the place, Kilchamaig, before it was made into one holding; the number or the condition of the people?—No. There were only his workers about Kilchamaig,—the ploughman, and shepherd, and herd, and so on.

35,363. And there was more cultivation then than now?—Oh, the whole ground was cultivated then; I trenched part of Achnaclaon and cleared it of trees: we trenched and drained it.

35,364. *Mr Gordon.*—You stay at Grassfield?—Yes.

35,365. How long is it since the farm was merged with Kilchamaig? How long has it been without a tenant?—There were people taking the house just the same as I am taking mine.

35,366. But how long is it since the land was occupied by a separate tenant?—I cannot say how long.

35,367. Thirty or forty years?—Oh, it has been far

more: ever since I remember it was in Sinclair's farms. It was in his hands before I was born.

35,368. Did you ever see any part of that farm in crop?—No, never: only a small patch where the shepherd is.

35,369. There is not very much of it that would do for cultivation without being drained, I am afraid?—It would need draining. There is one park of 50 acres where my cow and two others belonging to the shepherd were, in old Mr Campbell's time: but he is dead these ninety years.

35,370. But you never saw the field, or any part of it, in crop?—No.

35,371. What rent do you pay for your house and your cow's keep?—£6.

35,372. Do you get no winter keep?—Yes, winter, and everything. We got the ground with the house; just what would winter my cows.

35,373. How many acres?—About four acres.

35,374. But you say your house is not in habitable condition?—No.

35,375. Is it a slated house?—Yes.

35,376. But the roof is gone, I suppose?—Yes, the roof is gone.

35,377. And no one else has gone into it?—Not that I know of.

35,378. There will be nobody in the house now or on the farm, except the shepherd, after you left?—That is all.

COLL MACKECHNIE, carpenter, Clachan, Kintyre (53) —*examined.*

35,379. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a crofter?—No, I am a joiner and carpenter.

35,380. Have you any written statement to submit to us?—No, but I will answer any questions.

35,381. Have you heard the evidence already given to-day?—Yes.

35,382. Does the case of Clachan differ in any material way from that evidence?—No, it is just the same: only small holdings could not be got at all, because the landlords keep it all in their own hands.

35,383. How many families are in Clachan, speaking roughly?—About thirty.

35,384. How many of these have got land?—Very few; I may say none at all. There are two or three, such as the blacksmith, who has a small patch.

35,385. How much has he got?—I would say about four acres.

35,386. And have you, as joiner, got any land?—Yes, I got half an acre.

35,387. Are there any others besides yourself and the blacksmith who have any land?—We all got about half an acre; every small holder got that as potato ground.

35,388. Is it on the half acre that your house is built?—No, that is apart from the house.

35,389. In what direction is it—to the right of the road coming north, or to the left?—To the left.

35,390. Between Clachan and the river?—Yes. We had it for a number of years, and the late Sir William Mackinnon made an avenue through it. It belonged at one time to the Loup estate.

35,391. How do the people of Clachan hold their lots, are they leaseholders?—There are no feus on the Balnakill estate at all; but there are two on the Ronachan estate.

35,392. Is the bridge the boundary?—The bridge is the boundary, but the two estates were together at one time. Angus Macallister had them, and he sold it to Captain Stuart; then it went to Captain Macintyre, and then to Mr Pollok, and he left the farm in his own hands.

35,393. Then as to the tenure of the houses on the other side of the bridge,—I think you said they were not held in the same way. Have they building feus?—No, except in the case of two: and they got their feus from Captain Macintyre, who was there before Mr Pollok's time.

35,394. There is no feu at all on the Balnakill estate?—No.

35,395. Are you tenants from year to year?—Yes.

35,396. Tenants at will?—Tenants at will.

35,397. What do you generally pay for your houses?—I pay £4 for the house and cow's grass.

35,398. That is apart from the half acre?—Yes, it is a piece of the common.

35,399. Where is it situated?—It is as you come in to the hill,—it was a piece of the common that the blacksmith, the miller, and the innkeeper had, and it is given to us now. The doctor claimed a piece of it.

35,400. What do you say you are charged for it?—£4.

35,401. Have you access to it all the year round?—Yes.

35,402. It is just kept for yourselves entirely?—Yes.

35,403. You have a knowledge, of course, of these farms that have been spoken of to-day?—Yes.

35,404. Do you concur with the evidence we have had as to them?—Yes.

35,405. Are they, in your opinion, very suitable for making into small holdings?—Yes, especially Ronachan estate. I don't think there is any place more suitable than Ronachan, even in the Carse of Gowrie.

35,406. What farms are there on the Ronachan estate?—You have not heard them mentioned yet. There is Ronachan, or properly speaking it should be Rainoch: the estate got the name from the farm, the original name being Dunanultach. Then there are Lag-nan-goirtean, Corrarie, Talamh-toll, Dail-nan-garnan, Stuart-field or Dunanultach as it used to be, but Stuart called it after himself. Then there was another Dunanultach, then a small farm or a fine croft down near the shore, called Copenhagen,—I suppose the laird had been at the battle of Copenhagen. Then there is another bit near the Clachan, attached to the inn, Cnoc-mheadon, and another small place Creagan-a'-mhuilinn. Further up again was Achvraid, and South Loch-Kerran.

35,407. Is that the same place that was mentioned before?—No, it is a different farm.

35,408. You have given us eleven or twelve separate farms. How many of these are separate farms now?—It is all in the proprietor's hands. When Mr Pollok came here, the two farmers applied for the farms, but could not get them for love nor money. He said he believed they were right honest people, and they had no arrears of rent; but he said the property is mine and I am going to put it under grass. There was no use asking for small holdings or for land, because they kept it in their own hands.

35,409. The whole of these are in grass?—There is not a furrow turned in the whole of the estate, except two small patches for potatoes: to the best of my knowledge, all the rest is under grass or fog.

35,410. Can you give us any idea of the acreage or extent of it?—No, I am unable to do that.

35,411. Is there any desire among the people of Clachan to get an opportunity of acquiring small holdings?—Certainly there is. We are all employed on the Balnakill estate, but if that was to fail us we would require land, or else go into the sea.

35,412. Supposing that employment were to fail?—We would have to try the land: and even supposing we, in Clachan, could not take it ourselves, it would be let out in small farms, and would give us employment. There would be plenty to take the land supposing those in Clachan did not want it. There is far more demand for small holdings than for large ones.

35,413. Did you hear what was said by Mr Maclean, that only very large capitalists could take the large holdings?—Yes, and I agree with him.

35,414. And that there being little or no competition, those large capitalists could get farms almost at their own terms?—Yes.

35,415. That is the result, is it, of the policy of consolidation to the landlord himself?—Yes, certainly.

35,416. Now, with regard to the employment you get on the Balnakill estate: you have got, as a matter of fact, a considerable deal of employment during the

Tarbert, Lochfyne. — Coll Mackechnie.

lifetime of Sir William Mackinnon, have you not?—Oh, yes, he kept us all in employment.

35,417. Was that an exceptional case in Argyllshire, or do you know any other landlords who carried on improvements on their estates the same way as Sir William Mackinnon?—No, it was not common, but they always kept more or less, such as could,—the Earl of Morton and others. But Sir William kept the land in his own hand and gave us employment.

35,418. Because he was expending his money on the estate?—Yes.

35,419. Money that he was earning elsewhere, or deriving from other sources?—Yes.

35,420. But that is a thing that may come to an end at any time?—At any time.

35,421. Sir William Mackinnon died recently?—Yes.

35,422. And is his successor likely to carry on the same policy?—I could not say; but he is expected home soon. The estate is under trustees in the meantime and we do not know as to the future.

35,423. You are in a state of absolute uncertainty as to whether that employment is to be continued?—Just so.

35,424. But I think you said that if you had access to the soil to cultivate it you would be under no such uncertainty?—We would take our living out of the soil.

35,425. *Mr Maccallum.*—You have spoken, I think, with regard to the estates of Balnakill and Ronachan?—Yes, especially Ronachan.

35,426. And you have spoken so clearly about that that very little remains to be asked. Now, as to the removal of the people from the farm of Ronachan, how do you account for their removal?—When Mr Pollok bought the estate he kept it in his own hand. It was an uncle of my own that was in Ronachan at the time, and I remember it well. He would not give the land to the farmers upon any account, because he was such a great farmer himself and a dealer as well. It was not because they were in arrear at all, but because he wanted the land himself.

35,427. And you are perfectly clear with regard to that,—that the people left unwillingly?—Certainly, some of them did.

35,428. And you think that, with regard to the district generally, the people left not of their own accord but were forced away?—Yes, that is my opinion.

35,429. He removed them, you say, because he was a great farmer?—Yes.

35,430. And is there very good farming going on there just now?—It is all under moss.

35,431. That has been the result of consolidation,—that the farming has gone back rather than improved?—Yes, that is my belief. I know that where I saw good crops growing there is now nothing but moss.

35,432. Then I think you were quite distinct in the expression of your opinion that there would be no difficulty in letting holdings formed out of these farms?—I don't think there would be the least difficulty, and I think they would do very well. Besides, we have an example of that; the crofter down at Ballochcroy has a small place and is doing very well. He is bringing up a large family and is doing very well. Such holdings as that, larger and smaller as may be, would suit, I think, very well.

35,433. Then with regard to the farm of Loup on the Balnakill estate, which you say is added to another farm: was there any attempt made to let it as a separate holding, do you know?—No. There were plenty inquiring after it, but I don't think it was ever advertised.

35,434. There was no opportunity given to the people to make application for holdings on that farm?—Not to my knowledge. I know that the blacksmith wanted a small farm, Achvally, but he could not get it. Another man from Skipness was wanting Achvraid farm.

35,435. None of these were successful?—None.

35,436. Is there a steading on Loup?—Yes, and a good dwelling-house, but the rest fell down because they were not kept up: since Sir William got the estate he let them fall down, the only good steading on the estate is Corran and Dunskeig.

35,437. Did the people of Clachan themselves apply to his trustees for land?—No.

35,438. They did not approach them on the subject?—No, they applied to the factor, Mr Mactaggart, Campbeltown.

35,439. And do you think there would be more applications for land on the part of the people if they thought there was any use in applying?—Oh, certainly.

35,440. You think they are distinctly of opinion that it is useless to do so?—Yes, I know that the Loup estate would let very well in small single farms: I am certain of that, because I know the people that wanted them.

35,441. But they consider that they know the mind of the proprietors to be against small holdings?—Yes.

35,442. They removed them unwillingly, and they are not willing to take them on again?—It seems that that is the case.

35,443. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a carpenter in Clachan?—Yes.

35,444. Are there other tradesmen besides yourself and the blacksmith in the village?—Two masons.

35,445. And there are about thirty families?—Yes.

35,446. How many of these thirty families would be inclined to take land, do you think?—I could not say.

35,446*a*. What sort of a place have you in your own mind when you say you would like land? Is it land in connection with your present house and business, or would you like a separate holding altogether?—A little land to carry on along with my business.

35,447. How many acres could you cultivate?—If I had enough to graze a cow and raise as much as would winter it.

35,448. You are not very ambitious?—No. I spent £10 last year in fodder and ryegrass alone, and the year before that £11, and the year before that again £10.

35,449. I think you are not at all extravagant in your wishes. Would there be many of the thirty families who would like it?—A good many.

35,450. But it would be a bit of land that they could work living in their present house, with a few acres to grow corn or winter keep for their cows?—Yes, and they would have to improve their houses, if it was allowed to build houses on the lots.

35,451. How many cows are there in the village?—There are five cows on that piece of common: the blacksmith has two on his croft.

35,452. Five among the thirty families?—Yes.

35,453. What is the general occupation of the villagers: are they roadmen, or common labourers, or tradesmen, or what?—Mostly common labourers: farm servants generally.

35,454. Where are they employed?—By the trustees of the late Sir William Mackinnon. There is nothing done at all on the Ronachan estate: Mr Pollok used to give employment, but there is none now.

35,455. But you think the general wish of the people would be to have land given them in lots?—Yes, or that the land be given out to farmers to work, so that there would be labour.

35,456. They would like the farm round about the village to be cultivated, and they would like a small patch to themselves?—Yes.

35,457. Now, on this farm of Stuartfield there is a good steading?—Yes, a fine steading: it was the home farm.

35,458. But it is not occupied in any shape?—No.

35,459. At Ronachan there is a house, and at Lag-nan-goirtean there are some cottar houses?—Yes.

35,460. But there is no steading at either of these places, I think. Is there a shepherd at Ronachan?—No, the keeper is there; and there is a pheasantry there.

35,461. Is that not rather too high up for a pheasantry?—It is high, but well sheltered.

35,462. There is a good sheltered burn down below?—Yes.

35,463. Now as to Talamh-toll,—there are good houses there?—There is a shepherd's house and good fanks.

35,463*a*. But the houses there are specially built for a sheep farm?—Yes.

35,464. They are not adapted for an agricultural farm?—No.

35,465. And there is not a great deal of land that could be cultivated profitably; it is rather wet, is it not?—Well, I daresay it is wet, but it is lying on limestone. One Angus Keith is the last tenant who was there.

35,466. How long has he been out of that?—Maybe fifty years or so, since it was cultivated.

35,467. The shepherd possibly cultivates a little bit?—Yes, a small patch for potatoes, within the last two years.

35,468. It is a very nice place for a sheep farm, but it is not suited for an agricultural steading?—No.

35,469. But the land you would like, or that you think would be taken by the Clachan people, would be near the village?—Yes.

35,470. And you would like to see the other farms under cultivation?—Yes.

35,471. Giving employment to yourself and men like you?—Yes, that is the wish of everyone.

JOHN MACGUGAN, Castlehill, Tarbert (65)—*examined.*

35,472. *Mr Sutherland.*—How may we describe you?—I am a fisherman,—have been at no other trade during my life. I fished as long as I could work at it.

35,473. Of course, the fishing industry in Tarbert is a well known and very important one, so we need not go into particulars about that at present. You know the opinions of the fishermen in this locality very well, I suppose?—I just came here to give my opinion about the country.

35,474. But I take it that you can be held to know pretty well the opinions of the fishermen in Tarbert?—Well, there is one thing, they would like to see some small farmers. In my day they were only paying £14 of rent, and I think the value of that would now be about £10. I have no doubt fishermen in Tarbert would gladly take a half of that at a rent of £5, instead of their present houses in Tarbert where they have to pay £8 to £10 for two very small rooms.

35,475. Then, I take it that you are of opinion that those in Tarbert who have any land pay far too high for it?—I do. There were four who applied to the Crofters Commission, and they got reductions from £12 to £7 and so on.

35,476. Were there any fishermen who came under the Act?—Yes, there were four in Lochgilphead.

35,477. Their houses were on their land?—Yes.

35,478. And were there a number of them excluded because of their dwelling-houses not being on the land?—Well, they did not apply.

35,479. But did every fisherman in Tarbert who applied to the Crofters Commission get his rent fixed?—Yes.

35,480. Were there more of them who were in a position to apply and who did not apply?—Yes, at Ballochcroy, Corran, and the district.

35,481. Have not they applied since they saw the others get their rents fixed?—Yes, but I think they would be sorry they did not apply.

35,482. Are they not aware that they can apply at any time?—I don't know. I think some of them were not thinking very much about it.

35,483. Do you know whether any of them contracted themselves out by entering into any arrangement with the landlord?—I am not aware of that.

35,484. How much per acre do the fishermen of Tarbert pay for their land?—I cannot say about acres.

35,485. What is the general size of their holdings?—There is one with 1½ acre.

35,486. What is the rent of that?—It was formerly £6, 11s. and it is now reduced to £3, 10s.

35,487. Does that include the house?—Yes.

35,488. Did the landlord build the house?—No.

35,489. Do you know any large farmers who hold thousands of acres in this neighbourhood, who pay so high a rate as that for their land?—I don't believe they pay that for their land. I know farmers here that have no less than six shepherds, shoulder to shoulder. The whole estate of Stonefield is occupied by six families, an area of something like fifteen nautical miles, from Laggan Point to east side of Jura Sound. Tarbert, Lochfyne. John Macgugan.

35,490. And you think they do not pay at the rate of £6 for an acre and a half?—I don't know whether they will or not.

35,491. But you have an idea, surely?—I think the land would be dear enough at that. I am sure it would not pay them.

35,492. Then you think opportunities ought to be given to those who pay such a rate at present for their land, to get holdings on the land instead?—Certainly, breaking up the big holdings.

35,493. What holdings do you wish particularly to mention to us?—These are Drumrioch, Achnafiadh, Glen-na-kill, Port-na-doinionn, Old Ashen, New Ashen, Culraoch, Amhuinn-nan-Gillean, Barabhaille, Doirr-chearra, Glen-na-frodaich, Arichreggach, and the Forest.

35,494. These are all to the north of Loch Tarbert?—Some to the north and some to the south: one gentleman has them all.

35,495. They are both to the north of East and West Loch Tarbert?—Yes.

35,496. And are they all in one holding?—Yes.

35,497. What is the name?—Mr Macdougall, Ashen.

35,498. Could you give us those to the west now?—To the south-east here, Laggan, Altbea, Muldarroch, Breachlarach, Knock-a-cathail. These are all in the landlord's hands, in a sheep farm.

35,499. What is the name of the farm?—Muldarroch.

35,500. Now take those to the south west?—At Carnban there were five or six in my day, but there are three now: West Tarbert, Achnaglaic. You have got Stonefield's estate already, for we have now come to Eskart.

35,501. You think we ought to look at all these places?—Yes.

35,502. They were all separate farms at one time?—Every one of them.

35,503. Can you mention the townships in Eskart?—You got them from previous witnesses.

35,504. Did I understand you to say that you saw people in these separate holdings yourself?—Certainly I did.

35,505. You saw them yourself, in each of these places?—Yes, some were cleared in 1839; I can give the names and point out the houses where the people were.

35,506. You speak from personal knowledge?—From personal knowledge. I could go with you to the place and point out the houses.

35,507. You have already said that these places are suitable for small holdings; but as to the success of such holdings if made, have you any doubt in your mind whether they would be successful, under such conditions as the Crofters Act now gives?—Certainly, I believe they would. When I was in Balmeanach there were twelve families there, and there was a fisherman coming out of every house to Tarbert. Now, if a fisherman was to get half of one of these small farms I have been speaking of for about £5, he would not pay £10 for a single room in Tarbert. £14 was the rent when I was in Drumriach, and I am sure the Commissioners would not give the half of that now, for the ground is now under moss, rushes and bracken, and it would take a long time to bring it into the same state it was in when I was herding there.

35,508. *Mr Gordon.*—Could you find fishermen in Tarbert willing to take land at any distance from the place? In the first place, is there arable land near this that could be occupied by fishermen fishing from the port of Tarbert?—They would be within a mile of Tarbert.

35,509. And would they be willing to walk that mile?—I think they would.

Tarbert, Lochfyne.

John Macgugan.

35,510. Is there any land in the neighbourhood of what you have mentioned that would be suitable for cows' grazing for the fishermen?—There is no doubt of that.

35,511. The nearer end of West Tarbert here?—Yes, and up the hill, but the hill pasture was taken from them: and the hill pasture on the south side of Tarbert was taken from the fishermen of Tarbert.

35,512. There is ground in the neighbourhood of the village of Tarbert here that could be used as cows' grazing if it could be got?—Yes.

35,513. And that, even to the people living in Tarbert, would be a great boon?—Certainly. The land to the south-east would be a splendid place for summering cattle.

35,514. And to the south-west there is a large extent of green ground before you go to Eskart?—Yes.

35,515. Where is the nearest land that you have mentioned that could be cultivated?—Drumriach and Achnafiadh.

35,516. Is the grass lying in pasture just now?—Yes.

35,517. It is not cultivated?—A good deal of it is.

35,518. Then I am afraid it does not come within the scope of our inquiry.—But I may mention the next farm of Macdougall's on Stonefield,—that is Lochan and Gleann.

35,519. And is there green ground there?—There is a good deal of arable land and hill pasture. Stonefield is only under four families altogether.

35,520. But you believe that there is land in the neighbourhood of Tarbert that could be occupied with advantage and profit by the fishermen of Tarbert?—I cannot say whether it would be profitable or not.

35,521. Do you think they would take it?—I believe some of them would.

35,522. Is it not the case that a good many of your successful fishermen here would not be bothered with land?—Well, we were not very well off in these days.

35,523. You appear very well off yourself?—If I am, I work pretty hard for it. But I know it would be a great boon for the fishermen if they could get the land at a fair rent to build houses for themselves.

35,524. And it would be a great advantage to get milk for their families?—The whole village of Tarbert have to content themselves with four small parks; and if the doctor comes to your house in time of sickness and orders milk you must send to the country to get it. If the people could get the ground to build a house on, at a fair rent, they would be willing to pay for it. We have a very bad system in this country of building fishermen's houses: we have only got nineteen or thirty-eight years' leases, and we may spend £300 or £400 before our lease is out.

35,525. *Mr Maccallum.*—Are there any perpetual feus granted for building fishermen's houses here?—Leases only.

35,526. And what happens on the expiry of the lease?—They take the house and you can go.

35,527. You think if they were able to get perpetual leases they would build better houses and would be better off?—That is what I mean.

35,528. What is the average duration of the lease?—Nineteen years was the general rule for houses in Tarbert: and when your nineteen years were out and you have spent £400 you have to pay to the landlord at the rate of £75 an acre for a new feu. They pay 2s. 4d. a foot for frontage.

35,529. And besides the fishermen being benefited by getting land for themselves individually, do you think the town of Tarbert would be benefited in various ways by the land around being cultivated?—Certainly.

35,530. They could get milk more easily, for instance?—Certainly.

35,531. And with regard to the holdings you mentioned on Ashens, you say that these were in your early recollection held as separate holdings. What has become of the houses that were on them?—They are down, but the ruins can be pointed out yet. Another grievance is that the hill pasture was taken from the small crofters below. That was before my recollection. A gentleman called Macpherson got the first of it, but the ruins to this very day will tell what they have suffered.

Tarbert, Lochfyne.

John Macgugan.

35,532. In your recollection these holdings were diminished by the withdrawal of the hill pasture?—Yes.

35,533. What is the name of the farm to which the pasture was added?—Ashens: and those that I mentioned down there they call the outside hill the Forest.

35,534. In your recollection there was no doubt a good deal more cultivation. Were there meal mills working in those days when you yourself recollect?—To give a proof of my word, I may say that there are two meal mills can be seen from Tarbert to here, one for Kintarbert's estate and another for Stonefield estate: and there was a third down at Kilberry. I was down about a twelvemonth ago, and have seen the stones of the meal mill taken to build a public house.

35,535. There used to be a mill for every estate in those days?—Yes.

35,536. And there were two, I think you said, on the Stonefield estate?—Yes, one at Whitehouse and one at Lochan. Kintarbert had a mill for his own estate and Kilberry had one also.

35,537. And is there any meal made there now?—I don't believe there is a bushel for the whole district.

35,538. When the people were removed from their holdings, did they get any compensation for the houses that they left?—Not a farthing.

35,539. And is it your opinion that they generally left against their will?—Certainly they did. I remember the women weeping at the thought of leaving the place they were brought up in.

35,540. And, I suppose, you have no doubt that there is a very general desire to get back to these holdings again?—I cannot say much regarding that, for that is fifty or fifty-four years ago, and the young people are not now up to the cultivation of land the same as they were then.

35,541. But that, I suppose, applies only to the village of Tarbert?—Yes.

35,542. Would not people who have been brought up in the country have the requisite knowledge of farming?—No doubt they would be glad to get the chance.

[Adjourned.]

THIRTY-NINTH SITTING.

LISMORE, ARGYLLSHIRE, May 2, 1894.

Lismore, Argyllshire.

Present:—

Angus Sutherland, Esq., M.P. (acting as *Chairman.*)
George Gordon, Esq.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

John Maccoll, Killean [Cill-Iain], (61). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

John Macc

35,543. *Mr Sutherland.*—You have kindly offered to assist us in our inquiry here. Are you a crofter?—No.

35,544. What is your occupation?—I am a post-runner.

35,545. Do you occupy any land?—No.

35,546. Where is Killean?—A little to the north of this, along the coast. It is on the Duke of Argyll's estate.

35,547. Are there any persons in Killean in the same position as you, without land?—I cannot tell the exact number, but there is a considerable number.

35,548. Are there over twenty?—Not without land.

35,549. More than ten?—There are about eight.

35,550. Eight families?—Some crofts have two families, where the son resides on the croft: but there are also some families without any land.

35,551. Are there eight persons who, in your opinion, would like to get land?—There are eight who desire to get land.

35,552. Then do you think there is land in their neighbourhood to give them?—Plenty of it.

35,553. Would you kindly indicate to us where the land is to be found?—The Duke of Argyll's estate is almost all open for such occupation.

35,554. How is that land occupied at present?—It is under sheep and cattle.

35,555. Could you mention the names of the farms?—Fiart, Kilcheran, Craignich, Ballygrundle, and some pieces of Killean itself. There are crofts in Killean itself from which crofters were removed, and these are now occupied by one Ewan Buchanan.

35,556. What is the name of his holding?—He stays in Killean [Cill-Iain].

35,557. Is there a large farm there?—There is a considerable number where crofts were consolidated.

35,558. Are these all the farms you can tell us of on the Duke of Argyll's property?—Yes.

35,559. Are you acquainted with the lands on the other properties in the island of Lismore?—I am acquainted from point to point, from the north to the south.

35,560. Could you indicate to us the farms elsewhere, on which there is land that, in your opinion, could be profitably occupied by crofters or other small tenants?—On the Loch Nell estate there is Auchanduin.

35,561. How is Auchanduin occupied at the present time?—It is under cattle and sheep.

35,562. Is there any cultivation on that farm?—Not on the piece that is run out like this; there is a small bit on the near end of the farm cultivated.

35,563. What other estate can you mention besides the Duke of Argyll's and Loch Nell?—Mr Fell's estate of Lismore.

35,564. Are there any farms on that estate to which you would call attention?—Yes.

35,565. What are they?—The farm of Frackersaig, in the occupancy of Mr Macintyre.

35,566. Any others?—There is a great extent on Mr Fell's estate.

35,567. But what are the names of the farms besides Frackersaig?—Clochlea, Tirfuir, Balnagown, and Baile-a'-Gheamhraidh; also Achaghuaran and Baligarve.

35,568. To what use are these farms put at present?—Out under cattle and sheep, unless very little.

35,569. Could you tell us any of these farms on which there is no cultivation at all?—There is cultivation in little patches.

35,570. On the whole of them?—Not on the whole of them.

35,571. Tell us one or more upon which there is no cultivation at all?—Tirfuir and Baligarve.

35,572. And with regard to the others, you say there is but very little cultivation?—Very little.

35,573. Passing from that estate now, can you tell us any farms upon any other estates that are suitable?—Next the estate of Baleveolan.

35,574. What farms are there?—Mr Macintyre, the tenant of Frackersaig, occupies a part of Baleveolan.

35,575. It will doubtless be contiguous to Frackersaig farm if it is held along with it?—There is another township between Baleveolan and Frackersaig.

35,576. What is the next farm you can tell us about?—On the whole estate of Baleveolan, on the other side of the island, there is a great extent that is not cultivated at all.

35,577. But it will be held, I presume, for some purpose at present?—It is under sheep and cattle.

35,578. Then can you tell us the names of the sheep and cattle farms, so that we can see them?—Ballimackillickan on the estate of Baleveolan; Portcharn belonging to Councillor Maccoll; they say it belongs to him, but I am not sure.

35,579–80. Any other farm?—That is all on Baleveolan.

35,581. Well, on any other estate?—These are all the estates in the island.

35,582. And have you told us all the farms that, in your opinion, we ought to go and see, for the purposes of this inquiry?—Yes.

35,583. Now with regard to the land on these farms, are you of opinion that the people would take small holdings on these if they got an opportunity?—Yes, they are anxious to get them if they can. There is another bit on the Baleveolan estate which I did not mention, called Creaganbreac; and there is also Port-na-mod, on the same estate.

35,584. Are there many people without land on any part of the island except Killean?—In every corner of the island.

35,585. Could you tell us some places where the landless population is?—There are landless people on every one of these estates, who would be glad to get land if they could.

35,586. Were the large holdings in Lismore made out of smaller holdings at a previous time?—Yes, the small holdings were put together and the large holdings formed.

35,587. So the usual process of consolidation went on in Lismore as in other places?—Yes, that is the way of it.

35,588. Have you something to read to us?—I may say, that from the Loch Nell estate there were four families removed, and the holdings consolidated into one; from the Baleveolan estate there were eight removed and their holdings consolidated. On the Duke of Argyll's estate in Lismore there were thirty-eight families removed in my own recollection and their holdings consolidated; on Mr Fell's estate twenty-three, and on the County Councillor's estate of Port-Charn five.

35,589. Did these things take place within your own memory?—All that was in my own recollection.

35,590. And generally speaking (I do not wish you to go into particular cases), what became of these people?—Some of them were sent to America and some to the large towns. A large number of these would be glad to return if they got the land.

35,591. Are the people who are the descendants of these people anxious to get back to the land?—Yes, they speak to me every day about getting it.

35,592. Now, as to the ability of these people, would any of them be able to begin in small holdings if these large holdings were broken up?—Yes, plenty of them.

35,593. You understand that they would have to build new houses in most cases?—Yes, I understand that.

35,594. And with a full knowledge of that, you think a number of them would be in a position to take small holdings?—Yes, it is not difficult to build houses in Lismore; there is plenty of stone and lime.

35,595. Do you think it would be easier or more difficult to build houses now than it was when these people were first put off the land?—It would be more difficult at present, because of the different class of house: at that time they built only the old black houses.

35,596. Did the people who were put off the land build houses when they were removed from the land?—The proprietor was erecting houses for those who remained on the island.

35,597. Was it the proprietor who built all the houses, or the people who are in the villages now?—It is the landlord who is erecting the houses in the villages now.

35,598. You think that, notwithstanding all that, if the people got the opportunity of getting small holdings, they would in a great number of cases build the houses for themselves?—Some of them.

35,599. Would that be the greater or the smaller number, do you think?—I cannot go into that.

35,600. But you think there would be some at any rate who could build houses themselves without assistance?—That is sure enough.

35,601. I think you mentioned that a certain farmer had two farms, or one farm and part of another,—is it Frackersaig?—Yes.

35,602. Are there houses on both these holdings?—Yes.

35,603. Does the farmer occupy both?—No, he resides in Frackersaig.

35,604. What is the other house used for?—He has a cottar in it.

35,605. *Mr Gordon.*—What kind of farming is carried on here; is it dairy farming or sheep and cattle?—It is sheep and grazing.

35,606. They do not carry on dairy farming here, do they?—No.

35,607. Is there daily communication from this island to Oban?—Yes, a daily steamer, except on Sunday.

35,608. Would not dairy produce then be a more profitable business than grazing cattle and sheep?—It would, no doubt, be more profitable, and it would pay the small tenants better than it pays the big tenants.

35,609. Do you happen to know the population of this island?—I am not quite sure; I think it is now about 600 or 700, but in my young days I recollect my father telling me there were 1700 on the island.

35,610. What is the general occupation of the people on the island other than those who are in the occupation of land?—They are going from place to place, seeking work wherever they can get it.

35,611. They do not follow the fishing as a trade, do they?—Not much.

35,612. Fishing is not an ordinary occupation of the people?—No.

35,613. Have you much snow here in winter?—Some years we have snow, but it does not lie long.

35,614. Is the climate such that the ordinary highland cattle can be wintered outside, or are they housed?—Some of them are out in parks all winter: others are housed.

35,615. What size of a holding, do you think, would be required to keep a family here?—To maintain a family would require four to six milk cows and their followers.

35,616. There is not a great deal of land that could be cultivated in the island, is there? The larger proportion of the island, although green, is mostly pasture, is it not?—It is all cultivable. There are no rocks; it is arable land, every bit of it.

35,617. You think there would be no difficulty in getting people to occupy the land if it was offered to them in small holdings?—No, there would be no difficulty. There are in this island itself, and also in the large towns, people who are anxious to get back to the old holdings. They were driven away and are anxious to get back.

35,618. Is there any lime burnt in the island?—Yes.

35,619. At how many places?—In two places at present.

35,620. How many men are occupied at the lime works?—I don't know: at present the lime burners are complaining that they have no labourers; the people are away in other quarters.

35,621. They have difficulty in getting labourers?—Yes, the people are driven away, and are working elsewhere.

35,622. Then if the people were replaced to some extent upon the land, those who had spare time could work at the lime works?—Yes, and there would be a demand for lime itself, if it was worked and houses were being built.

35,623. No doubt, if it could be made cheap enough. There is no other occupation of a public nature for the people, is there?—No, nothing else.

35,624. *Mr Munro.*—I think you told us you are a post-runner?—Yes.

35,625. Have you any other occupation?—No.

35,626. What experience have you had yourself in the working of land?—I was a farmer myself in the place, but I was put away through treachery.

35,627. For how long were you a farmer?—I had land myself for twenty years in my own name, and my father had land before that, also my uncles and other relatives.

35,628. Why did they remove you from the farm?—The ground officer took my holding from the factor without my knowledge; I was not a penny in arrear.

35,629. With reference to the large sheep farms, you stated that in many of them there were only small bits of the land cultivated?—Yes, that is so.

35,630. Why is it that the sheep farmers cultivate only small bits of land?—They just cultivate little bits for the wintering of their cattle.

35,631. They cultivate just what suits themselves, I suppose, and what suits their farming interests?—That is so.

35,632. Now, supposing that that land were broken up and given to crofters, would they cultivate it to greater advantage than the sheep farmers at present do?—The crofters would work every bit of it.

35,633. If a sheep farm were broken up, are you satisfied that there is a sufficient number of people on the island at present who would take these farms split up into suitable holdings,—good and bad land taken together?—Yes, between those in the island and those sent from home who are anxious to return to the land.

35,634. I think you mentioned that you knew of families in America who would return to Lismore and take up land there if they got facilities for doing so; is that so?—Not six weeks ago I was told by a man who left the island for America that he would return again if the farms were broken up.

35,635. That man was not speaking for any more than himself, was he?—It was his own opinion he gave me.

35,636. Do you know, as a matter of fact, within your own knowledge, that there is a great anxiety on the part of the people of this island to obtain land here?—Yes, and more than that, I am anxious to get land myself.

35,637. *Mr Sutherland.*—Has land gone out of cultivation to any great extent in the island of Lismore within your memory?—All the land that I referred to in the paper has been allowed to go out of cultivation in my own recollection.

35,638. But I understand that even when the small holders were there, there was part of their holdings not cultivated?—Very little of it was uncultivated under the small tenants, except a piece away to the south here.

35,639. Then all the marks of old cultivation that we see here indicate the cultivation of the small tenants?—Yes, the small tenants.

John Buchanan, Lismore (46).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

35,640. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I am a mason; I live in Killean at present.

35,641. Have you heard what Mr Maccoll has said?—Yes.

35,642. Do you agree with that evidence?—Yes, I agree with every word.

35,643. And is there anything in addition that you would like to say to us?—No, except concerning myself.

35,644. Is it with regard to land?—It is about land, and about the house at which I live, that I wish to speak.

35,645. Do you desire to get an allotment or piece of land?—Yes.

35,646. Do you know where the land is?—Yes.

35,647. Who has it now?—I live in a croft house, and the croft itself is in Killean, in the tenancy of Hugh Buchanan.

35,648. Is he a crofter?—He is a tenant.

35,649. What farm is he tenant of?—Killean. [*The Secretary.*—The rent in the Valuation Roll is £62, 0s. 6d.]

35,650. Would you take a small holding such as Mr Maccoll has spoken of if you got the opportunity?—Yes; and because I am at present without land I am obliged to be away at Crianlarich, working at the station there. Lismore, Argyllshire. John Buchanan.

35,651. Would you be in a position to take a small holding if you got it?—Yes, I could erect houses myself, as I am a mason. Over and above that, there is another township which I occupy; it is at Balnagown, on Mr Fell's estate. I had a house on Mr Fell's estate, but I could not get the grazing of a cow on that estate, and I was, therefore, obliged to shift to the Duke's estate in order to get the grazing of a cow for milk for my children. But if, at any time, I could get land on Mr Fell's estate, I am desirous of returning to the place where I was born and brought up.

35,652. So your evidence amounts to the fact that you have no land and are very anxious to get some?—Yes.

35,653. *Mr Munro.*—Have families in this island any difficulty in procuring milk for their children?—It is so difficult that at one time they cannot get a drop at all.

35,654. Do other families complain of that difficulty as well as you?—Yes.

35,655. There is a difficulty in obtaining milk in Lismore?—Yes, because, as you heard from Mr Maccoll, the people are not cultivating the soil, and there is, therefore, no milk.

35,656. Does the health of the children suffer in consequence of the want of milk?—Yes, because they are obliged to use condensed milk.

35,657. They actually have to import condensed milk into the island of Lismore?—Yes. If they do not use that condensed milk they have to use tea, but tea is bad for them and often brings them trouble. I was anxious to get the park that was in Mr Fell's estate near the house I occupied there, but as I was not willing to give a high rent for it I could not get the park. The farmer who occupies that park heard that I was applying for it. I came down on Saturday from Crianlarich, and when I went to the place I found that the wall of the garden about the house for which I pay rent was broken down and cattle and sheep allowed in, and the trees and fruit bushes that I had there destroyed.

35,658. *Mr Sutherland.*—What do you intend to do with regard to that?—I spoke to the farmer, telling him he had acted very badly, and the farmer said to me that he would put it down altogether.

35,659. *Mr Munro.*—What farmer broke down your garden wall?—One Donald Maccoll in Balnagown.

35,660. Is he still in the island?—He is the tenant farmer in the place where the house I refer to is situated.

35,661. *Mr Sutherland.*—I think you said you applied to get land and you have not got any because the landlord asked too high a rent for it?—Yes.

35,662. But if you had got the land at what you considered a reasonable rent, would you have been glad to take it?—Yes.

35,663. *Mr J. F. Maclaren, Solicitor, Oban, Agent for Rev. Mr Fell of Lismore.*—What rent do you pay for this house to Mr Fell?—Five shillings for the house and garden.

35,664. You wanted a grazing for a cow and a park?—I was wanting a park that is near my house. The house is in the park.

35,665. You wrote to Mr Fell through me for a grazing?—I spoke to Mr Maclaren about the grazing of a cow, but I cannot say whether he spoke to Mr Fell.

35,666. You also wrote to me, did not you?—I don't think I did: I wrote a letter to Mr Fell.

35,667. And then I wrote to you, did not I?—No.

35,668. Did I not write to you that the places all around were let to small tenants and others?—No, I never got a word.

35,669. Did I not write to you?—No, not a word.

35,670. And tell you that it was all let round about, and that if you could arrange with any of the tenants we would be very glad if you could get a cow's grass, but that we were all let? [*Mr Sutherland.*—Did you ever hear of that arrangement or proposal?]—No, but Mr Maclaren told me in Oban that I would not get the farm.

35,671. *Mr Maclaren.*—The places are all let to small tenants round about, but we told Mr Buchanan that if he could arrange for a cow's grazing we would be very pleased, but we could not interfere with those who have so little there.

35,672. *Mr Sutherland.*—Is it the case that all the land that was available for giving you the holding was already in the possession of small holders?—The man who has this park has two farms.

35,673. Who is the man you refer to?—Donald Maccoll.

35,674. *Mr Maclaren.*—It is not a very large farm that Mr Maccoll has, is it?—No, but at the same time he has two good crofts. My uncle had one of these, and he brought up a family on it and was very well off; Mr Black had the other croft and he also brought up a family there.

35,675. Did I not tell you to arrange with Maccoll for a grazing?—I am not aware of that.

35,676. Is it not the case that you are a rather troublesome neighbour? Is not that the main reason why you do not get the grazing from him?

35,677. *Mr Sutherland.*—Is it the neighbours that give you a grazing?—My father-in-law gives me the grazing in the meantime; but I asked Mr Maccoll, the tenant, one day,—I was in the garden and he came in. I asked him would he be so kind as to give me the grazing for a cow; and he said no.

35,678. The point is this; in your opinion, was the grazing you wanted to be taken from a small holder?—Yes, it was to be taken from a man that has two crofts.

DONALD MACCOLL, farmer's son, Balnagown (22)—*examined.* Donald Maccoll.

35,679. *Mr Sutherland.*—What is your occupation?—I work in the farm of the Mr Maccoll referred to: I am his son.

35,680. Are you a farm labourer?—Yes.

35,681. What have you got to say?—I have to explain that Mr Buchanan left the dyke in a very disorderly way. He put it up, I think, about eight years ago,—unawares to us he took in a part of our ground, at least I did not know of it, and he enclosed it round about one day with a Galloway dyke. He never repaired that dyke or kept it in proper order. He left the place and went away to work at Crianlarich. The dyke had been very weak, and the cattle had gone in, though we tried to keep them out. We did keep them out as well as possible, and looked after the place, and I even put up some of the stones myself and rebuilt the dyke; but I think it is not our duty to look after the dyke and put it in order, and, therefore, we told Mr Buchanan here the other day to build the dyke, and to keep it in order.

35,682. That is the statement you wanted to make in explanation?—Yes.

35,683. *Mr Gordon.*—He is not living in the house, is he?—No.

35,684. There is nobody living in the house?—No.

35,685. The house and garden are left to look after themselves?—Yes.

35,686. *Mr Sutherland.*—You don't deny the damage that was done?—Oh, the cattle went in; but it was altogether unawares to us, and because the dyke was not properly built. [*Mr Buchanan.*—You will have to excuse me for saying two or three words more. I keep that garden in order, and I may say that every year I am getting more than 30s. worth of fruit from it; but it will be useless this year, for the sake of his cattle and sheep.]

[ADJOURNED.]

Bunessan, Mull.

FORTIETH SITTING.

BUNESSAN, MULL, May 10, 1894.

Present:—

JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq. (acting as *Chairman.*)
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

Archibald Macfadyen.

ARCHIBALD MACFADYEN, cottar, Lochbuy (36)—*examined.*

35,687. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

35,688. A cottar?—Yes.

35,689. You have a house at Lochbuy?—No, I have no house.

35,690. Do you reside at Lochbuy?—Yes, along with my brother-in-law.

35,691. And is he a crofter?—No, he is a joiner.

35,692. What evidence do you wish to bring before this Commission?—Well, I would like to have land; a house and 50 acres of low ground as the Act gave.

35,693. Your evidence is that you have come here to state that you desire land?—Yes.

35,694. To what extent, provided you can get it?—To the extent of 50 acres.

35,695. Do you mean by that 50 acres of arable?—Yes.

35,696. And grazing besides?—No, just as far as the Act could give.

35,697. But we are not under any Act: this is simply a Commission of inquiry, to find out what the desire of the people is in the way of land, and to ascertain what land there is available for crofts or other small holdings.—Well, 50 acres of arable land, and no grazing.*

35,698. Can you point out where such an extent of arable land is to be had in your neighbourhood?—In the Laggan district.

35,699. Do you consider that there is enough arable land there to meet your wishes?—Yes, over and above.

35,700. Then is your desire for arable land only?—Yes, but if there could be pasture got or hill land, certainly I would take that along with it, or a share.

35,701. And how would you propose to stock such a holding: have you the means?—No, but the stocking I think would not trouble me. I have no great means, but the stocking would not trouble me, as stock is not very dear.

35,702. You think you could stock such a holding?—Yes.

35,703. Could you build a house, and do the necessary fencing?—I think the Royal Commission should look after the house building and the fencing.

35,704. That is rather beyond our powers at the present time, or probably at any time. We are merely a Commission of inquiry, and we wish to see what would be the possibilities of a tenant in the way of providing means for such a holding as you have described. You mean that you would not be able to do that yourself out of your own means?—No.

35,705. You would require assistance to build and fence?—Assistance to build and fence.

35,706. And possibly to stock?—No; I would stock it myself.

35,707. Do you represent the views of anybody else on Lochbuy, or do you come as an individual witness?—Just an individual witness.

35,708. *Mr Gordon.*—How many people could be accommodated to the extent of 50 acres each on the farm of Laggan?—A family could live on it: just a family.

35,709. One family?—One family.

* Macfadyen has since the sitting explained that he meant to say 10 acres.

35,710. Are there more people in your district wanting land?—Yes.

35,711. Where would you propose to put them?—There is plenty of land in Laggan for all who are wanting it just now.

35,712. To how many acres does the farm of Laggan extend?—I am not sure, but I know there is plenty land for them.

35,713. Would there be 100 acres arable on it?—Yes, I should think so, and more. I cannot say how much there is.

35,714. I would not think there are 100 acres arable in the farm of Laggan. How many people would apply for land from your district?—Six altogether.

35,715. Suppose you and another were placed on the farm of Laggan, where would you put the other four? Is Laggan the only place you know in that country?—No; Laggan is the only place that we wanted; and as we applied at the Royal Commission at first, it was 10 acres each.

35,716. To the Crofters Commission?—No, to the Royal Commission. It was 10 acres arable we wanted each and 40 of grazing ground.

35,717. You would have no difficulty in getting the grazing ground, but there is not a large extent of arable upon the whole farm. There is no other land in that district that you know of as available?—No, there is no other land without a tenant, or without any cultivation on it, except the farm of Laggan.

35,718. Are there any holdings on the farm of Laggan at present?—There are two holdings,—the shepherd's house, and a small shooting lodge.

35,719. Is there a steading on it?—Yes, there is a steading on it.

35,720. But there is no part of the farm cultivated, is there?—No.

35,721. *Mr Munro.*—How are you employed at present?—Fishing.

35,722. Entirely fishing?—Entirely fishing just now.

35,723. Do you cultivate any land at all?—Not at present.

35,724. Have you ever cultivated any land?—I have; ten or twelve years ago I had a croft in the same place.

35,725. You cultivated a small croft?—Yes, about 6 acres.

35,726. You stated in answer to the Chairman that you wanted 50 acres of arable land?—Yes.

35,727. Then you told us that on the farm of Laggan there were about 100 acres of arable?—Yes.

35,728. And for these 100 acres there were six people applying. Now, how could you take 50 acres yourself and find suitable holdings for the other five?—Oh, not very well.

35,729. Don't you see that you would have half the arable portion of the farm for your own use, and leave only 50 acres remaining to be divided amongst the other five?—Yes.

35,730. Then you stated, a little late, I think, that the intention of the other applicants, if not of yourself, was to get 10 acres of arable besides grazing?—Yes, that was the first statement.

35,731. You said you could stock a holding if you got one, but you could not build houses?—Yes.

35,732. And I understood you to say that you expected the Royal Commission was to provide the holdings?—Yes.

35,733. Are you not aware that the Royal Commission has no such powers remitted to it? (*No answer.*)

35,734. Now supposing that you could not get the houses built for you by any outside assistance, your position then is that you could not take a holding at all: is that not so?—Oh, no. I could build it in a way that would suit me, but maybe that would not do for the Royal Commission, or for the laird, or whoever takes to do with it afterwards.

35,735. Keep the Royal Commission out of it altogether. You could build houses that would suit yourself on a holding?—Yes.

35,736. Without any outside assistance?—Without any outside assistance.

35,737. Now, do you think you could carry on such a farm to profit?—Oh, yes, I think I would.

35,738. Is that the general view of the other applicants as well as your own?—Yes, just the same.

ROBERT MACINNES, crofter's son, Lochbuy (34). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

35,739. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you reside on Lochbuy?—Yes.

35,740. Are you a crofter?—No.

35,741. Have you a house on Lochbuy?—My father has.

35,742. Is he on one of the farms?—No, he is a crofter.

35,743. Have you heard the evidence given just now by Mr Macfadyen, Lochbuy?—Yes.

35,744. Do you agree with that evidence?—Yes.

35,745. What are your own ideas as to the holding which, I presume, you would like to have? What size would it be?—Laggan is the only place I would like.

35,746. And what size of holding there?—I would take between both, 100 acres. [*The Interpreter.*—I fancy he means both arable and pasture.]

35,747. Do you think there is land there for all the people in Lochbuy who want land?—Yes, I think so.

35,748. Would you have the means to stock such a holding?—I would need to get money to stock the land.

35,749. You would require Government help, then?—No, not for stocking.

35,750. But for building and fencing?—If it could be got: if not, I would have to do without it.

35,751. *Mr Munro.*—You stated that you wanted 100 acres arable and pasture?—Yes.

35,752. Could you tell us how many acres arable and how many pasture?—Forty acres arable and 60 acres pasture.

35,753. Don't you see there would be some difficulty in dividing the farm of Laggan among six people? If you wanted 40 acres and another man wanted 50, that would leave only 10 for the remaining four?—I would agree to divide the arable land among us.

35,754. That would give 10 acres arable to each, besides the hill pasture. You have had no practical experience yourself as a crofter or a farmer, I think you said?—I was working the croft with my father.

35,755. And that is the only experience you have had?—I was working with farmers for a good time.

35,756. Have you made any calculation as to how much it would cost to stock a croft of 10 acres arable and say 70 acres of pasture?—No.

35,757. Then, how do you know that you could stock such a farm without outside assistance?—I would try to stock it the best way I could. I could never stock it unless I got the land.

35,758. No, that is obvious to anybody. But if you have made no calculation as to the amount of money it would take to stock such a piece of land, do you not see that there is some difficulty even for yourself in determining whether you can stock it or no?—Unless I attempt, I can never succeed.

DUNCAN LIVINGSTON, Dalnaha, Lochbuy (35). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

35,759. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a holding at Dalnaha?—No.

35,760. Are you a cottar?—No, I reside with my brother.

35,761. Has your brother a croft?—Yes.

35,762. Have you come here to express your desire to get some land?—Yes.

35,763. Have you any place in your mind where you think you could get a holding?—Yes, on Laggan.

35,764. Do you think that is the only suitable place near about for a holding?—Yes.

35,765. You have heard what the other delegates from Lochbuy have said as to the size of holdings they would like?—Yes.

35,766. You have also heard that the amount of arable land in Laggan is not very large?—Yes.

35,767. Do you wish to get a holding of the same size as they require, say 40 or 50 acres arable?—Twelve acres arable would suit my purpose.

35,768. That points more to a division of the arable of Laggan among five or six, does it not?—Yes, that would suit.

35,769. Could you stock a holding such as you describe?—Yes.

35,770. Could you build a house upon it?—If I could get some assistance.

35,771. You would require assistance from some outside source, would you?—I could build without assistance.

35,772. *Mr Gordon.*—Is your brother the farmer on Dalnaha?—Yes.

35,773. Who occupies the next farm, Achdaloist?—Macphail.

35,774. Does he reside on the farm?—Yes, there are other crofters residing beside him.

35,775. On the farm of Achdaloist?—Dalnaha.

35,776. Yes, but I am talking of the next farm?—Drimnatain on the one hand and Achdaloist on the other, are under one.

35,777. One tenant has both these places, has he?—Yes.

35,778. Which does he live upon?—Drimnatain.

35,779. Then there is no tenant on Achdaloist?—No, it is under sheep.

35,780. Is there any arable land suitable for cultivation in Achdaloist?—It is not very good, but some of it might be cultivated.

35,781. Not so good as Laggan?—Not so good as Laggan.

35,782. What occupation do you follow yourself?—I follow the fishing industry.

35,783. Do you go to the white fishing?—To the salmon fishing on Lochbuy estate.

35,784. You are a salmon fisher?—Yes.

35,785. How do you occupy yourself when the salmon fishing is not being carried on?—I prosecute the herring and cod fishing.

35,786. Do you go to the line fishing for white fish?—Yes.

35,787. Have the crofters in your neighbourhood boats big enough for the open sea?—On Lochbuy and the coast about Lochbuy.

35,788. You do not go far out?—No, just at the entrance to the loch.

35,789. On the farm of Achdaloist there are three or four crofters?—I saw four crofters on the farm of Achdaloist, but there are none now.

35,790. Are there not some crofts on the seaside?—Yes, small bits.

35,791. What do these men do?—There is no person resident; it belongs entirely to a tenant.

35,792. But are there no people living in these cottages near the school?—Yes, small crofters who have garden ground.

35,793. What do these small crofters do for their living?—Anything they can get to do.

35,794. Are they fishermen?—A number of them are on the poor roll.

35,795. That is a bad occupation. Are not these crofts a part of the old farm of Achdaloist?—No.

35,796. What farm are they a part of?—They belonged originally to Crogan, but they have been under the present tenant as long as I remember.

35,797. Could you prosecute the fishing from holdings on the farm of Laggan? Is there any good harbour on that side?—I have a distinct recollection of seeing twenty boats prosecuting the fishing at Laggan. There is a very good harbour, but we are not allowed to reside there now, because it is a deer forest.

35,798. Do you think that if land were available there and could be got, a colony of fishermen could be induced to settle down in the neighbourhood of the former harbour?—Yes.

Bunessan, Mull.

Duncan Livingston.

35,799. There is good fishing out there?—It is always good there.

35,800. And a safe harbour?—Not very safe in stormy weather; good enough for small boats.

John Livingston.

JOHN LIVINGSTON, Dalnaha, Lochbuy (31).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

35,801. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

35,802. Are you a relation of the former witness, Duncan Livingston?—Yes.

35,803. What relation?—I am his brother.

35,804. With whom do you live?—I live with my brother.

35,805. You have heard the evidence given us by your brother?—Yes.

35,806. Do you agree with it?—Yes.

35,807. Is there anything you would like to add to it?—No.

35,808. Then we may take you as concurring in the evidence given by Duncan Livingston?—Yes.

Allan Livingston.

ALLAN LIVINGSTON, fisherman, Dalnaha (25)—*examined.*

35,809. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a brother of the two former witnesses?—No.

35,810. Are you a crofter?—No.

35,811. Have you a house of your own?—I reside with my father.

35,812. Has your father a croft?—Yes.

35,813. Where?—At Dalnaha.

35,814. Have you come before us to express your desire for land?—Yes.

35,815. Do you know of suitable land in the neighbourhood?—The most suitable for us is Laggan.

35,816. You have heard the evidence that has been given about Laggan?—Yes.

35,817. Do you agree with that evidence?—Yes.

35,818. Is there anything else that you would wish to say about it?—No.

35,819. Would you be contented with a small holding at Laggan, with the chance of being able to fish from there?—Yes.

35,820. Are you a fisherman?—Yes.

35,821. Do you think you could keep a fishing boat easily and safely at Laggan?—Yes.

35,822. A small fishing boat, I suppose?—Yes.

35,823. There is no accommodation there for large boats, is there?—No.

35,824. They must be skiffs that can be easily hauled up?—Yes.

35,825. And you consider that you could make a living there if you had a small croft and some grazing, with the aid of your fishing boat?—Yes.

35,826. *Mr Munro.*—Is there generally a strong desire on the part of the people of Dalnaha to get more land?—Yes, those who have no land.

35,827. How many people do you know at present residing at Dalnaha who want to get land?—There are three at home, and there is a brother away who would be quite willing to return in the event of his succeeding in getting land.

35,828. That is referring to your own family?—Yes.

35,829. But do you know of any outside your own family who want land?—I know some at Crogan.

35,830. How many do you know there?—Two.

35,831. And is Laggan the place that they all, you think, seem to have set their heart upon getting in preference to any other subject?—Yes.

35,832. Do you know of no other suitable land besides Laggan?—Not on the estate so suitable for crofters as Laggan; but if we will not get land at Laggan, we will take it on another estate.

35,833. Don't you see the difficulty of dividing Laggan amongst every applicant when they are so numerous?—It could be divided, if they made the arable land into smaller divisions.

35,834. How small now would you say the arable land should be divided; how many acres to each?—Twelve acres arable for each. I will take 12 acres arable land and 100 acres of hill pasture.

Bunessan, Mull.

Allan Livingston.

Archibald Macfayden, Gribun, Mull (59).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Archibald Macfayden.

35,835. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft at Gribun?—No.

35,836. Have you a house there?—I have.

35,837. Have you any land at all—No.

35,838. How do you make your living?—I take my food out of the sea.

35,839. You are a fisherman?—Yes.

35,840. Do you represent the people of Gribun?—No.

35,841. You come here as an individual witness?—Yes.

35,842. Have you come before this Commission to express a desire as to land?—Yes.

35,843. Were you not appointed at a meeting of the Gribun people?—Yes, but I thought they were coming too.

35,844. Then you are not only on your own account but you were appointed by a meeting of the Gribun people to represent them?—I will do that as well as I can, but they ought to come themselves.

35,845. I have a letter here signed by John Bell, who could not attend here to-day, in which he states that you were appointed at a conference of the people?—I spoke to Bell yesterday. He told me he had spoken to one of the Commissioners yesterday, and that was quite sufficient for him.

35,846. Then I think we may take you as representing the people of Gribun?—I am not sure; I do not know what views they hold. I only know my own views.

35,847. Have you come here to express your desire for land?—Yes.

35,848. What sort of holding would you desire to have?—I would like a piece beside me.

35,849. Is there any land in your neighbourhood available for small holdings?—There is.

35,850. What land could you point out to us?—There is plenty of land, but there are people on it. But there are some on the roadside farther up.

35,851. Do you mean on Balmeanach?—There are people on Balmeanach, and there is the tenant on the farm on which I live.

35,852. Is it land then on the farm of Balmeanach that you are referring to?—If the land was divided, I would prefer where I am.

35,853. How is that land held just now?—It is let to Joseph Robson.

35,854. What is the farm?—Balnahard.

35,855. What size of holding would you require if you could get one?—I would take the same size as the present crofters have.

35,856. But you have not got a croft at all, have you?—No, not the length of my foot.

35,857. And you want a croft the same size as the other ones that are there already?—I would take that.

35,858. And would you want that off Balnahard if you could get it?—Yes, just so, and my share of the hill pasture as well.

35,859. And that is because it is close to your house?—The house and the land are better than the land alone.

35,860. Would you go to another place if you could get a good holding?—Yes, wherever I could save myself and the boat.

35,861. You would wish to continue the fishing?—Yes.

35,862. Do you know what the other people at Gribun wish?—I have no idea: I can say nothing as to them.

35,863. You don't even know whether they want any more land if they could get it?—I heard them say so, but I am not going to say anything about it.

35,864. In fact, you decline to give any evidence

except as to yourself?—They have feet of their own to walk here as well as I have. I got a letter at twelve o'clock yesterday, and I walked here, and am tired enough.

35,865. *Mr Munro.*—You stated, in answer to a question from the Chairman, that you would like the same sort of croft as are at present possessed by other crofters?—Yes.

35,866. Are you not aware that it is a subject of general complaint amongst the existing crofters, the smallness of their holdings?—They say so.

35,867. You know that a majority of them say that the present size of holding is quite insufficient for the maintenance of themselves and their families?—I believe that; but it would be better for me than to go on as I am.

35,868. Yes, but if you got a croft the same size as existing crofters have, does it not follow that you might subsequently prove discontented with such a small holding?—I don't know: it would be pretty good if I could get hill pasture with them. With a few sheep I would be better off than at present: if we had grazing for the horse on the hill pasture we would be better off.

35,869. I understood you to say that you have never cultivated any land?—Never.

35,870. Then, do you think you have any experience at all to justify you in taking land?—Yes, I know I could do it better than many who have land.

35,871. Could you stock a holding if you got one?—I would do my best.

35,872. Do you know how much money it would take to stock a small holding?—I don't know at present.

35,873. Then you don't know whether you could stock it or not?—I am not very sure.

35,874. Could you build the necessary houses and buildings required for such a holding?—No, I could not do that if I were removed from my present house.

35,875. From whom would you expect help to come to enable you to build the necessary houses?—My family, who support me at present, would build them.

35,876. Would you continue the fishing industry if you got a croft?—Yes, I will prosecute the fishing industry as long as I live.

35,877. And do you think you could do justice to both?—Yes.

35,878. *Mr Gordon.*—What stock have the present crofters of Gribun?—Two cows, a horse, and two stirks each.

35,879. How is the island of Inchkenneth occupied at present?—It is let to a tenant.

35,880. Does the tenant reside upon it?—No.

35,881. What sort of land is upon the island?—Good land.

35,882. Is it suitable for crofting?—Very good.

35,883. Are there any harbours on the island convenient?—Yes.

35,884. Could that land be utilized by crofters engaged partly in fishing?—Yes.

35,885. Is the harbour accommodation on Inchkenneth as good as the harbour at Gribun?—Yes, and better: we have a bad shore at Gribun.

35,886. Can the crofters at Gribun manage to keep two cows and two stirks and a horse within their own crofts?—Yes, that is what they keep: they pay rent for the horses at this time of year.

35,887. They have to put the horse away from the croft in summer?—Yes.

35,888. Where do they put the horse to graze?—They pay rent to Balmeanach in summer for the grazing of the horses.

35,889. Is there any part of the hill of Balmeanach that could be made available for an extension of grazing for the Gribun crofters?—Certainly.

35,890. Would it be useful in addition to grazing the horse for grazing their stirks or cows?—Yes, very good; the glen is very good.

35,891. You are aware that the farm of Balnahard is but a small place?—It is not so small; it is a farm.

35,892. It is rather bigger than a croft, but it is a very small farm?—I would not call a place that carries 400 sheep a very small farm.

35,893. What sort of land is there upon the farm of Balmeanach adjoining the crofts?—Very good land. Bunessan, Mull.

35,894. Is it as suitable for crofting?—Yes, crofters were there originally. Archibald Macfayden.

35,895. You did not let me finish my question. Is it as suitable for crofting as the portion of Balnahard which you propose to have?—Yes.

35,896. Would it be as convenient for the harbour?—No, if I had a smack or something of that sort.

35,897. There is most shelter round upon the Balnahard portion of the rocks?—Yes, Balmeanach is far away from the harbour.

35,898. *Mr Duncan Cameron, ground officer, Bunessan.*—What part of Balmeanach have you been speaking about as suitable for an addition to crofts? Is it the part next the crofts?—Yes, besides the crofts.

35,899. I thought you said the glen: what part did you refer to as being suitable for additional grazing?—Above the fence at the roadside.

35,900. In the glen? How far is that from the crofts—I mean above the crofts?—I made reference to the glen for grazing stirks; but there is plenty of grazing ground above the fence, next the crofts.

35,901. Do you mean above the Biolavon gate?—No, I refer to the grazing land from the bridge to Bell's house.

35,902. You said your family would provide buildings for you if you got a holding. Did your family provide your present buildings?—No, they did not build my present house.

35,903. Who did?—The Duke built it.

35,904. Did your family get an opportunity of building a house for you?—They were weak, and I am not sure that they had.

DUGALD MACLEAN, Torrans, Pennygael (73). Dugald Maclean.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

35,905. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you live at Torrans?—Yes.

35,906. Have you a house there?—Yes.

35,907. Where is it situated?—By the bridge at the roadside.

35,908. Is that where there are four or five houses?—No, it is the only house.

35,909. Is it close to the march?—At the end of the bridge.

35,910. Have you any ground there?—I got land from the tenant.

35,911. Just potato ground, I suppose?—Yes.

35,912. Do you pay any rent?—Yes.

35,913. How much?—£4, 10s. I also pay £2, 10s. for wintering my cow, or £7 in all.

35,914. Have you a family?—Yes.

35,915. Do you pay any rent to the proprietor of Pennygael for your house?—I pay to the tenant, not to the proprietor.

35,916. Then you are a sub-tenant, as it were?—Yes, I am a sub-tenant.

35,917. Have you been long in your present house?—Eighteen years next Whitsunday.

35,918. And you have always paid rent to the tenant?—No, I was ploughman on the farm till the last two years, when I began paying rent.

35,919–20. Before that, you had your house as a ploughman on the farm?—Yes, the house was part of my wages.

35,921. Have you any son working at home?—Yes, I have a son at home.

35,922. Where does he work?—He is a ploughman on the farm of Killunag.

35,923. That is on the same estate, is it not?—Yes.

35,924. What is your wish with reference to our inquiry? Have you come here to ask for a croft if one could be found?—Yes, I want a bit.

35,925. And where do you think there is land suitable for a croft?—Either at Lower Torrans or Killunag, on either side of the burn.

35,926. The side of Torrans next the march?—Next Mr Clark's property.

35,927. Are you asking for a croft on your own account?—I want a piece for myself and for my son.

35,928. Could you work a croft without the assistance of your son?—Yes.

Bunessan, Mull.

Dugald Maclean.

35,929. What size of holding would you find yourself competent to work without your son?—Three or four acres.*

35,930. It is only a small holding you require?—Yes.

35,931. Do you think you could take a living off it if your son went away?—Yes.

35,932. Off three or four acres?—Yes.

35,933. Without any other help?—I have other members of my family who would help me.

35,934. Then it is more for your family than for yourself that you are desiring land, is it not?—For myself and for my family both.

35,935. *Mr Gordon.*—On what part of the farm of Torrans could land for your purpose be conveniently got?—There are three Torrans: I would like it between Torrans and Lower Torrans, where my father had a croft.

35,936. Is that next Killunag, or is it on the other side of the farm?—On the lower part of the farm, next the Kilpatrick estate.

35,937. Is any part of that land under cultivation at present?—Yes.

35,938. How far is that land from the farm steading of Torrans?—More than a quarter of a mile.

35,939. From the steading of Torrans?—Half a mile at most.

35,940. Has that land been under cultivation for any length of time?—Yes.

35,941. Is it cultivated regularly?—It is under cultivation at present.

35,942. And has it been cultivated for some years?—Oh, yes, always.

35,943. Because I should like to point out that the remit to our Commission does not cover land under cultivation?—There is a part of it under cultivation, and a part not.

35,944. Part of the land next the estate of Kilpatrick is not cultivated?—That is what I am saying; only a part of it is under crop.

35,945. Is that the only land in that quarter which you think could be got, or would be available for crofts?—Yes, there were crofters there originally.

35,946. You are speaking now only about Robertson's estate, not of the Kilpatrick estate at all?—No.

35,947. How is the Kilpatrick estate occupied?—It is in the hands of the proprietor.

35,948. Is there any cultivation upon it at all?—No, not beside us: they have arable land at Airdhuisnish.

35,949. Is there any land suitable for cultivation upon the farm of Bioch?—Plenty.

35,950. Suitable for crofting?—Yes, it is.

35,951. And there is no part of that land at present under cultivation at all?—No; only one garden.

35,952. Is there any part of the farm of Ormsaig under cultivation?—No.

35,953. Any of Kilpatrick farm?—Not that I am aware of.

35,954. Then the only part of that property that is partially cultivated is the farm of Ardhuisnish?—Not that I am aware of: a shepherd has it.

35,955. And is there old arable land suitable for crofters upon the other three farms?—Yes, on each farm.†

* Maclean has since explained that the land he had in view is from 6 to 7 acres in extent.

† The following letter has been received with reference to the evidence of Dugald Maclean:—

Brolas, Pennygael, Mull, 26*th June* 1894.

Sir,—We, the undersigned cottars on the estate of Pennygael, and others, held a meeting at Pennygael some time before the "Deer Forest Commission" came to Bunessan, in order to appoint a delegate to speak for us at the Commission. Dugald Maclean, Torrans, was appointed delegate, but we now find that he spoke for no person but himself and his son. We now wish to know what should be done. We are as needful of land as Dugald Maclean, and there is plenty of land on the estate of Pennygael and in the neighbourhood.

(Signed) John Lamont.
,, John Campbell.
,, Hector Macgilvray.

Wm. Mackenzie, Esq.,
6 Parliament Square Edinburgh.

Allan Livingston (recalled)—*examined.*

Bunessan, Mull.

Allan Livingston

35,956. *Mr Gordon.*—I should like to get from you, if you please, what is your opinion about another part of the country regarding which we have had no evidence yet. Do you know the estate of Achnacraig?—Yes.

35,957. Do you know the portion of Achnacraig called Gallachulish?—Yes.

35,957*a*. That land is in the proprietor's hands, I understand?—Yes.

35,958. Is there any old arable land in Gallachulish?—Yes, plenty.

35,959. Is it under cultivation at the present time, or any part of it?—No, only a small bit that the shepherd has.

35,960. Is that land suitable for occupation?—Yes.

35,961. Do you know the farm of Achnacraig proper?—Yes.

35,962. Is it under regular cultivation, or grazings?—There is a portion of it under crop and a portion under grazing.

35,963. Is there much of it cultivated?—Very little since the tenant left it.

35,964. It is mainly under pasture?—Yes.

35,965. Do you know that little place, beside yourself, of Achdaloist?—Yes.

35,966. Is any part of that farm cultivated?—No.

35,967. The tenant has another farm and does not reside in Achdaloist?—A nephew resides on the farm of Achdaloist, in a house on the other side of it.

35,968–69. But he is not the tenant of it?—No, he is not the tenant.

35,970. Is there any old arable land upon that little farm?—Yes.

35,971. Would it be suitable for crofters?—No, it is difficult to bring under cultivation; it is very soft.

35,972. Is it mossy and wet?—Yes, it is mossy

35,973. Is the Gallachulish land wet and mossy, or is it good land?—Yes, it is dry.

James Beaton, Creich, Ross of Mull (80). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

James Be

35,974. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a cottar at Creich?—Yes, I am not long a cottar.

35,975. Were you appointed to represent the Ross of Mull at a meeting of the inhabitants who selected delegates?—Yes.

35,976. Is this paper which I have before me an account of your meeting, and of the appointment of delegates from the whole of the Ross of Mull?—Yes.

35,977. The paper reads as follows:—

May 9, 1894.

A meeting of delegates appointed to give information to the Royal Commission of Inquiry and Inspection, agreed to submit the following statement of lands suitable to be profitably occupied by small tenants and for allotments. *Scoon*, including Shiaba and Kilvickeoin; *Ardachy*, including Knocknafenaig, Suie, and the pasturage of Ardchiavaig; *Ardfinaig*, including Tirghoil; *Fidden*, including Pottæ and Errait; *Knockvolagan*, including Tirergan; *Ardalanish*, including *Iochdar*, and the various tacks and farms on each side of Lochscreeden once occupied by small tenants and allotters, of which part of the parish Charles Macneil will give information. From the whole surface, submitted above, the people have been driven to enlarge sheep farms and to make sheep farms, and is now under sheep and cattle. Delegates in order of preference: — James Beaton, cottar, Creich; Malcolm Beaton, crofter, Ardchiavaig; JohnMackinnon,crofter,Caitchean; Donald Macgillivray, cottar, Ardalanais; Hugh Campbell, crofter, Creich; John Black, crofter, Ardtun; Robert Graham, cottar, Ardtun; James Cameron, Fionna-phort; and Charles Macneil, Ardachy, above stated for the north side of Lochscreeden and Gribun.

35,978. Have you any land?—Not at present. I

once had land; I was with my brother for the last thirty-four years, but when he had a family of his own he turned me out three years ago, and I have had no land since.

35,979. Have you any family?—No, but I am married.

35,980. Have you come to express your own desire for land here?—Yes, I was wanting land before.

35,981. Is there land in your district available?—My brother went there as a smith, and three years later he succeeded to another croft. Before his family grew up he always alleged that I would succeed to the croft; but when his family grew up he turned me out.

35,982. How do you make your living now?—I get a piece of potato ground from the crofters here and there and everywhere. I would like a piece of land where I could keep a cow.

CHARLES MACNEILL, Ardachy (70).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

35,983. *Mr Forsyth.*—It is stated in this account of the meeting held to appoint delegates, that you would give us information as to the whole surface of the farms in this neighbourhood: is that the case?—On the estate of Ardmeanach, Mr Bell's.

35,984. Are you a crofter?—No.

35,985. Have you any land at all?—No land.

35,986. You live in a house at Ardachy?—Yes.

35,987. What district did you wish to give evidence about?—The place I know best, Ardmeanach.

35,988. That includes Tabul and Burg and Tiroran, does it not?—Yes, and Kilfinichen.

35,989. Do you consider that there is land there suitable for small holdings?—Yes, suitable enough.

35,990. Do you think small tenants could make a living there if they had good sized holdings?—Yes; they did well before.

35,991. Is it a good place for fishing?—Yes, it is not bad.

35,992. Have you a family?—Yes.

35,993. Then I take it your family support you more or less, do they not?—They support me at present.

35,994. And it is with reference to Ardmeanach that you come here to-day?—Yes.

35,995. *Mr Munro.*—What is your present occupation?—I do nothing, except the fishing and planting potatoes.

35,996. You do not earn a living from that alone, I suppose?—No.

35,997. According to the statement submitted to us, there have been extensive removals of crofters and other small tenants from a number of places mentioned here,—Ardachaidh, Scuir, Airdfineig, &c., and it says that you will give information about the people who have been driven from these places. Do you remember how many people were driven away from these farms?—I did not reside here till lately. Formerly I was a crofter in Burg, paying £12 rent, with a stock of 6 cows and followers and about 100 sheep. I was ejected, and I was not in arrears of rent. This was at the time craze for sheep instead of men was on. The whole district of Ardmeanach was cleared, and Baile-vuilin was added to Kilfinichen.

MALCOLM BEATON, crofter, Aird-chiabhaig (76)—*examined.*

35,998. *Mr Forsyth.*—What size of croft have you at present?—Three small crofts.

35,999. What stock do you keep on the whole of them?—Two cows, a two-year-old, and a pony. But the third croft has no hill pasture.

36,000. Two of them have some hill pasture?—Yes.

36,001. What rent do you pay?—I now pay £7, 15s.

36,002. Has the rent been fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

36,003. What was the old rent?—£12, 18s 6d.

36,004. Do you find your crofts large enough to keep you?—Well, we have to do with them; it is not an easy matter to make them larger at present.

36,005. Would you take more land if you could get it?—The third one would require hill pasture.

36,006. Is it hill pasture you require most?—We would require that at all events, taken from the Aird-chiabhaig hill.

36,007. Where is Ardchiabhaig, is it down to the south-east of Bunessan?—Yes.

36,008. Are there many tenants there?—No, they went off; the place was cleared.

36,009. How many crofters are there there now?—There will be about 15 or 16 I daresay. There are three and myself paying £2 of rent. The rest is let to the Uisken crofters; and these crofts and all the hill pasture were added to Ardachy.

36,010. Are there any cottars?—Three have houses without land; one of them has a piece of ground down near the shore.

36,011. Then do the people of Aird-chiabhaig want more land, arable or pasture?—Some of them would take more. Three of them, I think, have a small piece down near the shore.

36,012. But are you satisfied at Aird-chiabhaig with the size of your crofts?—Oh, yes, we are mostly satisfied.

36,013. Then, do you come here to express any wish or desire on the part of the people of Aird-chiabhaig?—No, I do not take anything to do with them: I came here to-day to show the marches if required.

36,014. Then do you consider your crofts sufficient as they are now?—Oh, they are sufficient; there is no way of making them larger at present, I think.

36,015. Would any of the people of Aird-chiabhaig go to a larger holding elsewhere if they had the chance?—I daresay some of them would.

36,016. Could you point out where such a holding could be obtained?—I cannot say where.

36,017. You do not wish to speak about that?—No, I don't know, and I cannot say anything about it.

36,018. *Mr Munro.*—How many acres of land do you cultivate at present?—About 8 or 9 acres.

36,019. Have you any hill pasture as well?—Yes, I have hill pasture for two crofts.

36,020. Do you manage to make a comfortable living upon these 7 or 8 acres with the hill pasture?—Not very comfortable, but we must do as well as we can.

36,021. Do you think a little more land would make you much more comfortable?—Oh, yes; a place that would keep a few sheep, and the like of that.

36,022. You spoke of Aird-chiabhaig being cleared of small tenants some years ago?—Yes.

36,023. Do you remember that yourself?—Yes.

36,024. How many small tenants were cleared off it?—They were all cleared away, I think.

36,025. How many?—Fifteen or sixteen.

36,026. And do you think that all that land could now be profitably occupied by small tenants if given back to them?—Oh, I think so.

36,027. Were the fifteen families forcibly removed, or did they desire to go?—They were desired to go.

36,028. But did they themselves desire to go, or were they evicted forcibly?—Some were in a manner pressed.

36,029. Where did these families go to?—To America as a rule.

36,030. How many years is that ago?—About forty years.

36,031. Is that on the Duke's estate?—Yes.

Bunessan, Mull.

John Mackinnon.

JOHN MACKINNON, crofter, Caitchean, Ross of Mull (42)—*examined*.

36,032. *Mr Forsyth.*—What size of croft have you?—A small croft.

36,033. How many acres arable?—About 3½.

36,034. What stock do you keep?—Two cows, a two-year-old, and some sheep.

36,035. You have some hill grazing?—Yes.

36,036. What rent do you pay?—£4, 5s.

36,037. Was that fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

36,038. Do you find your holding large enough?—Not half.

36,039. Have you a family?—Yes, six.

36,040. Could you work a bigger holding if you got one?—Yes, three times as big, or four times, and little enough it would be, but easier than the place I have.

36,041. What sort of holding would suit you? How much arable?—According to the quality of the ground.

36,042. I will put it another way. What amount of stock would you like to keep?—Well, I would say from eight to ten cows, and sixty sheep, or thereabouts.

36,043. Then you want what is really more, a small farm?—A small farm.

36,044. Would you be prepared to stock such a farm if you had the chance of it?—Indeed, I could not do it just now, as I am.

36,045. That is rather a large undertaking, you know?—Yes.

36,046. Supposing the land for such a farm were available, could you manage to build a house on it?—If I could get the value of the house that I am in, which I built myself.

36,047. You have a goodish house where you are?—Yes.

36,048. Which you built yourself?—Yes, and it would not be easy for a poor man going to another house.

36,049. There would be a little difficulty about your present house if you were going to a new house altogether?—Like enough, but perhaps not.

36,050. Supposing in some way or other you got value for your present house, could you then start afresh on a larger scale on a bigger place?—Yes.

36,051. And that is your desire?—Yes.

36,052. Is there land close to your place that you could get in addition to your own holding, so that you need not leave your present house?—No. The farm of Fidden is marching with the township of Caitchean, and available for pasturage.

36,053. There is no land near?—No, it is all occupied by crofters already.

36,054. And do these men also want more land?—Most of them, anyway.

36,055. Are they thinking of the size of farm you were speaking of?—Yes.

36,056. Some of them would do with something smaller, I suppose?—Yes, and I could do with a smaller holding too.

36,057. But that is the sort of thing they would all like?—Yes, that is what would do for a family.

36,058. How many acres would do for a self-sustaining holding, one which would keep a man and family? Of course, you are talking of eight or ten cows; but supposing you took something a bit smaller?—About six cows.

36,059. And say 50 or 60 sheep?—Yes.

36,060. You think that would make a self-sustaining holding here at which a man could work all the year round?—It would be nearer the thing than the way we are at present.

36,061. But would it keep him and his family, if he worked it well?—Well, I am not going to say that he would be extra fat.

36,062. But he could live?—He could live.

36,063. You would much prefer the 10 cows?—That would be better.

36,064. That means rather a large farm, you know, and there are not so very many hundreds of acres of good land in this neighbourhood: there may be some, no doubt?—Well, I think there is plenty of land in the Ross of Mull, and good land too, for all the people that are in it.

Bunessan, Mull.

John Mackinnon.

36,065. To make really good holdings?—To satisfy the people.

36,066. Now, is the wish of the people to get a good sized holding generally in the Ross?—Well, a good many of them do; some would not take it although they got it.

36,067. Are there many people about this district who could find means to start in larger holdings?—There are some.

36,068. But, of course, there are others who could not?—Oh, there are some that would go who could not take them without help.

36,069. Have you thought in your mind at all how they could get help? Have you any ideas as to where the assistance should come from?—No.

36,070. Have they relations who could help them?—Unless Government would assist them.

36,071. You have been thinking of Government assistance in the way of building?—Yes.

36,072. And perhaps even for stocking?—Yes.

36,073. Have you thought how much that keeps a man back, having to borrow money at interest? It is a heavy charge on him?—Yes, I know that.

36,074. But you think they could fight through that?—When they would get justice in the matter of rent and the like of that; and another thing I must say that there is a very honest and hard-working people here and they would try their best, I know.

36,075. They would require the land at a pretty moderate rent, would they not, if they had this burden of interest on a house, and maybe on stock?—Yes.

36,076. They could not pay a very large rent for the land could they then?—No, of course not.

36,077. What sort of holding would do for those who could not afford or who had not the courage or ability to start on a large holding? Would two or three acres be a sufficient holding nearly to keep a man?—There are plenty who would be very glad to get that, those who have none at all: they would be very glad to have maybe less than that.

36,078. Have you any idea how many crofters there are altogether in this whole Ross of Mull, on the Duke's property say?—I cannot say that just now. [*Mr Cameron.*—I may be allowed to inform you that in the Ross of Mull there are 60 crofters; in Iona, 18; in Gribun 3: that is exclusive of land held by people in Bunessan here.]

36,079. Mr Cameron has just stated that there are about 60 crofters at present, which, I suppose, no doubt is exactly correct?—I don't doubt that.

36,080. And would the most of these people require larger holdings, or are some of them good big crofts already?—Yes, some of them are nearly sufficient.

36,081. Have you come here to say that there is land available in the various farms for making new crofts?—Yes, I am of that opinion.

36,082. And are you, or other crofters in this district, willing to show us where this land is?—Yes, I will show you that any time.

36,083. Could you state generally just now where it is,—on what farms?—There is Siaba first, that is added to Scuir.

36,084. You had better take the places on Scuir first?—And Scuir itself, and Cill-Mhic-Eobhainn; these are three places that have plenty of land; and Siaba, it is crofters' ground altogether.

36,085. This is a crofter's place already?—Yes.

36,086. What I want you to draw our attention to is, not the places held by crofters but places where crofters could go?—It is not held by crofters at all; the crofters were cleared out of it.

36,087. Is it now part of the farm of Scuir?—Yes.

36,088. What other place is there?—Airdachaidh and Cnoc-na-feannaig and part of Suidhe and part of Aird-chiabhaig.

36,089. There are some crofters there, are there not?—Yes, but there are three crofts of it added to Aird-achaidh, with the hill pasture.

36,090. Where else can you state that there is land?—Aird-alanais, and a place they call Iochdar.

36,091. Any other place?—Cnoc-Mhaolagain, Aird-fineig, including Tir-a'-Ghoill, and Fidean.

36,092. This is a pretty complete list of all the large farms here in the Ross, is it not?—Yes.

36,093. And your contention is that there is land in all these farms from which good crofting holdings could be made,—is that it?—Yes.

36,094. *Mr Munro.*—You have told us that you would like to have land sufficient to keep 8 to 10 cows and 60 sheep?—Yes.

36,095. Could you specify to us what extent of land you would require, as that statement is somewhat vague?—Of course that would depend upon the quality of the land.

36,096. Take the fair average of the Ross of Mull?—Between 12 and 14 acres arable and maybe 60 or 70 acres of hill pasture, or thereabouts. That would keep the higher number of stock I mentioned.

36,097. Mr Cameron, the ground officer, has told us that there are about 60 crofters in the Ross of Mull. Now, if each of those 60 crofters got 14 acres of arable land, that would be between 800 and 900 acres altogether?—Yes, but perhaps one half of that would be better for some. Maybe 8 acres of some land would be better than 14 of another: I don't mean to suggest that each should receive exactly 14 acres.

36,098. I am dealing with the fair average of the land?—And there are some of them who have it already; these would not need it.

36,099. Is there sufficient land in the Ross of Mull at present under grazing that could be converted into a sufficiency of arable land for every applicant?—It is my opinion that there is plenty for all the people in the place.

36,100. But you have never made any accurate calculations?—No, but that is my opinion.

36,101. You have told us that you could neither stock such a farm, nor build houses, without Government assistance?—No.

36,102. Now, have you ever reckoned in your own mind what amount of Government assistance you would require?—No, of course I did not.

36,103. You must know it is a very serious thing to contract debt?—Oh, I know that too well.

36,104. Have you ever thought how you could repay that money?—There is many a way that it could be paid.

36,105. But you have made no calculation that you could submit to us, or any statement?—No, indeed; it would be early enough to be thinking about it when people would be expecting to get it first.

36,106. Yes, but before you would expect to get it, you would require to submit some reasonable scheme?—For my part, if I could not see my way to pay it back nor have a chance to pay it back, I would not seek it at all; and I would advise everybody to do the same.

36,107. We do not doubt your honesty for a moment; but we would like some more specific information about it.

36,108. *Mr Forsyth.*—I would just like to ask you this question. You have been talking of eight or ten cows as a nice holding, and you are also talking of 12 or 14 acres of arable with the hill pasture. Now, do you think you could keep that number of cows with that small quantity of arable?—Well, it is small enough, I believe.

36,109. Don't you think that you people generally keep too much stock for your acreage, for your wintering?—We are doing that.

36,110. Don't you think you would be better with less stock, better done?—Far; but I always keep two and sometimes three, and if I were to let away one, although I were to feed the other one very well, I think the two are fully better than one.

36,111. Would not the two cows well done to, and the stirks well wintered, be better for you than the three?—Yes, of course.

36,112. Would it not pay you more in money?—No doubt, the two would be better than the three when well kept; but when you have only two and let away one of them, there is only one left, and there is not much money to be made out of one. There is not a great deal to be taken off two even as things are.

36,113. What I mean is that one cow thoroughly well done would, in my opinion, pay you better than two cows badly done?—The cow would be the better, anyhow.

36,114. And would not you be the better, if the cow were better?—I don't know if I would not be as well.

36,115. But don't you think you would need a good deal of land to keep eight or ten cows well?—No doubt.

36,116. It would be better to keep five or six on the same ground thoroughly well done?—Yes, but we are not used to keep them thoroughly well.

36,117. Don't you think it is time you got used to keep them thoroughly well done?—We would like to keep them if we got the chance.

36,118. But I am afraid you people would begin overstocking immediately?—I don't mean that at all, but I might be wrong in my idea for all that.

36,119. We are all liable to be wrong,—perhaps I am wrong too, but I, myself, think you would be better with cattle thoroughly well done to, and not too many; and I think your view as to the number of cows for the acreage is much too high.—No mistake about that.

36,120. I don't think 14 acres of land in Mull will carry ten Highland cows done decently?—No.

36,121. *Mr Gordon.*—How are these farms that you have spoken to at present occupied? How is Scuir farm occupied?—By a man of the name of Mackean, who belonged to Wigtownshire.

36,122. He is not a resident tenant?—No.

36,123. Where does he live?—Away in Wigtown. He has an estate of his own there, I believe.

36,124. How is Airdachaidh occupied?—Mr Macniven has it.

36,125. Does he reside upon it?—Yes.

36,126. Does he cultivate it?—Yes, he cultivates some of it,—one-third of it.

36,127. Then as to Cnoc-na-feannaig?—I mean that to be included with Airdachaidh. The tenant is cultivating part of Cnoc-na-feannaig and part of Airdachaidh.

36,128. How is Aird-chiabhaig occupied?—It is divided among four: Malcolm Beaton here has part of it. Three crofts from it were added to Airdachaidh along with the hill pasture.

36,129. How is Aird-alanais occupied?—The tenant resides there.

36,130. And cultivates part of it?—Very little of it.

36,131. Then as to Iochdar, how is it occupied?—It has not been cultivated within my memory.

36,132. Does the tenant reside on it?—No; it is added to Aird-alanais now.

36,133. Then Cnoc-Mhaolagain?—There is a shepherd residing there.

36,133*a*. But no tenant?—No tenant.

36,134. Aird-fineig?—Macniven has got it just now, I suppose; the present tenant is leaving it at this term.

36,135. Is it a small or a large farm?—It is a large farm. There are two farms; Tir-a'-Ghoill was added to Aird-fineig.

36,136. And it is changing tenants at this term?—Yes.

36,137. Then Fidean, how is it occupied?—There is a manager residing there.

36,138. But no resident tenant?—No.

DONALD MACGILLIVRAY, cottar, Aird-alanais (66).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,139. *Mr Forsyth.*—You are a cottar at Aird-alanais?—Yes.

36,140. Have you no land at all?—No.

36,141. Have you a family?—Yes.

36,142. How do you support yourself?—I work at every kind of work I can get.

36,143. Are you a fisherman?—No.

Bunessan, Mull.
Donald Macgillivray.

36,144. You work on the land?—Yes.

36,145. Have you regular work?—Sometimes; but I only get employment from one man.

36,146. Who is that?—John Macniven.

36,147. You work for Mr Macniven of Airdachaidh?—Yes.

36,148. Have you heard the evidence that John Mackinnon has just given us?—I only heard a part of it.

36,149. Have you any evidence that you wish to give us as to land?—As far as I can.

36,150. Do you wish a holding yourself?—I would take land if I could get it.

36,151. Where would you take it?—I would not require to go far for it: I could get land near where I live.

36,152. You mean at Aird-alanais?—At Lower Aird-alanais. There are only four crofts at Aird-alanais. There are three crofts at Lower Aird-alanais and two at Aird-alanais Point.

36,153. Do all these men want new holdings?—There are others who would take land in the same way.

36,154. There are more cottars than yourself?—I am the only cottar.

36,155. What size of holding do you want?—The crofts at Aird-alanais are large sized, those at Lower Aird-alanais are smaller.

36,156. Do you want a holding on which you could live without other work,—a large holding?—Yes, I could take a place of that sort, and I think one of yon crofts would suit. There is a dyke around the croft, and it has hill pasture attached.

36,157. Have you any means to stock?—No.

36,158. You would require help, would you?—Yes, I would require help.

36,159. Is there anything else you would wish to state to us?—No.

Hugh Campbell.

HUGH CAMPBELL, crofter, Creich (46).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,160. *Mr Forsyth.*—What size of croft have you, a large or a small one?—A medium small croft.

36,161. What stock do you keep?—Four cows and a horse.

36,162. Is your croft larger than the most of those in Creich?—No.

36,163. They are about the same size, are they?—Yes.

36,164. What rent do you pay?—£5, 10s.

36,165. Have you come here to give evidence as to your desire for a larger holding?—Yes.

36,166. Would you leave the croft you have to go to a larger one if you could get it?—Yes; but I would not need to leave the croft: there is plenty land adjacent.

36,167. You could get land close by?—Yes.

36,168. Who holds the land just now?—The farms of Potee and Aird-fineig march with us.

36,169. And is there land on both of them?—Yes. They would do good to the whole township of Creich.

36,170. Is it arable land or grazing land that you want in addition?—I want both; there are both there.

36,171. What size of a holding would you like if you got what you want?—Twenty-five acres arable, and ten cows and a pair of horses.

36,172. That means a small farm almost. Would you require that to keep yourself and your family properly without outside work?—Yes, it would be small enough.

36,173. Have you any means to stock such a holding?—Yes, I have relatives who will provide the money if I get the land.

36,174. And could you erect a new house, or could you manage with the house that you have?—The house will do if I get the land.

36,175. *Mr Munro.*—You mentioned the farm of Potee as suitable for division into crofter holdings?—Yes, it is, and Aird-fineig on the other side.

36,176. How is the farm of Potee occupied at present?—It is let to John Macniven, one tenant. Bunessan, Mull.

36,177. How many acres arable are in it?—I am not sure: there will be upwards of 100 or 120. Hugh Campbell.

36,178. Supposing that that farm were divided out amongst crofters, would they take each of them the good and the bad land as it would turn up?—Certainly.

36,179. Would you yourself take any part of that farm that might be allotted?—Yes, at once.

Robert Graham.

ROBERT GRAHAM, cottar, Ardtun (76).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,180. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you appear on behalf of the people of Ardtun?—Yes.

36,181. Had you any meeting among the people?—Yes, we had a meeting in the schoolhouse, and they appointed me.

36,182. Have you any land at all?—No.

36,183. Just a house?—Yes.

36,184. Are there many other cottars at Ardtun?—Yes, several: I cannot exactly give the number.

36,185. Have you any family?—I have two.

36,186. Have you a son at home?—I have one at home.

36,187. Have you come here to express a desire for a holding of some kind?—If I could get land I would take it.

36,188. Have you a son who would assist you with land?—Yes.

36,189. Is your son married?—No.

36,190. But he is working?—He is a steward on a steamer.

36,191. Then you have with you no one who has experience of the working of land?—I am experienced myself: I was working at land in my younger days.

36,192. And what sort of holding could you take?—If I could get the land which my father and grandfather farmed, I would take it.

36,193. Where is that?—It is let at present to Dr Mackechnie.

36,194. Would you prefer that to any other land?—Yes, I would prefer that in my declining years.

36,195. *Mr Munro.*—Would you wish to evict Dr Mackechnie from the land he has?—I would not like to evict the Doctor, but I am not particularly anxious whether I get land or no.

Duncan Campbell.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, contractor, Bunessan (75)—*examined.*

36,196. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a contractor here?—I have been a contractor for some years back.

36,197. For roads?—Yes, roads, and buildings sometimes; but I lost my farm.

36,198. You had a farm at one time, had you?—Yes, and my father and grandfather before me. My ancestors have been in the one place for 250 years, and all I want to-day is my old farm.

36,199. What farm is that?—A place called Cnoc-na-feannaig, on the other side, about two miles from here.

36,200. Have you any written statement to put in to us about this farm?—No.

36,201. Do you appear on behalf of yourself, or on behalf of other people as well?—Just for myself. There were six crofters on that farm, and the whole of them were put out in the year 1849.

36,202. Then you wish to say generally that this place of Cnoc-na-feannaig is available for crofters or small tenants?—There were six crofters before.

36,203. You wish to get back to Cnoc-na-feannaig?—I want back my own farm. The Duke promised me it two or three times, but I did not get justice from these factors. (Produces copy letter, dated 1834.)

36,204. Do you wish to put in this document as a claim to a croft upon Cnoc-na-feannaig?—My father got warning from the late factor, Campbell, Islay. I left that in 1855 to take up my farm; but what the father

of the present Duke promised to my father you will see in that paper.

36,205. This is a copy of a letter, dated in 1834 :—'The Duke has granted what you have free of ground, 'and also I am ordered to give you more ground at an agreeable rent?'—Yes.

36,206. You put in this letter as evidence to show that you have a claim for a holding at Cnoc-na-feannaig?—Yes, and the present Duke promised me the same thing two or three times.

36,207. When did you leave the place?—In 1855.

36,208. Then shortly, what you wish is to get back to Cnoc-na-feannaig, of which you say you have been dispossessed?—Yes.

36,209. Have you any evidence to give generally or otherwise?—I would be willing to take Knockvaolagan. The Duke granted me that before.

36,210. If you could not get a place at Cnoc-na-feannaig you would take one elsewhere if you got it elsewhere?—Yes. I had a place from the Duke in 1847, but the factor baffled me, and gave it to one Macintyre.

36,211. Have you any other statement to make as to land elsewhere?—No : all I want is my own farm.

36,212. You want to get back to the place where you were?—Yes.

36,213. *Mr Gordon.* — How is Cnoc-na-feannaig occupied just now?—It is part of Airdachaidh?—Yes, and the hills of Asicavay. He has about 14 miles of land.

36,214. Does the tenant reside upon the farm?—He resides upon Airdachaidh.

36,215. And Cnoc-na-feannaig is part of his present holding?—Yes, he has that, and Airdachaidh too.

36,216. *Mr Munro.*—Why were you evicted from Cnoc-na-feannaig?—I will tell you that. This man Macniven belonged to Islay, where the big factor, Mr Campbell, came from. I leave my case before the whole of this house to-day to give the proof of what I say. In 1846 I improved my land ; I commenced to improve it in 1834, and the Duke appointed me gamekeeper, and my brother ground officer for the estate. This Macniven came along with the factor from Islay, and he saw that my farm had the best importations in the Ross.

36,217–18. In short, you were evicted to make room for Mr Macniven, along with the other six crofters?—Yes, myself and other five.

36,219. Were you in arrear of rent?—Not a shilling to this day, or my father before me.

36,220. And you want to get back to the farm, do you?—I want my own back. Now, I leave it to the house to say if they have heard anything against me from the day I was born.

DUNCAN CAMERON, ground officer, Bunessan (39)—*examined.*

36,221. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you any statement to make on behalf of the Ross of Mull Estate?—No.

36,222. You could, if we asked you, put in a statement of the various crofters holdings, with the rents and the number of crofters?—I think I might.

36,223. Then, perhaps, I will just ask you if you will kindly send in a list of the number of cottars,—the number of cottars who have houses without land in Mull?—Do you mean those having garden ground?

36,224. Take cottars,—some have gardens, and others, I presume, have not ; but include among cottars all who are not crofters under the Act?—Yes, I will do so. [Mr Cameron lodged the following statement :—]

Cottars on Duke of Argyll's Estates in Mull and Iona—

Kilfinichen and Gribun.

Cottars,	4	
,, Gatekeepers,	3	
,, Farm servants,	4	
	—	11

Ross of Mull. Bunessan Mull.

Cottars,	91	
,, Gamekeepers, gatekeepers, and ferrymen,	4	Duncan Cameron.
,, Farm servants, and occupying houses from Granite Coy.,	22	
,, Paupers,	31	
	—	148

Iona.

Cottars,	6	
,, Farm servants,	2	
,, Paupers,	2	
	—	10
		169
In houses belonging to the Duke in the Villages of Bunessan and Iona,		7

Crofters.

Ross of Mull,	60
Iona,	18
Gribun,	3
	81

DUNCAN CAMERON,
Ground Officer.

10*th May* 1894.

[ADJOURNED.]

FORTY-FIRST SITTING.

TIREE, May 12, 1894. Tiree, Argyllshire.

Present :—

JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

HECTOR STEWART, Moss (40)—*examined.* Hector Stewart.

36,224*a*. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter at Moss?—I am not a crofter, but I live with my brother who is a crofter.

36,225. Have you been appointed to give the views of the people of Moss, or of Tiree generally, before this Commission in the matter of new holdings or extension of holdings?—The whole of them.

36,226. You were appointed at a meeting as a delegate to give evidence?—Yes.

36,227. Have you any written statement that you wish to put in?—Yes.

36,228. Will you kindly read it?—The great grievance of the Highland people is the want of land. They and their representatives in Parliament are of the opinion that there are large tracts of land out of cultivation in the Highland counties that could be used, and to profit, by the people. The Royal Commission, in whose presence we now stand, was appointed, as stated of late by the Secretary for Scotland, to find out whether such lands were available in the Highland counties or not. Tiree, I am sorry to say, needs but very little evidence on my part to prove that there are such tracts of land that could be used by the people, for it is self-evident ; but, although it is self-evident, that will not bring to light what poor people, who were formerly in possession of crofts, suffered at the hands of those in power at the time. The officials in power at those times had all the power in their own hands, and, consequently, treated the people in a manner that would be beyond the bounds of justice even in countries where

the name of the Lord is not given heed to. One man and his family, for refusing to leave his house, were forced out and had to spend the winter night under a boat, no one daring to take them in. Another widow was lifted out on the bedclothes, and left at the roadside; a blind man and his mother were in the same way forced out of their house.

There are seven large sheep farms in Tiree, which, with few exceptions, were formerly in possession of crofters. Again, by commencing from one end of the island to the other, there is not a township but in which there may be seen the crofts of three, four, and in some cases five, crofters in possession of one, without speaking of the number of crofts out of which crofters were evicted and added to the neighbouring tack (*e.g.*, Balephuill, Kenovay, and Moss). In my opinion, sheep-farming on the scale now so common is a failure, and injurious both to the landlord and to the island generally. It is a sad spectacle to behold these sheep farms, which formerly maintained so many families, overgrown in a great measure with rushes and rough grass, instead of waving with golden grain. The island would be materially benefited by these large farms being broken into small ones for such as are willing to pay a fair rental. The island would then, in a great measure, be self-supporting, whereas now it greatly depends on imports. There are three classes of people in Tiree:—fishermen, cottars, and small crofters. The fishermen have their houses on the crofters land, and so near the beach that, in coarse wintry weather, they are in danger of being swept out by the tide. As there is no work to be had in the island, they must be content with the little they make by fishing. Nothing like a living can be made by fishing in Tiree, for the poor people have not proper boats, and, on the other hand, there is no safe harbour to keep such boats if they had them. The cottars who follow not the fishing are engaged in summer in kelpmaking, and in the winter at tangle-gathering. As they have no other way of carrying sea-weed to a drying place, these cottars are obliged to carry it on their backs, and thus it is only very little help they are able to make, even should the weather prove favourable. Tangle-gathering, on the other hand, is a work at which no one but one in want would engage. The poor people carry them up on their backs to where the tide will not come near them. They then build them up in heaps, and get 4d. per yard for them, but this price must be accepted in goods sold in the chemical store, let the price or quality of the goods be as it may. Then there are the small crofters. These, in my opinion, are not much better off than the cottars, for they must also engage in tangle-gathering, because the produce of the little patches of crofts they have would be scanty enough to maintain a family for a month or two in the year. There is a large number of this class of crofters in Tiree, who, in fact, will not see a boll of meal made of the produce of their own crofts from one end of the year to the other. This, in my opinion, ought not to be the case, seeing that the greater part of the land formerly maintained our forefathers, and the people are willing and desirous of having it re-divided among them at a fair rental. Again, that there is a demand in this island for land cannot be denied, for the number of applications sent from this island to the County Council for small holdings was more than sent by any island of its size. The circular sent to each applicant, asking him to state the average and position of land desired and the price or rent he was prepared to pay, was answered plainly and definitely; but the Council saw not its way to carry out the Act. In my opinion, therefore, the land ought to be re-divided among the people, so that the poor people may be put in a position to enable them to live in a style beyond the bounds of poverty and want.

(Signed) Hector Stewart, Moss, Tiree.

36,229. This statement of yours points to the fact that there is land available in Tiree here, and that, if it were divided into crofts of a certain size, it would give a comfortable living to a considerable number of people. This is the case, is it not?—Yes.

36,230. Do you consider that a large proportion of the existing crofts are too small?—Yes.

36,231–2. Some of them, I understand, are of considerable size, are they not? There are some crofts, below the £30 limit, of considerable size?—Yes.

36,233. These, I suppose, are self-supporting? The larger ones will maintain a family?—They will.

36,234. But the smaller ones will not?—No, they will not; they have only 6 or 7 acres of arable land.

36,235. Then would there be a large number of the smaller crofters who would require additional land to enable them to live comfortably?—That is my opinion.

36,236. And there are, on the island, I believe, a great many cottars, are there not?—Yes, a large number.

36,237. Is it the wish of these people also that they should have holdings?—Yes.

36,238. And do you consider that there is sufficient land in the larger farms of this island to provide comfortable holdings for all the people?—For a great number of them, at all events.

36,239. What do you consider would be the proper size, taking the average land of Tiree, for a self-supporting croft?—The land is not altogether of the same value; in some places it would require more acres than in others.

36,240. But take it on the average. Can you give me an instance of any existing croft which you consider to be a sufficient one,—a self-supporting croft? Can you think of one, and give me any idea of the size of it; or, if you cannot give the size of the croft, state the amount of stock it will carry. How many cows should a man have in Tiree?—Before I could say that he would have the keeping of a family, I would say about five or six cows.

36,241. That would require some 15 or 20 acres of arable, at the very least, would it not?—Oh, yes.

36,242. Perhaps more?—About 20 or 25 acres, I think.

36,243. And would it not be better, too, that the cows should be well done to, and that there should be plenty of keep for them?—Oh, yes.

36,244. Do you think a great many of the cottars would be able to take up land if it were offered to them?—That is the view they take just now.

36,245. Could they start themselves in holdings without assistance?—Well, some of them could not.

36,246. How would you propose to get over the difficulty of first starting, in the way of house building and fencing?—In one sense, I would look on it as a very fair way if the Crown were to give money at interest to people here as well as giving it to Highlanders in another part of the world.

36,247. You point to a Government advance with interest?—Yes, that is what they offer in other quarters. And, in another sense, if the people could pay the rent, they would be getting on every year; they would be working for their own good.

36,248. I suppose a few of the people have some means, and could start themselves, could they not?—There are some who could.

36,249. It would be better for them, of course, if they could do that?—That is true enough.

36,250. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you mean that they would purchase the land, or rent it, when you speak of getting an advance? Is it for the purchase or simply for stocking it?—For stocking it; I don't mean buying it outright.

36,251. I ask because you mentioned that they would be doing good for themselves?—Yes.

36,252. They would be working still as tenants under some person; you don't mean that they would purchase the land?—No, taking it just at a rent.

36,253. Have you any idea what money it would take to stock the place,—say a five-cow croft?—It would take some money, no doubt.

36,254. You could not say?—But in one sense I am not the least afraid but the people would manage it if they got the land.

36,255. Well, you know they cannot manage it without capital; it depends upon where they could get the money from. No doubt, if they had the money them-

selves, they could manage it, or if they got the money from Government they could manage it; but they would be dependent either upon having the capital within themselves, or of getting a grant from Government, before they could stock the places?—Yes, to put on the whole stock that the place would carry. But, looking through the whole island, it is very seldom I meet one who can say that the whole of his stock is his own.

36,256. Is it within your knowledge that there are a certain proportion of the crofters on this island who are living comfortably on their crofts?—Some of the larger ones.

36,257. Then, keeping that in view, it would be advisable that the crofts, if they are created, should be of a size capable of supporting a family?—Yes.

36,258. You would not have little crofts?—No.

36,259. Are there any families here who are engaged solely in fishing as a means of livelihood?—In some parts; they must engage in it: they have nothing else to do.

36,260. But are there any families in the island who maintain themselves in moderate comfort by fishing?—What I would say to that is, that they have to do it, at all events; but the maintenance is only just the mere name.

36,261. But are they in comfortable circumstances, any of them who are fishermen?—Taking them in the average, they are just the very same as the small crofters; that is all I can say about them.

36,262. Now you have a large cottar population in this island?—Yes.

36,263. How do they maintain themselves? Is there any work on the island by which they exist, apart from the fishing?—No, only what they make at kelp and tangle-gathering, and a little fishing.

36,264. What can a man, working a fair day's work, make at manufacturing kelp?—A cottar who has no other way of carrying up the seaweed but on his back, will have enough to do to make about a ton,—that is, should the weather prove favourable.

36,265. For the whole summer, do you mean?—For the summer.

36,266. And what is the ton worth?—£4, they get for the ton, in goods.

36,267. He will barter it for goods supposed to be valued at £4?—If he got the £4 in money it would do a great deal more for him.

36,268. I understand that there are a great number of cottars in the island?—Yes.

36,269. How are the majority of them maintained? Do they go south to work?—Yes, some of them go to the mainland, to service, and send home something to their fathers and mothers.

36,270. They cannot get work on the island to keep them at home?—No, there is no work here.

36,271. Come back for a moment to the question of rent. You say that the tenant, if he got money advanced to him by Government, would manage to pay the interest along with the rent: is that so?—That is the view they take of it.

36,272. Yes, but you are talking for yourself just now. What view do you take of it?—[*No answer.*]

36,273. I do not want to press the question if you do not feel inclined to answer?—For my own part, I would take it at a reasonable rate of interest.

36,274. What I want to direct your attention to is this, that if you have a certain amount of interest to pay for the stock, or for the houses, you could not pay a full rent and maintain a family; if you got money advanced it would be absolutely necessary that the rents should be extremely moderate,—less than a fair rent,—or you would not be able to pay it. Is that so, or not?—Oh, well, that is true enough.

36,275. The danger would be, that if you are to carry out the proposal of getting a large advance from Government, it might be very hard upon the man who took it, and leave him in a worse condition of poverty than before. Do you suppose that a man could pay the interest and a full rent?—Well, that is the view that I take of it, anyhow. And I would take in hand to be for some years even struggling to get back to my own land again. That is the only thing that I would have in view. Supposing I would suffer for some years, I would rather do so, and then I would have the chance of getting on.

36,276. You see, interest is running all the same, and if your income is limited to the produce of your croft, you cannot pay but a certain sum of money in the form of rent or interest after maintaining yourself and your family; and the question I put to you is whether you think a man would be able to pay a fair rent for the land, *plus* the interest required, to stock it either with live or dead stock?—[*No answer.*]

36,277. *Mr Forsyth.*—If you think you cannot see your way to answer that question, of course you can say so. It is at your discretion; you may feel some difficulty in giving a decided answer at the moment to a question of some importance?—Well, I cannot see through what is the main intention in the question.

36,278. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you think that a fair rent would be sufficient for a man to pay, without interest in addition?—That is, along with maintaining himself?

36,279. Yes.—I would say they could do more than pay a fair rent and maintain a family, according to the style I see going on in the island just now.

36,280. That is to say, they could afford to pay some interest in addition to a fair rent?—Yes.

36,281. *Mr Munro.*—How long have you lived on the Island of Tiree?—I was born in the island, although I was away from it for some years.

36,282. Where were you when you were away, and how long were you away?—I was in Glasgow for a good many years, and I was in Orkney for some time.

36,283. But how many years have you lived in Tiree altogether?—It is about eighteen years since I came home last time.

36,283*a*. Have you had any experience yourself in the cultivation of land?—It is very little I have done in the way of cultivating land, true enough.

36,284. But I suppose I may take it that, from your long residence in the island, you would be quite familiar with the opinions and wants of the people?—Yes.

36,285. Then is it the case that there is what is commonly called 'land hunger' on the Island of Tiree?—Oh, yes.

36,286. The people are really desirous of becoming possessors of land, that is, those who have none; and those who have got a small extent are desirous of becoming the possessors of more; is that the case?—Yes.

36,287. There are, on the island of Tiree, 184 crofters and about 250 cottars, making 434 in all. Now, supposing that the sheep farms on this island were broken up, is there sufficient land altogether to give reasonable holdings to those who might apply out of these 434?—Yes, along with the others that have more than they should have.

36,288. That is what I meant: I referred to the large farms. Supposing they were broken up, would that give sufficient land to live upon for all those who are desirous of getting land?—That is my opinion, at all events.

36,289. Now, in your opinion, supposing the people were put in possession of moderately sized farms or crofts, would they be able to maintain themselves fairly well without any other sources of income?—Yes.

36,290. You have put in a statement of considerable importance before the Commission, and you have there made reference to a number of acts of oppression alleged to have been perpetrated upon certain inhabitants of the island. Can you give us any idea when these things occurred? You, for example, mentioned that one man and his family, after refusing to leave their house, were forced out and had to spend the winter night under a boat, no one daring to take them in. Another widow was lifted out on the bedclothes, and left on the roadside: a blind man and his mother were in the same way forced out of their house Could you give us any idea when these things occurred?—That was during the time when Mr Campbell was factor here.

Tiree, Argyllshire. — Hector Stewart.

36,291. What year would that be?—About forty years ago, or so.

36,292. It has not occurred in your own lifetime, I suppose?—No.

36,293. Were these people evicted for the purpose of enlarging the sheep farms or of making new sheep farms?—It was altogether in this sense: if the factor had one that he wished to favour, he would ask another man to leave his croft and his house,—that was all the warning that he got; he would have to agree to that, or else suffer as stated there.

36,294. But why were they evicted: was it in order that their land might be added to the sheep farms?—Yes, or given to a favourite of his own.

36,295. Now, in another part of your statement, you mention that the people earn some living by tangle-gathering?—Yes.

36,296. Does that custom still prevail in the island?—Yes.

36,297. Then you go on to say, after giving a description of how the tangle is made, that 'they get 4d. per yard for it, but this price must be accepted in goods sold in the chemical store, let the price or quality of the goods be as it may. Then, again, there are the small crofters. These, in my opinion, are not much better off than the cottars, for they must also engage in tangle-gathering, because the produce of the little patches of crofts they have would be scanty enough to maintain a family for a month or two in the year. Now are these people under compulsion to engage in the work of tangle-gathering in the island?—No, but for their own good.

36,298. But you say that they are compelled to take payment for their labours in goods sold at the chemical store?—Yes.

36,299. Is that the case at the present day?—That is the case.

36,300. Are you aware that that is a serious breach of law on the part of those who compel them to accept payment in goods?—That is what we hear from others,—that the truck system is out of date now, and that they ought to get money for what they bring: but complaints will not do, they must have it.

36,301. You say that these evictions took place about forty years ago, and there were great complaints then made by the people of the usage they received from those in authority over them. Now I have before me here a copy of a petition which professes to be signed by forty crofters and ninety-six cottars in Tiree. The docqueting of the petition runs 'Petition to Sir 'John M'Neill, from certain poor persons in the Island 'of Tiree, praying for aid to emigrate.' Have you ever heard anything about that petition asking assistance from the Board of Supervision to enable the people of Tiree to emigrate?—I do not remember anything about that.

36,302. The petition concludes 'May it therefore 'please your honour to take the miserable condition of 'your petitioners into your consideration, and use your 'influence with His Majesty's Government or his Grace 'the Duke of Argyll to provide for them the means of 'emigrating.' You never heard anything of that petition?—I don't remember.

36,303. You will, no doubt, be aware that that petition was written very shortly after the potato famine?—I heard recently about that.

36,304. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton* (*Secretary of the Highland Land Law Reform Association*).—I should like to ask this witness whether he has fully understood Mr Gordon's question with regard to the rent of a self-supporting holding. Mr Gordon referred to it first as a full rent—[*Mr Gordon.*—No, I beg your pardon]—and at other times as a fair rent, which required, of course, to have the interest on money advanced added. I would like to ask, regarding the average-sized croft in Tiree at the present time, whether the rents which have been fixed by the Crofters Commission are paid out of the produce of the holdings or have to be got from other sources.

36,305. *Mr Forsyth.*—Mr Macrae's first question is whether you have thoroughly understood the question which was put to you by Mr Gordon, as to the difficulty there might be in paying either a full or a fair rent, together with the interest on money advanced,—say by Government,—for building and stocking. Did you understand that question?—I think so.

Tiree, Argyllshire. — Hector Stewart.

36,306. Then is it your opinion, in answer to that question, that the tenant of a new holding would be able to do all that?—I think so.

36,307. The next question is, are the rents of the crofters holdings paid out of the holdings, or from other sources?—In some cases, throughout the island, the rent has to be got in another way; they complain that the rents are not altogether what they should be.

36,308. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Do they complain that their rents are too high?—Yes, according to the rate that the markets are going just now.

36,309. We have been told that there are 184 crofters at present in Tiree, and I accept that statement as correct. Have the larger number of these crofters to get their rent from other sources than the land, or the smaller number?—Those that have not sufficient land to maintain the family must get it in some other way.

36,310. Are the most of them able to pay their rent out of the land, or are most of them forced to get the rent from other quarters? I want to know their average condition?—[*No answer.*]

36,311. Can it be said that 100 out of the 184 pay their rent out of the land?—I would take it that the larger number must get their rent from other sources.

36,312. Then I would like you to tell me where they get the rent?—Most of them by their children sending home money to pay the rent.

36,313. From the south and from abroad?—Yes.

36,314. Now, supposing Government advanced money for buildings and for stocking new holdings, do you believe that these sons and daughters of the people of Tiree, who have in the past been in the habit of sending their parents money from abroad and from the south, would stop sending the money when their parents got larger and better holdings? Would they not help their parents in the future as they had been doing in the past, in order to get clear of the Government debt?—Yes, that is what I think.

36,315. So that your opinion is that, if a proper 'fair rent' was fixed on new holdings, the debt of the Government loan would be no difficulty whatever?—No.

36,316. The sons and daughters would join with the parents, and help to pay the new rent as they had been helping to pay the old rent in the past?—Yes.

36,317. *Mr Munro.*—You have told us that at present a number of these 184 crofters in the island obtain a proportion of their rent from their sons and daughters in the south, to enable them to meet that rent. Now, supposing that they got their crofts considerably enlarged, would they be enabled to dispense with such outside assistance altogether? Could they then live comfortably upon their crofts without any other help?—If I understand aright what is meant by the question, I believe they would dispense with it as far as the means of living to themselves and their families are concerned, for the produce of the croft would support the family.

36,318. But would it pay the rent as well?—[*No answer.*]

36,319. Suppose, for a moment, that a man with 10 acres got his holding increased to 20 or 30 acres, would that enable him to live comfortably and pay a fair rent, without any outside help at all? I am not speaking of building houses or anything of that sort, but simply the living for the family and the paying of the rent: could he do that out of the increased holding?—Yes, that is what I think.

36,320. You say, emphatically, that if they got their present holdings enlarged,—say from 10 to 20 or 30 acres,—the crofters would be enabled to live without any outside help, and pay a fair rent?—Yes.

DONALD SINCLAIR, Barrapoll (50).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,321. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—For two years.

36,322. Have you heard Mr Stewart's evidence?—Yes.

36,323. Do you agree with it?—In part.

36,324. Are there any of his statements from which you wish to differ?—Yes.

36,325. In what respect?—As to rent and interest.

36,326. Mr Stewart, I think, gave us to understand that a crofter in Tiree, with an enlarged holding or a new holding of larger size, could pay a fair rent and interest on Government advances: do you wish to differ from that?—I think that they could do it, and I would give the reason, if I am allowed to give it.

36,327. Can you show us any way by which they would be able to do that?—Forty years ago a 12 acre croft would feed a family, and the reason was that, at that time, the rent was only one-third of what it is at present. If the rent was down, as it was from 45 to 80 years ago, they would be able to pay the interest along with that rent.

36,328. In short, that simply means that if the rent were sufficiently low, they would be able to pay the interest along with it?—Yes.

36,329. Have you any idea of your own as to the size of croft that ought to be given for a self-sustaining croft?—Twenty-eight acres of arable.

36,330. And some pasture?—Forty acres of outrun or common. The common here is not good,—I am talking of the present crofting land.

36,331. Would you be prepared to take a holding of that kind now?—Yes, but it is not to be had, except in the large farms.

36,332. *Mr Munro.*—You have said that, if the rents were reduced to what they were 45 years ago, you could live comfortably. Can you remember what the rent,—say of your own place,—would be 45 years ago?—I do not remember it myself, but I heard from my father that it was £9 at one time, in his day, and in my grandfather's time £5.

36,333. And what is the rent now?—£13, 18s.

36,334. Would the difference between the rent paid by your grandfather and the rent you pay to-day enable you to live in comfort at the present time?—We could live comfortably at that rent, with what we can do of outside work.

36,335. Now, coming down to the present time, you mention that, if you got a holding of 28 acres arable and 40 acres outrun, that would be sufficient to maintain your family?—That would do it.

36,336. And you could maintain your family and pay a fair rent without any outside help?—Yes.

36,337. In answer to the Chairman, you stated that you would take such a holding yourself if it was offered to you?—Yes, if I was paid for the improvements I did where I was, I would be willing to take it.

36,338. And I take it that you consider that such holdings could not be obtained in the Island of Tiree except by breaking up existing sheep farms?—No, the crofters' holdings do not yield the same produce now: they are run out with over-cropping.

36,339. [*Question repeated.*]—It could be done by doubling some of the existing crofts.

36,340. How could you double existing crofts, unless you broke up some other land?—[*Mr Macrae.*—His answer explained that. He said, by one of the present crofters leaving his croft and going to one of the big farms, and the two crofts being joined.]

36,341. Now, supposing that a sheep farm were broken up and divided amongst crofters, would they be able to pay a rent equal to what the present sheep farmer is paying for that farm?—Yes, with the improvements that the large tenants get in the way of fencing, draining, and building.

36,342. You know the island very well, I suppose?—Yes, all the island.

36,343. Do you think that, if the existing crofters got an extension of their holdings, and the cottars got a sufficient extent of land, that that would add materially to the comfort or prosperity of the island?—Not without a reduction of the present rent.

36,344. Of course I am assuming a fair rent?—Yes, it would.

36,345. Is there any desire amongst the people of Tiree, at present, to emigrate?—There are some leaving, and perhaps more would leave too, if the land was divided.

36,346. Would *not* leave, surely you mean? Or do you mean that, if the land were properly divided, some would be glad to go away so as to make room for those who remained?—That is what I mean.

36,347. *Mr Gordon.*—You are aware of the number of crofters and cottars on the island: have you any idea of the extent of the sheep farms?—No, I don't know the acreage.

36,348. Looking at them, and taking them in gross, I think they would be between 4500 and 5000 acres. Now, if you were to break up these five or six farms into holdings of the size which you propose, they would accommodate only 70 people at the most?—There are other large farms that could be reduced.

36,349. Which ones?—Where there is one man with five or six crofts.

36,350. Yes, but I am afraid this Commission would not be justified in dealing with a small farm, although it might cover four or five crofts; it cannot interfere with small holdings. It is strictly mentioned in the remit that we are only entitled to deal with land that is not in the possession of small holders. What would you do with the balance of the crofters and cottars in want of land if you were to divide it into holdings of the size you mentioned?—I would give nothing to crofters till the cottars were first served.

36,351. But suppose you divided the whole island into holdings, you would only be able to accommodate one-third of the cottars?—A number of the cottars would only take 3 acres and a cow's grazing.

36,352. Then you would suggest a graded size of crofts,—which I think a reasonable proposal,—some of 28 acres, and others of potato land only: is that so?—Fishermen would take the small holdings.

36,353. You think a number of small holdings would be taken by men following the occupation of fishermen?—I am sure of it.

36,354. And in that way you would make the land that was divided go further?—Just so.

36,355. Now you gave us, to my mind, a very fair account of the rents which the crofters would be able to pay along with the interest. But you stated that the crofters or the men would be found able to enter a croft of the size you mentioned, provided the proprietor gave them buildings and fences the same as he does to the big farm: is that so?—I thought it referred to myself personally, and I answered that I would leave my own holding on these conditions.

36,356. No, I think you distinctly stated it as your opinion that the crofters generally would be able to pay the same rent as the large farmer. [*Question and answer, No.* 36,341, *read over to witness.*]—Yes, that is right.

36,357. You are aware that, if a big farm is broken up, the present buildings would not be suitable for the smaller holdings?—A crofter who took a share of such a big farm would be able to build if the proprietor found one-half of the expense.

36,358. That is your way out of the difficulty, but what I want to get from you is this. Assuming that one of these big farms is fully housed and fenced at present, and that it is proposed to break up the farm into five or six holdings, would you propose that the landlord should provide all the new buildings and new fences required to fully house the farm for the smaller lots, and to provide the necessary subdivision fences?—No.

36,359. If that money was required, you must get it from some other source?—I would put half of it on the proprietor.

36,360. Would that be fair to the proprietor?—It would be as fair as making it for the large farms.

36,361. Yes, but if the large farm is properly housed

Tiree, Argyllshire.

Donald Sinclair.

and fenced at present, would it be fair to ask the proprietor to undo the present state of things?—He has been paid for it a long time in the rent he has been getting.

36,362. That is one way of looking at it. But there is a difficulty in the question which I would very much like you to face. Do you say that the proprietor should pay one-half of the expense of the new buildings and fences?—I think he should.

36,363. Did the Crofters Commission lower your rent at all?—No.

36,364. Did they wipe off any of your arrears?—No.

36,365. Then they must have thought you had a cheap holding?—That was not the reason.

36,366. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did the Crofters Commission, as a rule, reduce almost all the crofters' rents in the Island of Tiree that came under their notice?—No; I am an example myself that they did not take anything off, and mine is one of the worst crofts in the township.

36,367. Were there many who did not get a reduction?—There are some who got only a slight reduction.

36,368. Could you name two crofters in Tiree who did not get a reduction?—No, there is only one who did not get a reduction.

36,369. Who is the man who did not get a reduction?—Myself.

36,370. Was your rent increased by the Commissioners?—No.

36,371. What is the size of your holding?—36 acres.

36,372. How many acres arable?—12 acres arable.

36,373. What is your rent per acre?—I cannot say, for in the winter time most of it is under water. [*The Secretary.*—The area given in the Commission Report is 14 acres 3 roods arable, 25 acres 2 roods outrun, and a share in 760 acres of common.] *Witness.*—There are 16 shares in the common.

36,374. How many shares have you got in the common?—One share.

36,375. Could you give us the names of the large farms that you have under consideration for sub-division?—Yes.

36,376. Name them, please.—First, there is Hynish.

36,377. Who is the tenant of Hynish?—Mr Robert Macdiarmid.

36,378. Is that the factor?—No.

36,379. What is the next farm?—Hylipol.

36,380. Who is the tenant?—The factor, Mr Hugh Macdiarmid.

36,381. The next large farm?—Hough.

36,382. And the tenant?—The factor.

36,383. Keep all the factor's farms together: they will be more easily added. The next farm?—Crossipol.

36,384. The tenant?—Mr Barr.

36,385. The next farm?—Reef.

36,386. The tenant?—Mr Barr.

36,387. The next farm?—Balephetrish.

36,388. The tenant?—Mr Barr.

36,389. Is there another farm?—Yes, Scarinish.

36,390. Who is the tenant?—Miss Macfadyen, the innkeeper.

36,391. Are these all the big farms over £100, or are there any more?—Greenhill.

36,392. The tenant?—Lachlan Macneill.

36,393. Name any other big farm you would like to see broken up?—That is all.

36,394. Is there a place called Cornaigmore?—Yes.

36,395. Should that, in your opinion, be broken up?—Yes.

36,396. Could you, from memory, give us the rents of these farms respectively?—[*Mr Watson.* Balephetrish, £420; Crossipol, £260; Hynish, £355; Hylipol, £376; Reef, £320; Hough, £234.]

36,397. Well, if we got the acreage now, I think we would have an epitome of these large farms. Did you calculate the average rent of the crofter holdings and compare it with the average rent of the big farms?—No, but I was hearing that the big farms paid half the rent.

36,398. Half the rent the crofters are paying, acre for acre?—No, altogether; the total.

36,399. The total rental of the big farms is about half the rental of the island?—Yes.

36,400. Have you any idea whether the big farmers or the crofters pay the higher rent, acre for acre?—The crofters pay more.

36,401. And are the lands occupied by the crofters better and fatter lands than the lands the large farmer occupies?—No, the crofters have the worst of the land altogether.

36,402. Now I should like you for a moment to consider the condition of the fishermen who have not an inch of land, and the condition of the smallest class of crofters in the island: I wish to ask which of those two classes is in a safer and better condition of social comfort?—They are very much like each other, and I will give the reason.

36,403. Do you mean to say that a fisherman, without an inch of land, is as comfortable and as secure from poverty as a small crofter?—Yes, but I must give you the reason.

36,404. I would like to know the reason?—The small crofter loses his time about his work, and cannot get any other labour done; the only work there is to be had,—kelp-making,—he cannot get at, because he is engaged on the croft.

36,405. Do I understand you, then, to mean that a man who is a fisherman should not get a bit of land at all,—that he would be better without a bit of land?—I answered that question before; he would be better with getting a bit of land.

36,406. Could a fisherman pursue the fishing, and improve the condition of his family, by having a small bit of land for cultivation along with the fishing?—Yes, for the fishing does not continue the whole year, and he would have time to work the land.

36,407. If he had a bit of land, it would keep him in employment when he could not fish.

36,408. How would you propose to improve the condition of the fishermen of Tiree,—that is, those fishermen who have no land at all?—The first thing would be a harbour for them; and 3 acres and a cow.

36,409. What is the smallest sized croft in Tiree at present?—2, 3 and 4 to 6 acres arable.

36,410. How do you propose to improve the condition of that class of crofters? Would you give them crofts and make fishermen of them, or enlarge their holdings?—No, I would not make fishermen of them.

36,411. Well, how would you improve their condition?—By putting the small crofts together till they came up to 18 acres; and some of them to leave and go into large farms.

36,412. How would you select those who would have to leave?—That would not be very difficult; they would be all very willing to leave it, if they got the chance.

36,413. Would the crofters who have between 2 and 6 acres be in a position to take up a self-supporting holding in one of the big farms without Government assistance?—I think they would not.

36,414. Would you rather get that help, for the building of houses, steadings, and dykes, and for draining, from the landlord or from the British Government?—The one-half to be provided by the proprietor, and the other half by the Government, and interest paid on it.

36,415. But if the proprietor turned round and said that he had enough to do to pay his own expenses, and had no money to give, how would you propose to get out of that difficulty? I know proprietors who are not in a position to do it, and who openly say so, regretting their inability to do it.—I would not be *asking* the proprietor; I would *make* him do it.

36,416. But, in the event of the proprietor not being able to do anything of that kind, did you consider the question of Government stepping in and buying out the landlord altogether, and dealing directly with the native population?—That is the only way out of the difficulty.

Tiree, Argyllshire.

Donald Campbell.

DONALD CAMPBELL, fisherman, Kilmaluag (47)—*examined.*

36,417. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you fish regularly here?—I am not fishing this year.

36,418. But you have been fishing in past times?—Yes.

36,419. Have you found, on the whole, that you can make a fair living by fishing, or have you had other employment?—I am stopping with my father on a croft.

36,420. Your father has a croft?—Yes.

36,421. And you are fishing to help the family living, as it were?—Yes.

36,422. Do you think a man in Tiree can make his living by fishing, without any other work?—No, he cannot.

36,423. Is that chiefly because there is no harbour?—Yes.

36,424. Supposing there was a good harbour, and large boats could be kept, is it a suitable place for fishing?—I don't think a fisherman would stop all the year round; he would have to go to some other place.

36,425. Then your idea is that a fisherman should have some other means of livelihood besides the fishing?—Yes.

36,426. Do you concur with the preceding witnesses as to the desirability of a small fisherman's croft?—Yes.

36,427. I think one of the witnesses said about 3 acres and a cow or thereabouts?—Some of them would rather have that than a big holding.

36,428. *Mr Munro.*—Have you no land at present?—My father has, and I am living with him.

36,429. But do you desire to have some land?—I would like to have better land than we have just now.

36,430. Is it possible for a fisherman to pursue the occupation of fishing, and cultivate a small croft advantageously as well? Can he combine the two?—A very small croft; he cannot do both if the croft is of any size.

36,431. *Mr Gordon.*—What size is your father's croft?—30 acres in all.

36,432. Is that mostly arable?—There is hardly any of it arable; only about 2 acres.

36,433. Then it will scarcely give employment to one man?—No.

36,434. But you do not work much at the croft?—Yes, I am working at it this year, because my father is unwell, and I could not leave the house.

36,435. When you were at the fishing, did you follow the line fishing?—Yes.

36,436. And the herring fishing also?—Yes.

36,437. A harbour here would be essential before you could make this a fishing district, I suppose?—Yes.

36,438. And it is rather difficult to get a harbour?—Oh, money can do everything.

36,439. And there is difficulty in getting a suitable place?—No; and it would give work to the people. If the money was forthcoming, the harbour could easily be made.

36,440. You heard what the other witness said about the places that were available for getting additional land?—Yes.

36,441. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

Archibald Macneill.

ARCHIBALD MACNEILL, smith, Kenovay (38).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,442. *Mr Forsyth.*—You have heard what has been said by the other witnesses?—Yes.

36,443. Do you agree with it?—Yes, I think it is right.

36,444. Have you anything particular that you wish to add to their evidence?—No, except what I would like myself.

36,445. Do you hold any land here?—No land.

36,446. Then you would want land, I suppose?—Yes, a little.

36,447. To have as an addition to your smith work?—Yes.

Tiree, Argyllshire.

Archibald Macneill.

36,448. Would you ask a large holding if you could get one?—No.

36,449. Just a small croft?—Yes.

36,450. With the view of keeping a cow?—Two cows, and potato ground.

36,451. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—When did you begin to feel and to realise the want of land for your family?—Fourteen years ago.

36,452. Did you take any steps to bring your desire under the notice of the factor or of the proprietor?—No, but others did, and they were refused.

36,453. Are there many people in your quarter in the same position as yourself,—without any land?—Yes, and without trade.

36,454. Did they approach the factor or the proprietor for land?—Not to my knowledge.

36,455. Did you take any steps to bring your condition under the notice of the County Council?—Yes.

36,456. When?—Last year.

36,457. Why did you not approach the factor for it thirteen years before then, seeing that he had the whole island?—I thought it would be of no use.

36,458. What made you think it would be of no use to go to the factor for a small holding?—I did not see openings.

36,459. Did you expect that the factor would give small holdings unless he was asked?—I was not thinking he would give it, either for asking or for not asking.

36,460. Do you know of parties asking small holdings from the factor and getting a refusal?—I don't know.

36,461. Were a large number of applications for small holdings or allotments sent to the County Council from Tiree?—Yes.

36,462. Have you an idea how many?—I cannot say exactly, except from our own township.

36,463. How many from your own township?—I think four.

36,464. Who was the County Councillor for the district at that time?—Mr Barr and the factor.

36,465. Mr Barr, the big farmer?—Yes.

36,466. How does your application for allotments or small holdings stand now, do you know?—We sent away our applications, but have heard no word of them since.

36,467. How long is it since they were sent away?—About nine months.

36,468. Do you say that the crofters of Tiree heard nothing about those applications for the last nine months?—To my knowledge.

36,469. Did you ask the County Councillors representing the district what had become of those applications?—No, I never did.

Alexander Campbell.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, fisherman, Balevulin (43)—*examined.*

36,470. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you any land?—No land.

36,471. You have only a house?—That is all.

36,472. Do you make your livelihood by fishing here?—No.

36,473. What other means have you of living?—I do a little joiner work, and work along with the crofters for potato ground when I am not fishing.

36,474. You do not fish regularly and systematically?—I cannot be at it regularly.

36,475. Would you take to the fishing regularly if you had the chance,—if there was a good harbour?—Not in the island, but in other places, if we had good big boats.

36,476. Do you think a good living could be made about here, by fishing, if there were a harbour?—Yes, for nine months of the year.

36,477. Then, if there were a harbour, would you be content with a small fisherman's holding?—Yes, if I could get near where the harbour was.

36,478. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Are there many cottars in your neighbourhood in the same con-

Tiree, Argyllshire. Alexander Campbell.

dition as yourself,—without land and very desirous of getting some land?—There are about 24 of them at the same work as myself.

36,479. Did you yourself, or you and your neighbours, take any steps to make that desire plain and clear to the estate authorities?—No.

36,480. You never applied for land?—I applied to the County Council.

36,481. How long since?—Four or five months ago, I think; I hardly think it is so long as the former witness stated.

36,482. What lands did you apply for?—It is the land that is in possession of the crofters that would suit the fishermen; but they would take it out of large farms, for all that.

36,483. Did you mention, in your application, any particular land that would suit you?—I said, in my own application, that I would take it any place in Tiree.

36,484. Have you heard anything further about that application?—No.

Angus Munn.

ANGUS MUNN, crofter, Hianish (52).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,485. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you heard the evidence that has been given by the other witnesses?—I heard part of it; I was a little away, and did not hear it all.

36,486. Do you agree generally with what you heard of it?—Yes.

36,487. Have you any special point to bring before us to-day?—No, nothing further than what the rest have given you.

36,488. What size is your croft?—About 9½ acres, including rocky ground.

36,489. Do you want a larger croft, if you can get it on fair terms?—Yes.

Duncan Mackinnon.

DUNCAN MACKINNON, Scarinish (65)—*examined.*

36,490. *Mr Forsyth.*—You are a cottar with no land?—Yes.

36,491. How do you make your living?—I have sons who are sailors, and they support me.

36,492. Is it the desire of the cottars generally to get some land here?—Yes.

36,493. You think that would make your condition more comfortable?—I am sure of it.

36,494. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Was there a time in your recollection when the families living at Scarinish had land?—It is 26 or 27 years since the Scarinish people lost their land.

36,495. Had the whole of the people of Scarinish land at that time?—There were nine of them cottars then.

36,496. And how many families had land?—Twelve had land; the crofts were small, and they had been doubled.

36,497. How many tenants occupy to-day the lands that these 12 tenants had 27 years ago?—One.

36,498. Who is the tenant who has that land to-day?—The Macfadyens.

36,499. Is that the hotel people?—Yes.

36,500. I think you were saying, in an answer when you were interrupted, that 21 had crofts?—Twenty-one crofts, but 12 tenants; some of them were doubled.

36,501. Why were the lands taken from these 12 tenants and consolidated into one holding?—Because they were suitable for sheep farming, and some of the tenants were in arrear, but my own rent was always clear.

36,502. You were one of the 12 tenants?—Yes.

36,503. Were you willing to part with the land?—I was not: I had a small family, and was very sorry to leave the land.

36,504. What excuse was made for depriving you of the land, seeing you were not a penny in arrear?—To clear the farm, that all would be alike landless.

36,505. Has the condition of the people of Scarinish been improved by this estate arrangement of taking land from them and giving it to one? Did it leave them better, or worse?—It made them go away all through the world,—shore and land,—to earn their livelihood. Tiree, Argyllshire. Duncan Mackinnon.

36,506. Did it make their condition at home better, or worse, to take the land from them?—I am sure it did them harm.

36,507. Did it make a change for the worse in the food of the people,—in their living? Can they get milk to-day?—No, they cannot get milk.

36,508. Was milk plentiful when the tenants had the land?—Yes.

36,509. And what other food had they besides milk?—Potatoes, meal, and other things.

36,510. Had they cheese?—Yes.

36,511. And butter?—Yes.

39,512. Do they eat butter to-day?—Yes.

36,513. Is it as good as the butter they used to eat then, when they had cows and made their own butter?—No, nor half so good.

Donald Macneill.

DONALD MACNEILL, tailor, Barrapoll (35).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,514. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you heard the evidence of the previous witnesses?—I heard some of it.

36,515. Can we take you as concurring in what they said?—Yes.

36,516. Have you any special evidence that you wish to lay before us to-day?—I wish to say that we do not get butter or cheese, and we get no meal except Indian meal.

36,517. You wish to differ from the last witness in that respect?—I am wanting land.

36,518. You come before us to say that you want land, and that you have none at present: is that so?—Yes.

36,519. Would you wish to add a croft to your other employment?—Yes.

36,520. Do you think that would improve your condition?—I am sure it would.

36,521. And you would be willing to take one, if one could be found, provided the rent was a fair one?—Yes; we see that there is land.

36,522. You wish to add that there is land available in this island for that purpose?—Yes.

36,523. Would you be able to stock a croft if you got one?—No, but I would be assisted to do so.

36,524. You would require assistance for that, would you?—Yes.

36,525. *Mr Munro.*—From whom would you expect that assistance to come?—From the proprietor,—from the Duke, because it is owing to his or his officials' doings that I am to-day without land.

36,526. But, supposing that the proprietor refused to give you assistance, what then?—We would just have to be as we were before.

36,527. So that your position is that you could not take the croft without getting assistance, and you would expect that assistance to come from the landlord?—I think it should.

36,528. But if you could not get assistance, then you could not take the croft?—I am not sure but that I might: I think I could partly stock the croft.

Alexander Maclean.

ALEXANDER MACLEAN, crofter, Balemartin (about 50).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,529. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you heard the evidence given by the various witnesses we have had to-day?—Yes.

36,530. Can we take you as concurring generally in that evidence?—I want to give evidence that there is arable land in Tiree, and people needful of getting it.

36,531. Is your croft of sufficient size to maintain you?—No.

36,532. Would you take a larger croft if you could get one?—Yes.

HECTOR MACKINNON, Fisherman, Kilmoluag (48)—*examined.*

36,533. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft?—No, I am a fisherman.

36,534. Do you make your living mostly by fishing?—Yes.

36,535. Do you find you can make a fair living by that?—During part of the year: for nine months.

36,536. But it cannot keep you going during the winter months?—No.

36,537. Could you do better if you had a good harbour here?—Yes.

36,538. Would you go in for a larger boat?—Yes.

36,539. Then your ideas are mostly towards the fishing? You think more of the fishing than anything else, as a means of livelihood?—Yes, and a bit of land along with it.

36,540. You think a fisherman would be the better of a bit of land?—Of course.

36,541. That is, a small fisherman's croft?—Yes, for the dead of winter. That would improve his condition, and keep him comfortable the whole year round.

36,542. Then you come before us with the idea of asking us for that, if it could be obtained. What is your idea of a fisherman's croft?—Three acres of land, and a cow's grass.

36,543. That is the sort of holding you are seeking?—Yes, and as close to the sea as could be.

36,544. You would require your holding and house to be near the pier and harbour, if there was one?—Of course; to be near the place I fish from, if possible.

36,544*a*. You have heard what has been said at this meeting?—Yes.

36,545. And do you agree generally with the evidence given by the other delegates?—Yes.

36,546. *Mr Gordon.*—Where is your present harbour?—There is no harbour at all, I may say, on the island, except what we call a creek.

36,547. Where do you shelter your boats?—Port Bhist was the old one, and there is another creek over in Cornaigmore where we have to take shelter when we cannot stay there.

36,548. That faces almost due north?—Yes.

36,549. Where is the nearest available land to your present holding?—From Kenovay to Hough.

36,550. On what farms is it: on Cornaigmore or Hough?—Cornaigmore and Cornaigbeg.

36,551. You think that land suitable for the fishermen could be got on one or other of these farms?—Yes.

36,552. That would be most convenient for your present sheltered creeks?—Yes.

36,553. How are these two farms held at present: are they held by one man or by different men?—By different men.

36,554. *Mr Munro.*—Supposing you got the 3 acres and the grazing for a cow, could you do justice to that as well as follow your calling of fisherman?—Yes.

36,555. One witness here stated that at Scarinish there was a difficulty in procuring milk for the children. Is there any similar difficulty at Kilmoluag?—There is, for some of the people. Those that have ground have milk, but those who have not ground have nothing.

36,556. Can they not get milk by buying it?—Sometimes.

36,557. But there is a scarcity?—They will hardly have enough for themselves, sometimes.

36,558. Do the children suffer in consequence of the scarcity of milk?—Surely they should, when there is no milk.

36,559. And one of your desires is to obtain land in order to have a sufficient supply of milk for your family?—Yes.

36,560. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Where do you say you get shelter for your boats?—In a creek they call Port Bhist.

36,561. Was there a pier there once?—Yes, and it is there yet,—a bit of it.

36,562. When was it built, and by whom?—I think it was built by the Fishery Board.

36,563. Or by the British Fisheries Society?—Yes, it might be them.

36,564. Have you any idea what it cost?—No.

36,565. When did it begin to break up?—Last year, most of it; during the winter.

36,566. Did it stand the weather for 50 or 60 or 70 or 80 years until last winter?—No.

36,566*a*. Well, then, when did it begin to become a wreck?—About 10 years ago.

36,567. It held on for a long number of years before then?—Yes.

36,568. Has anything at all been attempted or done to repair it?—No.

36,569. And is it badly broken now?—Yes, it is so badly broken that the stones are lying in the harbour where the boats draw up.

36,570. So that it is a source of danger now?—Yes; when there is anything of a run in the harbour, you may get your boat smashed to pieces if you don't watch it carefully.

36,571. Did the estate ever do anything to assist in repairing it?—No.

36,572. Are there many landless cottars in the neighbourhood?—Yes, a good few.

36,573. Can you give us an idea of the number, as near as you can?—I believe about 27 or 28.

36,574. Without any land at all?—Not as much as they could stand upon.

36,575. Do these 27 or 28 grow their potatoes, or do they buy them?—Some buy them and some grow them on land they get from the small crofters, for which they pay or labour.

36,576. So you then put it down as a statement of fact that those who have no land at all depend on small crofters for potato ground?—Yes.

36,577. Do you believe that these crofters are in a good and independent position themselves?—Some of them.

36,578. Are many of them badly off?—A good few, I think.

36,579. And yet they come forward and assist cottars by giving them potato ground?—Yes.

36,580. Would your condition be very much worse unless the crofters were kind to you and gave you ground?—To be sure.

36,581. Had some of these cottars land at one time?—Yes.

36,582. Had the half of them crofts at one time?—In the same place where I live there were 35 crofts at one time, and there are only 18 now.

36,583. So that, in your own memory, 17 who had crofts were dispossessed, and the crofts taken from them?—Yes.

36,584. Why were the crofts taken from these 17?—Because there were some of them taken by the factor and favoured above me. You would get, perhaps, only a day's notice, that was all; and if you were not willing to go they would make you go.

36,585. And instead of adding a croft taken from one man to the neighbouring croft, do you say that in many cases such a croft would be given to a favourite of the factor?—It is often the case yet.

36,586. You said that most of those who are cottars had crofts at one time?—Yes.

36,587. Were they in a much better condition when they had crofts than they are to-day?—They were bound to be, seeing they have now no land at all.

36,588. They were much more comfortable then than they are now?—Yes.

36,589. Do you consider the condition of these fishermen desperately bad now, seeing that they have no land at all now, and no place for landing,—no place for keeping their boats safe or their lives secure?—That is so.

36,590. What farm in particular would you and your neighbours see broken up to form a colony for some of these people?—They could easily find that out when it comes to that step.

36,591. What is the name of the farm that would be

Tiree, Argyllshire.

Hector Mackinnon.

handiest? — It is between Kenovay and Hough: Cornaigmore, I believe.

36,592. Who is the tenant of the big farm that would be handiest for you?—There are no big farmers; but that would suit us better, because it is close to the shore, where we are working for our living.

36,593. So you think, then, that the land has been very badly managed and badly divided in Tiree?—Yes; it is badly divided still.

36,594. You heard to-day about two classes of crofters: one class that would be self-supporting,—that is to say, the tenant would be kept in employment all the year round, and the croft would not only keep him going but support the family; and another class of crofts,—smaller crofts that would enable a man to have potatoes and milk and would allow him to follow the fishing too?—Yes.

36,595. Do you approve of both these classes of crofts in Tiree,—a class of crofts for farmers and another for men following the fishing: do you approve of that division of the land?—Yes.

36,596. Then you would break up all the big farms in the island and make self-sustaining small holdings out of them?—Yes.

36,596*a*. And you would give all the land near the piers and harbours as small holdings to the fishermen?—Yes.

36,597. *Mr Munro.*—As several strong statements have been made here to-day with reference to the management and administration of the Argyll Estates in Tiree, I think it would be advantageous, both in the public interest and in the interest of the Duke of Argyll, if we had some statement from His Grace's Factor in Tiree. I would therefore suggest that Mr Macdiarmid, who is present, be invited to come forward and give evidence. — *Mr Macdiarmid.* — The statements made refer principally to matters that took place before I had anything to do with the estate. I know nothing about them; and I am not authorised or prepared to give evidence or submit any statement.

36,597*a*. *Mr Munro.*—Then you decline to make any statement?—*Mr Macdiarmid.*—I do.

[Adjourned.]

FORTY-SECOND SITTING.

COLL, ARGYLLSHIRE, May 15, 1894.

Coll, Argyllshire.

Present:—

James Noel Muller Forsyth, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
George Gordon, Esq.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

Rev. Roderick Ross.

Rev. Roderick Ross, F.C. Minister, Coll (49) —*examined.*

36,598. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you appear here on behalf of the people?—I do.

36,599. Have you a written statement?—Yes, I have.

36,600. Kindly read it.—My acquaintanceship with Coll dates from 1882, exactly twelve years ago. Amongst the first things that reached my ears as a stranger settled down in the island was the somewhat disheartening story that Coll was a poor place,—that the people in general were poor, and some were very poor. On the surface, that did not appear: the cottar class were kept in employment, but I had been told that rents were high, and that farmers and crofters were in arrears. The former were chiefly on the Coll Estate, and the latter, with four or five exceptions, on the Cornaig Estate, where there are too many and the crofts are too small. The Cornaig crofters are a thrifty, hard-working people, and, since the fixing of Fair Rents by the Crofters Commission, are as prosperous as low prices for cattle and the size of their holdings would lead to expect. The great cry with them, and the great need with them, is enlarged holdings. A reasonable addition to their crofts, with a favourable change in the markets, would make the Cornaig crofters a prosperous, happy, and contented people. These were, at one time, crofters on the Coll Estate; they removed to Cornaig thirty-six years ago (about two years after the estate was bought by the late Mr Stewart, father of the present proprietor), either from compulsion or some other circumstances of estate management. In the township of Soddisdale, on the Cornaig Estate, there are seven crofters, some of whom occupy half crofts. If this township were divided between two, or at most three, of the crofters, they would have enough of land to maintain a family in comfort, the remaining four crofters to be provided for elsewhere. In the same way, two or three crofters might be removed from Bousd, on the same estate, with advantage to all concerned, and one from Cornaigmore. Seven or eight thus removed would have to be provided for elsewhere, and the Royal Commission will be satisfied that there is ample room in other parts of the island for these, and a number of cottars both on the Cornaig Estate and the Coll Estate requiring land.

Coll, Argyllshire. Rev. Roderick Ross.

Apart from those in constant employment on the Coll Estate, there are about fifteen cottar families between the Cornaig, Caolas, and Coll Estates, all of which could be supplied with crofts on land at one time under cultivation and now lying waste.

The crofters on the Coll Estate applied to the Crofters Commission for enlargement of holdings, but their applications have not yet been considered. These applications can be met without difficulty or injury to any existing holding.

At the census of 1841, about fifty-three years ago, the population of Coll stood at the high figure of 1442 souls; in 1851 it was 1109, and in 1881 it was 643, whilst in 1891 it was only 522.* If, fifty-three years ago, nearly three times the present population, and 43 years ago, more than double the present population, could live at all in Coll, how unfounded and utterly unreasonable and shameless is the cry kept constantly ringing in our ears, that the population of Coll is still too large to enable them to live in comfort, and that they should move away to the large cities. This is the policy that, by fair means and foul, has been carried on for years, and been brought to bear oppressively on the cottar class. The population over 120 less than it stood twelve years ago, and yet that same class poorer to-day than they were then! The truth is, that the policy is one of extirpation of the Highland race from their native soil, and it would ill serve the purpose to improve the condition of those allowed for a time to remain. On the contrary, as the little band grows smaller and smaller, like the remnant of a once noble army surrounded by savages, their condition becomes every day more critical and less bearable. The barbarism of civilised tyranny, systematically kept in motion and bringing forth its results with the certainty of an exact science, baffles thought and diction adequately to bring to light and illustrate. It is not for me to say who is responsible for all the evils that I know to exist. At the same time that I was told that Coll was poor, I was also told that the laird would make a good proprietor if he had good advisers. Indeed, the laird was usually painted white by those of his own estate, and his advisers black as black could be. If, from the want of practical knowledge of his business, the proprietor leaves himself in the hands of men who are irresponsible either to the Queen or to the public for their actions, and who usually get intoxicated by the unwonted power they are enabled to wield for the weal or the woe of their fellowmen, in virtue of the position they occupy, and if, because of this, oppression and tyranny, heartless threatenings and savage deeds, become the order of the day, and, as a consequence, the

* Mr Ross has since written stating that he accepts Mr Johnston's figures as to the population in 1851. See page 874.

wonted sense of security and happiness gone, then it can be no hardship if the State take matters seriously in hand and put the necessary machinery in motion for the amelioration of the condition of the people. When an estate is bought, as, 38 years ago, the Coll Estate was bought, the purchaser does not buy the people and the people's rights, to do with them as he may see fit. The people ought to have facilities to live in comfort on the land, and if the proprietor, either by his own act or through his agents, follows a course incompatible with the same, he fails in his duty, and there is a call for State interference. It will not do to be able to show instances of kindness and considerateness towards some who may fall into the ditch, whilst others are thrown in on purpose, or the ditch is there as the result of mismanagement. In carrying out the policy alluded to, some five or six years ago, a change was effected whereby the tillage of the land was stopped to an alarming extent. Many people were thrown out of employment, and some of them advanced in years, and without any provision being made for their support. From then till now not fewer than twelve families were affected, and six of them all in one batch, when the bread-winners of between 50 and 60 souls were thrown out of work. The house rent had to be paid in full, else there was threatened eviction from their houses. It was then that the question of land for the unemployed cottars was considered, and petitions sent to Colonel Stewart asking 2 acres of land for each cottar for potato ground. The factor was authorised to arrange to give some land, but the conditions attached were of such a nature that the men could not profitably undertake to fulfil them, and they are to this day without potato ground. But occasionally some of the unemployed do get work. Much could be said of the ills endured by the people as a whole, the centralisation of power and privilege being at the root of most of them; and among them all there is none more annoying than the prevalent and distinct feeling of disgust,—and distrust to a more or less extent among all in the community,—as though they lived in constant dread of some disastrous event that was about to happen, like people living in the vicinity of a dreaded volcano, not knowing when or of what sort the next upheaval may be.

36,601-4. Do you wish to be examined with reference to the land that might be available for small holdings on this island,—on the practical side of the question, I mean,—or do you wish to leave that to some other witness?—I would prefer simply to make the general statement, as they are perhaps more conversant with the practical part.

36,605. You wish rather to confine yourself to the general statement you have made?—Yes.

36,606. *Mr Gordon.*—There is a considerable extent of this island in the hands of the proprietor?—There is.

36,607. Which he apparently uses as dairy farms?—Yes.

36,608. Is the management of these farms the same now as it was some time ago?—I am not acquainted with the inside management.

36,609. But you say that there is a want now of employment for the people?—Yes, in that respect there is a great change, which I have alluded to.

36,610. You have not specified the change?—The ceasing of tilling, I referred to.

36,611. That is what I want to bring out from you. He now occupies these farms,—the dairy farms,—mainly as grazings?—I believe they are partly grazing and dairy farms—that is to say, sheep and dairy.

36,612. But he occupies the dairy farms more as grazing farms than as agricultural subjects? He does not grow corn crops nor any green crops?—Not to any extent. There is a great change in that respect since the present factor came to the island.

36,613. Therefore there is less employment for the people upon them than there would have been if they were used as ordinary agricultural subjects growing corn crops and turnips?—Yes, of course there is less employment for them; but we think they could do without such employment if the people got the land in their own hand.

36,614. But in regard to the management of the estate which you referred to generally, would these changes have been made in the farms, do you think, in consequence of a lack of labour?—I do not think so,—the very reverse. My opinion and belief is that it was done with the exact object of getting the people off, for I had a conversation with the factor at the time. The cities have more need for them than the country, apparently.

36,615. Now you have referred to another application made for 2 acre lots, and you stated that the conditions attached to the granting of these plots were such that the people could not accept them?—Yes, that is so.

36,616. Can you tell us what were the conditions imposed?—I can. I can read out the conditions to you. This is a letter from the factor addressed to myself, in connection with these applications, dated 'The 'Estate Office, Coll, 23rd April 1890. Yours of the '21st inst. to hand. As the villagers' application for 'potato land has been allowed to lie over so late in the 'season, it is impossible now to have the arrangements 'completed in time for planting this summer; and, 'besides, the land which they may get is taken up for 'the grazing of your own and the villagers' cows.' I may explain that I was deprived of the grazing of my own cow about 8 days after this, for my pro-cottar propensities, and my intimation that I was to apply to the Crofters Commission. The factor denied that the villagers were cottars, and that seemed to me to indicate a snake in the grass, and I knew from the origin of the village that they could not be other than cottars, as they were originally cottars and crofters; and I intimated, in consultation with the people, my intention. I intimated that to Mr Darroch, and in less than 24 hours' notice I was deprived of the grazing of my cow, which here, he says in express terms, I am to have along with the villagers till Martinmas. That I looked upon as a revengeful and vindictive act. I could tell more that has followed since then on the same line. My cow is now fed in the byre. To resume the letter—'is taken 'up for the grazing of your own and the villagers' cows, 'but they may get possession of the land for their 'purpose at Martinmas next on the following terms:— 'No land will be given to parties who may then be 'in arrears of rent for their dwelling houses.'

'The land to be apportioned to them will be to the 'extent of 1 imperial acre for each, of the land lying 'between the upper village of Airidh-nan-gobhar and 'the Free Church Manse.'

'That they jointly and severally become bound to 'work and maintain, at their own expense, a sufficient 'wire fence between the lands let to them and the lands 'adjoining.'

'That they come under an obligation to properly 'work, clean, and manure the lots, and to have in each 'year of their tenancy half an imperial acre of each lot 'in potatoes and the other half acre in oats; and at 'the end of the lease the ground to be left in such 'condition as will enable the proprietorto easily restore 'the land to pasture, they leaving the fence until in 'ordinary rotation the land comes in for grazing, after 'which they may remove the whole of their fencing 'material from the ground.'

'The tenants will bind themselves to pay direct to 'the collectors all the tenants' taxes applicable to the 'lands in their possession.'

'That none of the tenants will be permitted to sub-'let or sub-divide their lots; but the other lessees may 'arrange among themselves for the working of any un-'occupied lot.'

'That if the land is cropped, as above stipulated, 'the rent will be 15s. sterling per imperial acre per 'annum; but if allowed to lie in grass, or if cropped 'differently from what is stipulated, the rent will be at 'the rate of £4 sterling per imperial acre per annum.'

'That the rents will become due, and payable in full, 'at the term of Michaelmas in each year; the tenants, 'besides jointly and severally binding themselves to 'pay the whole rents when they become due, shall find 'two cautioners to the satisfaction of the proprietor

Coll, Argyllshire.

Rev. Roderick Ross.

'who will bind themselves to guarantee full implement 'of the conditions of let.'

'The tenant to pay the whole cost of the lease.'

'The lease to extend to five years, from Martinmas next.'

'Yours truly,

'Alexander Darroch,

'*pro* John Lorne Stewart, Esq.'

36,617. *Mr Munro.*—I should like to ask you one or two questions, if you please. Your memory, I think, carries you back for twelve years over this island?—Yes.

36,618. And I take it, from this interesting statement which you have given to the Commission, that you have identified yourself very closely with the wishes of the people in regard to the acquiring of more land for the amelioration of their condition, or helping them in any other way?—I may explain that, before the present factor came on the scene, my services were not required. The first move was in connection with paying off a batch of men in the service of the proprietor, and the change in the tillage of the soil, when it became necessary for these people to have some means of living, and it was then that my assistance was chiefly called for. Formerly, on personal grounds, I had anything but cause to complain of the proprietor: to me, personally, he was most kind, nor had I, until this vindictive spirit began to manifest itself, the slightest occasion to find fault with the proprietor on personal grounds. I was asked to identify myself, because of these troubles with the people, and I felt bound to do it.

36,619. So that I may presume you have taken up this question on public grounds, and in the interest of the poor people of the island?—Thoroughly and entirely, and at a disadvantage to my own feelings, because Mr Stewart was so friendly to me that it was really a difficulty with me to get myself into apparent opposition to him. Moreover, many of my people were in the service of the proprietor, and, for various reasons, I had difficulty in opposing him. It was the last thing in the world I wished to do, and if I had not seen it my clear and distinct duty, no power on earth would have made me do it.

36,620. You have stated that the people are poor, but thrifty and hard-working?—That is so.

36,621. May I take it that their poverty mainly arises from their difficulty in procuring reasonable allotments of land to work upon?—I have no doubt that if they got reasonable allotments of land to work upon, they would do well.

36,622. You told us that in 1851 the population was somewhat over 1100, and in 1891 it was down to something over 500?—Yes.

36,623. You have also stated, I think, that the decrease of the population and the poverty of the people always went together?—That is my observation. The cottars of to-day are, if anything, poorer,—a good deal poorer, I think, than they were twelve years ago.

36,624. Can you give us any idea of what the poor rates of the island were in 1851, as compared with what they were in 1892?—I am sorry I am unable to do that. There is a delegate from the people, however, who has for a long time been connected with the Parochial Board; perhaps he may be able to tell you that: I refer to Mr Johnston. He is pretty conversant with the matter, though, perhaps, he may not have made the comparison over so long a time. On that question, at all events, he may be taken as a better authority than I would be.

36,625. Do you think that the administration of property in this island by Colonel John Lorne Stewart, or his factor, is in any way harsh?—I do not quite follow you.

36,626. Are the people harshly treated?—Well, there is a system of terrorism,—in fact, people are not allowed, under pains and penalties for instance, to act independently. There are threats going about as to what may follow. I cannot give proof, but, for instance, when I was asked to stand as a candidate for the County Council for this district of Coll, it was, in the first instance, much against my own inclination; certainly, if there were any other in Coll who could stand, I would not go, but I was asked distinctly on the ground that this would be a protest against the mismanagement of the factor.

36,627. How is the land in Coll mainly cultivated at present?—I think I have already said it is chiefly in grazing and dairy farms.

36,628. Dairy farms mainly prevail here, I suppose?—Yes.

36,629. I presume you have some practical acquaintance with the cultivation of land?—Well, no, not much; I could not give myself out as an authority upon that.

36,630. You have hinted in your statement something about the shifting of crofters from congested districts, and planting them in other places where there is more land?—Yes.

36,631. Now, to take a practical case for illustration, supposing that one of these dairy farms were broken up and divided amongst crofters, do you think that they could advantageously or profitably occupy it now?—I certainly think so. I have every evidence of that from what the East End crofters are doing,—I mean the crofters on Cornaig. A load of misery was lifted off their minds, because they had been sunk in debt. It is a source of dispiritment,—it would dispirit any man, however humble in life, to be under a load of debt, and that load stifling the natural buoyancy of the people: and they were weakened because of that. Now, since the rents are on a reasonable footing, the people are comparatively prosperous, and the only thing that they complain of, that I hear, is the smallness of their holdings, and the bad markets. They are a most thrifty and hard-working people, and up to time. If the Royal Commissioners were to go there in summer they would find, in the crofts of the Cornaig crofters, corn as good as is grown on the best of Colonel Stewart's farms that he has in his own possession. I have seen it myself.

36,632. Then your remedy for the present discontent is to give the people free access to the land under fair and reasonable conditions as to rent and otherwise?—That is so.

36,633. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Have you any substantial proof, written or otherwise, that tyranny has been practised on yourself for the part you took in standing up for the rights of the people?—(*Mr Forsyth.*—I may explain to you that it is entirely optional to you whether you should answer that question or not).—*Witness.*—I have not come here to expose my own grievances, and, upon the whole, I would rather not be pressed. I may say that I have hitherto restrained my feelings as to personal matters: I mentioned what I did say, simply because it naturally occurred to my mind in passing. I certainly have had such proof in the matter of the cow's grazing, for instance, and I have plenty of other evidence such as is referred to in the question.

36,634. All owing to the part you have taken in standing up and speaking up for the rights of the people?—I know no other reason.

36,635. Have the doors of your house been barricaded with barbed wire by the estate, because of the same thing?—Well, I would rather not go into the matter. There is an action pending in reference to that; and, on the whole, I think, it would be better not to touch upon it.

36,636. Have you inquired into the original foundation of the township of Airidh-nan-gobhar,—the conditions on which the township was originally established?—Yes, I have.

36,637. Would you be kind enough to state the original arrangement of that township?—I am not sure if I can do so from memory; but, about two years ago, I got a statement from one of the villagers, and also from an old man, the father of Mr Johnston, who told me the village was built originally by cottars, with permission from the old laird, Maclean of Coll, some eighty years ago. Some time after, the cottars received the Arinagour lots divided into crofts, rented from

£2, 15s., perhaps, to £3 or £4 each. After the estate was acquired by the father of the present proprietor, there was a change made. I cannot enter into the question of how the people lost their crofts; but they were, in one way or another, deprived of their lots, and became cottars once more. They still hold their houses as cottars.

36,638. Have you any idea of the number of cottar houses there are in this township of Airidh-nan-gobhar at present?—It would be just a matter of counting; I daresay sixteen or seventeen, perhaps.

36,639. Substantially, then, is this the fact, that for forty years,—that is, from 1810 or thereabouts,—these people in Airidh-nan-gobhar all had their homes on a croft?—Whether they all had I cannot say, but substantially all. My belief is that, in olden times, there were cottars, numbers of cottars, on each township, and whether there were any cottars in addition to the crofters of Arinagour township I am not in a position to say.

36,640. But, substantially, the body of the people were crofters?—Substantially they were. Indeed, so far as my memory goes, I am told there were more crofters,—that is to say, after they did get land.

36,641. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you know up to what date there were crofts attached to the Arinagour houses?—Up to about 1856, I should think.

36,642. As late as that?—Yes.

36,643. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Mr Stewart was the proprietor who deprived the people of their crofts?—Yes.

36,644. Now, substantially, are the people to-day called upon to pay for their houses as big a rent as they were paying under the old proprietor, Maclean, for houses and crofts?—I would rather the villagers themselves should be asked that question.

36,645. So far as you could ascertain, is that the case?—Well, I believe they are: some of them, indeed, higher than the crofts. Some of the crofts bore a rent of only £2, 15s., and a man with a croft then would have two or three cows and some sheep, and perhaps a horse. I have no doubt the villagers and others fully acquainted with the circumstances can tell more accurately.

36,646. To your knowledge, there is a very strong desire on this estate for a holding, large or small?—Oh, undoubtedly.

36,647. That is a universal desire among the native population?—So far as I can ascertain, that is the fact.

JOHN JOHNSTON, Totamore Cottage (57)—*examined.*

36,648. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you occupy any land at Totamore?—Yes, I have a small croft of about 10 acres.

36,649. What is the rent of it?—£7.

36,650. Was your rent fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

36,651. And that is the present 'fair rent'?—Yes.

36,652. Do you represent any section of the people of Coll? Have you been appointed to appear here?—Yes.

36,653. At a public meeting?—Yes.

36,654. Have you any written statement?—I have a statement showing the condition of the various townships in the island at the time when the estate was bought in 1856. I also produce a map which shows the old divisions. It is about a hundred years old, and it shows the original townships, as follows:—

In *Torostan* township there were in 1848–9 eight crofters paying an aggregate rent of £60. Their names were Mrs M'Eachren, Donald Beaton, John Mackinnon, Lachlan Macdonald, Murdoch Maclean, John Maclean, Neil Mackinnon, and Malcolm Kennedy. There were also nine cottars.

Knock was let in one farm, but in 1810–12 there were sub-tenants working for the farmer and getting a cropping place such as would keep them in cropping, and a horse for their work. I call them sub-tenants, and there were four of them besides the farmer himself. The rent was £30, the names being Hugh M'Lean, tenant, Archibald M'Kinnon, Donald M'Kinnon, Neil M'Kinnon, and John M'Kinnon, sub-tenants. There were also four cottars. *Trialan* was also let in one farm in 1776, to Mrs Janet M'Lean as tenant. Here, again, there were three sub-tenants, Dugald M'Donald, John M'Innes, and Roderick M'Lean. These worked for the tenant under the same conditions as above stated. I have not been able to ascertain the rent of this place, the date is so far back. *Gallanach* was in 1776 let as one farm. Captain Lachlan M'Lean was the tacksman, and there were eight sub-tenants working for him, viz., Charles M'Lean, Donald Beaton, John M'Kinnon, John M'Donald, Lachlan Paterson, Roderick M'Kinnon, John M'Kinnon, and John M'Donald. I cannot tell the rent of this place. *Arnabost* in 1854 had seven tenants, but one of them had two crofts. The rent was £66, 1s., made up as follows:—Lachlan Johnston (two crofts), £20, 13s.; Angus M'Fadyen, £10, 6s. 6d.; Neil M'Kinnon, £10, 6s. 6d.; John M'Lean, £6, 7s. 6d.; Donald M'Kinnon, £6, 7s. 6d.; Lachlan M'Donald, £6; and Donald M'Donald, £6. There were four cottars here. *Cliad* was occupied by Mrs Campbell, at a rent of £40. There were four cottars or workers, but no sub-tenants. *Mibost* had two tenants,—Donald M'Lean, rent £17, 10s., and Hector M'Dougall, rent £20,—together £37, 10s. There were also two cottars who were not workers. *Grishipoll* had nine tenants, paying a total rent of £74, 9s., as follows:—Widow M'Eachren, £11, 1s.; Alexander M'Dougall, £7; Duncan Campbell, £11, 12s.; Lachlan M'Kinnon, £11, 10s.; Murdoch M'Lean, £8, 4s.; Neil M'Lean, £6, 18s.; Neil M'Donald, £6, 18s.; Allan M'Kinnon, £7, 15s.; and Hector M'Kinnon, £3, 11s. There were also four cottars. *Ballahough* had two tenants,—Donald M'Lean, whose rent was £12, 15s., and Charles Campbell, £25, 10s.; but the latter had two shares, so that there were practically three crofts. There were two cottars. In *Totronald* there were six tenants, paying an aggregate rent of £76, 17s., and no cottars. The tenants were Archibald M'Donald, £17, 11s.; Neil M'Donald, £16, 3s.; Neil M'Lean, £13, 1s.; Donald M'Lean, £9, 10s.; John M'Lean, £9, 10s.; and John M'Kinnon, £11, 2s. *Grimsary* had five tenants,—Donald M'Kinnon, rent £11, 4s.; John Kennedy, jun., £11, 4s.; John Kennedy, senior, £8, 13s.; Donald M'Fadyen, £11, 13s.; and Lachlan M'Lean, £8, 15s.,—total rent, £51, 9s. There were two tenants in *Arileod Crofts*, John M'Lean paying £4, 5s. and Widow M'Callum paying £7, 14s.,—total rent, £11, 19s. *Broadhill* had also two tenants, Roderick M'Kinnon and Mrs Nicholson, each paying a rent of £3, 15s., —total rent, £7, 10s. *Arileod* had one tenant, John M'Lean, whose rent was £54, and there was one cottar there at that time. *Breackacha* and *Gallanach* were joined together in 1854, under the factor Dugald Campbell, at a rent of £486, 17s. *Crossipol* was held by Neil M'Lean at a rent of £262, 15s. *Fresland* was occupied by two tenants,—Norman M'Lean paying £11, 10s., and Neil M'Lean paying £5, 2s.,—together £16, 12s. *Acha* had also two tenants, Allan M'Lean, £20, 8s., and John Smeaton, £30,—together £50, 8s. *Gorten* had one tenant, Donald M'Kinnon, who paid £12, 15s. *Lagmore* had two tenants,—Duncan M'Kinnon, £3, 17s., and Hugh M'Fadyen, £5, 11s.,—together £9, 8s. *Kilbride* was in the occupation of four tenants, viz., Alexander M'Lean, £11, 18s.; Donald M'Lean, £11, 18s.; John M'Lean, £8, 8s.; and John Kennedy, £8, 10s.,—in all, £40, 14s. *Hyne* was occupied by Hugh M'Lean at a rent of £9, 7s. *Fisgary* by Neil M'Lean at a rent of £10, 4s. *Arintluie* by John Kennedy, who paid £9, 7s. *Eilean Oronsay* by Hector M'Lean, paying £14, 12s. for two crofts. Coming now to *Airidh-nan-gobhar*, we find 18 crofting tenants, besides the innkeeper, the total rent of £56, 1s. 6d. being made up thus:—

Peter M'Pherson (inn and croft),	£12	0	0
Neil M'Innes, . . .	2	0	0
Donald M'Lean, . . .	2	14	0
Hector M'Kinnon, . .	1	16	6

Malcolm M'Fadyen,	£1	15	0
Lachlan M'Kinnon,	3	0	0
Neil M'Donald,	6	8	0
John M'Kinnon, senior,	7	0	0
James M'Lean,	2	0	0
Hugh M'Lean,	2	0	0
Allan M'Lean (merchant and crofter),	1	15	0
John M'Kenzie,	3	8	0
John M'Innes,	2	0	0
John M'Fadyen,	1	17	0
John M'Kinnon, junior,	1	0	0
Allan Johnston,	1	14	0
John M'Dougall,	0	18	0
Michael M'Innes,	0	18	0
John M'Lean,	1	18	0
	£56	1	6

Thus the whole tenantry in 1856 numbered 73 tenants and crofters, *i.e.*, holders of land, not including cottars. The total rental of the Coll Estate was as follows:—1854, £1286, 3s. 6d.; 1885–6, £3577, 15s. 10d.; 1893–4, £2972, 12s. 7d.

The population of the island, according to the census returns, was as follows:—In 1841, 1409; 1851, 1235; 1861, 781; 1871, 723; 1881, 643; 1891, 536.

Most of the population of 1235 in 1851 resided on the Coll Estate. Now, the population of the whole island in 1891 was 536, of whom 170 were at Cornaig. Then there were a number of strangers,—I took pains to count them. I am sanitary inspector of the parish, and I know the whole of the people in the island and their families individually. I found there were 120 strangers on the estate of Coll at the time of the last census. These, together with the people at Cornaig, numbered 290, leaving 246 old inhabitants on the Coll Estate.

With regard to the township of Arinagour, the rental in 1856, including the land which the crofters held, was, as I have said, £56, 1s. 6d. The present rental of the houses alone, according to the Valuation Roll, is £74, and the peat rent, 10s. each, comes to £6, 10s., making £80, 10s. for the houses alone without the crofts.

With regard to *Caolas* Estate, which we saw yesterday, there were in 1840 four tenants (Neil Mackinnon, John Mackinnon, Charles Campbell, and John Kennedy), paying £50 each, total £200. The present rental is £264, 4s.

36,655-6. Do you represent a section of the people here, or do you represent the whole of the people of Coll?—I was appointed to give evidence before the Commission by a general meeting of the people.

36,657. Do you wish to state here that the people in general have a desire for enlarged holdings, or new holdings, as the case may be?—Exactly.

36,658. Can you tell us where those holdings could be acquired in this island,—where there is land available?—There is land upon the Coll Estate; there is land upon Gallanach here in the proprietor's hands, and, roughly speaking, I believe three-fourths of the island altogether is in the proprietor's hands.

36,659–60. And what you come before us to say is that there is plenty of land available for small holdings in Coll?—Yes.

36,661. And that there are people who wish to take it?—Yes.

36,662. What size of holding do you think would be suitable for a crofter in Coll if such holdings were formed?—Something like what it was before. The township of Grishipoll, for instance, at one time had nine tenants.

36,663. Yes, but I want to ask you what sort of holdings you think desirable for the future, either in acreage or stock carrying power?—I can come to it better that way. The general desire was to have something like what they had before; that would mean 4 to 6 cows with their followers, 15 or 20 sheep, and 2 horses.

36,664. Would you call that a self-sustaining croft,—one that would keep a family?—Yes.

36,665. Are there many people here who could take up such a holding?—Yes.

36,666. Could they stock it, and fence and build?—Yes, as a rule, they could stock it.

36,667. You mean that they have means?—Yes, as a rule. There may be some isolated cases which would, perhaps, require help; but I know personally a number of them who could stock that size of holding.

36,668. Generally speaking, you think the people would be able to find the means to build and fence and stock?—Yes, generally speaking.

36,669. *Mr Munro.*—How long have you lived on the island?—Since I was born.

36,670. So that your memory carries you back most of the present century?—Yes, I remember well when the place was full of people.

36,671. You have given us a history of the island showing how the crofters' holdings were broken up and consolidated into large farms. Now, what was the condition of the people at that time?—Well, they were what you would call ordinary; they were not rich, of course, but they were in the way of making a living.

36,672. Were they prosperous and contented?—Yes, just so, according to the rent they were paying at the time.

36,673. Is it your opinion that, if this land could be restored to the crofters, they could cultivate it profitably and advantageously?—Yes, I am of that opinion, and we have a proof of it here, because there are crofters at Cornaig who are prosperous now, and who were just on the same conditions, and with about the same size of holdings as I referred to. There are some of them present to-day.

36,674. Those farms which have been taken from the crofters, you are aware, are at present occupied as dairy farms?—Principally.

36,675. Are you prepared to admit that these farms are at present properly cultivated, and fairly well managed?—They are not cultivated; they are under grass. I cannot say whether it would pay the proprietor better to break them up, or to use them as at present; but they are not cultivated as matters stand.

36,676. But you allow that the tenant is making the most of them that he possibly can in his own interest?—Yes.

36,677. Supposing that we take one of these farms, and divide it among, say, six or twelve crofters, as the case may be, would they be prepared to take these farms, and cultivate them to the same advantage as the present tenant does?—I believe they would.

36,678. Could that be done?—Do you mean paying the same rent as the proprietor charges to himself in the Valuation Roll?

36,679. I am coming to that point afterwards; could they cultivate them properly, and to fair advantage?—Of course they could; and I believe they could cultivate them better, because there would be more of them to do it. They could drain and fence and plough: there is no mistake about that.

36,680. And, in your opinion, could they pay a rent equal to what the present tenant is paying?—Generally speaking, I believe they could, according to the present rent.

36,681. At all events, they would be able to take the places at a fair rent, as that might be fixed by a competent tribunal,—is that your position?—Yes, they would be prepared to do that.

36,682. To what use would you put the present farm steadings on these farms?—That is a question I cannot go into.

36,683. I suppose these would be of practically little or no service to the crofters?—They could be let, I suppose, in various ways. There are not so many of them altogether, and some of the crofters themselves might even take them. Say, for instance, Grishipoll, where there is a small house and a small byre; the best off of the crofters might take that, and give more for the croft, for the sake of the house, than the rest.

36,684. How would the crofters occupy one of these

dairy farms, suppose they were put in possession of it?—There are various ways. Do you mean the house?

36,685. No, take the farm all over: how would they manage it, suppose they got possession of it?—They would just break it up into crofts as it was before, and put a division fence between them, and build houses for each of them.

36,686. And you think it would pay them under these altered conditions?—I believe it would pay as much rent as it pays now. Cornaig, for example, where the crofters are now, pays pretty near the rent it was paying formerly: it was at one time £150: I remember when it was only that, but it goes now to £200, I think. It was £150 when it was in the proprietor's hands, before it was let, but the tenants pay over £200 for it now, I understand.

36,687. Can you give us any idea what the poor rates of the island were in 1851 as compared with to-day?—I cannot tell that: I have no figures for it; but after the potato disease a great many people fell upon the rates.

36,688. Is it your opinion that if the land were restored to the crofters as it was occupied by them in 1851, it would bring about a state of comparative prosperity and contentment amongst them?—Certainly, I have no doubt of that. The Cornaig Estate proves that beyond a doubt.

36,689. *Mr Gordon.*—If you break up one of these farms, you would require to provide holdings for the tenants?—Certainly, but as a rule they could build themselves.

36,690. You think they could build themselves?—Yes, 13 of them applied to the County Council for allotments in Coll, and when I was questioning them upon the point, I found most of them were prepared to supply themselves with houses.

36,691. And would they be able to supply themselves with stock too?—Yes, but not all of them; they cannot all put up a house and stock the place.

36,692. In the event of any not being able to build the necessary houses or stock the land, how would you propose that they should get assistance?—It depends a great deal upon what sort of houses they would require to build. They might build a house that would suit themselves without much expense; whereas, on the other hand, they might be forced to put up one costing £200.

36,693. I should think £200 would be an extreme class of house?—I heard that figure mentioned by the factor here.

36,694. I should think that a cheaper house than that would do. But I may assume that a number of them would require help?—Oh, yes; there is no doubt that is so.

36,695. How do you suppose they would get that assistance?—If it was spread over a period, they might get the County Council to help.

36,696. Do you mean that Government should lend the money?—Or the Government might advance the money at a certain percentage, allowing 30 or 40 years for repayment.

36,697. Suppose the Government advanced £200 or £300 to a tenant to build and stock?—Oh, that would be folly: say £150 or perhaps £100 to most of them, besides what they have already.

36,698. It would depend upon the size of the croft, I suppose?—Yes.

36,699. Taking it as £100. If Government advanced £100 to a crofter, what would you assume to be the rent of the croft?—It is not very easy to answer that.

36,700. Would it be a £10 croft?—I would say £12 to £15.

36,701. You would suggest that he should borrow a sum not exceeding £100?—Just so.

36,702. To be repaid in 30 or 40 years?—Yes.

36,703. How much would the interest on that be?—I really do not know.

36,704. It would not be less than £4 per cent., paying it back in 40 years?—I thought they could get it at less than that.

36,705. You see you have to pay 3 per cent. interest and a portion of the principal as well. I assume it would be about 4 per cent.; it might be a trifle less or more. Now you say they would be able to pay the same rent as the present tenant, but I have grave doubts upon that point, and I think you may be doing a grave injury to your friends the crofters by suggesting that they could do so. They would have to pay the 'fair 'rent' plus the interest, which would make the total rent more than the tenant in all probability would be able to pay?—That depends upon what sort of croft he has.

36,706. But I am assuming that the land is fairly rented, irrespective of the holdings?—You mean that the crofters should pay the present rent.

36,707. You stated that they could pay as much rent as the tenant is paying; but if you break up a rent of £100 into ten or say into eight rents of £12, 10s. each, you require seven new steadings, and you require new fencing?—A great many of them can put up their own steadings.

36,708. Yes, but you have already stated that you think they would require to borrow £100?—Some of them might, and others might not. I don't believe they would all require assistance: this was the extreme case that I suggested. Perhaps most of them would only require £50, or £30, or £20.

36,709. You made a definite statement, and I am taking you on your own statement. The difficulty is this: that if you overburden the crofter with rent, you may place him in a worse position than he is in at present when he has no land and no rent?—That is true enough; but very few of them may require to borrow at all.

36,710. I don't say they should pay as much rent as the present tenant does, but it is a dangerous thing to say that they can do so.—Well, I still believe they could, and this is a proof of it. The crofters' rents, as fixed by the Crofters Commission, are on an average about 6s. an acre. Now I believe the big farmers here in Coll, those with £200 rent or so, have their land for about 2s. 6d. an acre at the highest.

36,711. But the crofter's land may be better than the average of the farmer's land: the latter has a good deal of black hill included in his land?—What I wish to come to is that, if the crofter is able to pay 6s. just now, and the big farm is broken up, it cannot be over 2s. 6d. an acre. Surely, then, the crofter can afford to pay a little interest in addition to rent.

36,712. Suppose you take that farm of Gallanach as an example. I have not yet been over the farm, and therefore I speak rather from the plan than from personal knowledge of the place; but if you take that farm you will find, I think, that nine-tenths of it is black hill, which is not worth 1s. an acre?—Well, according to the present rent, it comes to 1s. 6d. an acre, good, bad and indifferent, as it stands. The crofters pay 6s., and they have black hill as well as Gallanach. Now there is a great deal of difference between 1s. 6d. and 6s. per acre.

36,713. You think the crofter could pay a rent for the land plus the interest of the money he requires to borrow for fencing and steading?—Yes. Let Gallanach be broken up and let at 1s. 6d. an acre: surely if the crofters can pay 6s., they could pay 1s. 6d. and interest also.

36,714. Would you suppose that the size of croft which you have specified,—six cows and followers and a few sheep,—would be big enough to employ a man and his family all the year round?—That depends entirely on what family he might have.

36,715. Would it be sufficient to employ a man himself, without a family?—I know crofters in Coll that have twelve of a family: it would take the whole of Gallanach to give them all employment!

36,716. Do you think a man would find profitable employment on a croft of that size?—Yes, I think so. I remember very well when there were crofts of that size in Coll, and they were making a living out of them.

36,717. Yes, but would they be content with the same now?—Yes, that is what they ask; they ask no more than about that size.

Coll, Argyllshire. — John Johnston.

36,718. Are there any people here who follow the occupation of fishing along with crofting?—There are a few; in the summer time, generally, these crofters fish, and there are perhaps three or four crofters that work at it all the year round; but most of them just take a spell at it in the summer time.

36,719. What sort of a living do those who occupy themselves with the fishing all the year round make?—A pretty fair living.

36,720. Are they as well off as the crofters?—Not altogether; they have a difficulty in the winter time.

36,721. Do they go to the white fishing? Do they fish as line fishermen?—Some are line fishermen and others are lobster fishermen.

36,722. These go to lobster fishing in winter and herring fishing in summer?—The native population here do not fish herring, but cod and ling.

36,723. In the summer time?—Yes.

36,724. With the smaller boats?—Yes.

36,725. Would there be any demand in the island for fishermen's crofts,—that is, 2 acres each?—Yes, these fishermen would like to have a piece of land attached to their houses.

36,726. Is the village of Airidh-nan-gobhar, here, the principal fishing station in the island?—It is not the best; there are more fishermen here than elsewhere, but over at Cornaig is the best fishing ground for the whole island.

36,727. Were the people who applied for the 2 acre lots, of which Rev. Mr Ross spoke, fishermen, or any of them?—Some of them are.

36,728. Is that the size of allotments or crofts that, in your opinion, would suit a fisherman?—I believe that, as a rule, they do not wish a large croft, but they would like to have a cow's grass and a certain amount of land for potato ground, &c., and some pasture for the cows.

36,729. That is the sort of croft which you think the fishermen would readily take to?—Yes. Some of them have been speaking to me about that, and saying they would like to have that along with their fishing; but others who have means would take more land, and give up the fishing altogether.

36,730. Would the land which Mr Ross spoke of be suitable for fishermen's holdings? Is it near the village here?—There is plenty of land near the village, all round.

36,731. Are there any other ports as good as Airidh-nan-gobhar?—There is a port on the Cornaig Estate better than Airidh-nan-gobhar for fishing, and there is one at Breackacha too,—Port Luing, which you saw yesterday.

36,732. That is a good place, is it?—Yes.

36,733. And do you think that if land were got there, there could be established a small fishing village down near the pier there?—Yes, there is no doubt of it.

36,734. In addition to the land you showed us yesterday, you will be able to show us what other land there is in the island suitable for allotments?—I will accommodate the Commissioners in that respect.

36,735. *Mr Munro.*—Are there many people in the island of Coll who could take land without any outside assistance?—There are.

36,736. Could the majority of the crofters take enlarged holdings without any outside help?—Yes. I believe I can safely say the majority could.

36,737. And could they erect the necessary buildings on their holdings?—Yes.

36,738. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—How many crofters on the Coll Estate are to-day under the Crofters Act?—Five.

36,739. How many tenants were on this estate when Mr Stewart bought the property, whose rents were within the limits of the Crofters Act,—under £30?—Possibly you may call it about 70.

36,740. So that, if the Crofters Act had passed about fifty years ago, there would have been 75 tenants or thereabouts on the Coll Estate to-day under the Act?—Yes.

36,741. With security of tenure and sitting at a fair rent?—Yes.

36,742. Now, could you tell us how many tenants there are besides the five crofters on the Coll Estate at present?—There are 18 holding land, but eight of them have only small pieces that do not amount to much, leaving practically 10 tenants holding any size.

36,743. Does that include the five crofters?—No; 18 altogether, between crofters and all.

36,744. So that, besides the crofters, there are only ten?—Only 10 that have any size of holdings, and eight with small pieces.

36,745. Do you know the total rental to-day of all the lands in the proprietor's own hands?—According to the Valuation Roll, the rent, including the village houses, &c., is £2962, 12s. 7d. This includes the whole tenantry, householders as well. [*Question repeated.*]—No, I did not make that up.

36,746. You did not mention the farms in the hands of the laird?—No, but I could state them.

36,747. Name them, please?—Gallanach, Grishipoll, Totronald, Ballard, Breackacha, Acha, Kilbride, Airidh-nan-gobhar; I think that is all, but these are pretty large holdings.

36,748. You said that the total rent of Airidh-nan-gobhar in 1854 was £56, 1s. 6d.?—Yes.

36,749. What is the rent of Airidh-nan-gobhar to-day?—£80, 10s.

36,750. What subjects were covered by the rent of £56, 1s. 6d. in 1854?—They had all the land round here; I don't know the acreage, but it is considerable. There were 18 tenants, some of them paying £3, 8s., one £3, one £6, 8s., and these had generally two or three cows, as well as a horse or pony, and a share of the hill. There are some of the villagers here who can tell how many sheep they had.

36,751. But the £56, 1s. 6d. in that case covered the houses, peats, crofts, and common grazings?—The whole thing.

36,752. And what do they pay the £80, 10s. for to-day?—For the bare houses alone. This includes the shop in Mr Stewart's own hands; but there was a shop at that time also, although it is on the site of the ground where the people are.

36,753. How many shops are in the place now?—Only one.

36,754. In whose hands is it?—In the proprietor's hands.

36,755. Do you remember when these farms in the laird's hands were cleared of their tenants?—Yes, it was a gradual process; Airidh-nan-gobhar was cleared in the year 1857.

36,756. That is the year after the property was bought?—Yes. The great clearance was made in 1861, when the Cornaig crofters were removed.

36,757. Why were they cleared? What was the excuse or reason for their removal?—That is a question that I cannot tell very well. Some of them were removed by ordinary summons, others by raising the rent so high that they could not pay it, and certain of the conditions attached as to draining, under penalty of raising the rent, such as they could not accept. Some of the people left voluntarily, because they could not stay. There are different ways of sending away people. You can do it by imposing conditions which cannot be complied with.

36,758. Could you give me the name of one of the farms last cleared and now in the hands of the laird?—I should say Totronald.

36,759. Take Totronald then: how many tenants were there in Totronald formerly?—Six.

36,760. Do you remember Donald Maclean and John Maclean, rented at £9 and £9, 10s. respectively?—Yes.

36,761. What stock had they?—I really do not remember, but they would have between four and six cattle, and they had sheep and two horses. Four cows and their followers, I believe, was the rule, but some may have had six.

36,762. Taking the tenants who were within the £30 limit, were they, as a rule, in a condition of comfort before the estate was sold to Mr Stewart?—Certainly they were: I well remember that.

36,763. Were the tenants of Airidh-nan-gobhar con-

sidered better off when they had the land than they are to-day?—Decidedly.

36,764. They are paying a bigger rent to-day for nothing than they were paying before for the land and the peats?—Yes.

36,765. And that did not improve their condition?—No.

36,766. The crofts in those days were not of the same size?—No, some were larger than others.

36,767. What was the lowest rent on the whole estate?—I think the lowest were in Airidh-nan-gobhar: the lowest rent of a croft there was £1.

36,768. And if cottars got land now on these farms, would you make every croft separate from every other croft, or would you have the arable land separate, and common grazing for the whole? Would you establish them in single crofts or in townships?—I would prefer to see them separate with a common. The original plan was to have the crofts separate, where they had the arable land and their houses, but they had a moss common outside.

36,769. Is that the way in which the thing was managed before, the arable land separate, and a common grazing on which every man had the right to put stock in proportion to his rent?—Yes.

36,770. Is that the condition on which the crofters hold to-day?—That is the condition upon which the Cornaig crofters hold.

36,771. I am speaking about the Coll Estate.—No, not on the Coll Estate; the crofters have no common at all, nothing but the croft itself; they are fenced in.

36,772. And that tends very much to the injury of the croft itself?—It does, certainly.

[Mr Johnston submitted the following statement]:—

	Tenants in Township of Torostan.	Rent
1848–9.	Mrs M'Eachren,	
	Donald Beaton,	
	John M'Kinnon,	
	Lachlan M'Donald,	
	Murdoch M'Lean,	
	John M'Lean,	
	Neil M'Kinnon,	
	Malcolm Kennedy (and nine cottars),	£60 0 0
	Knock.	
1810–11.	Hugh M'Lean, tenant,	30 0 0
	Archibald M'Kinnon, sub-tenant,	
	Donald M'Kinnon, „	
	Neil M'Kinnon, „	
	John M'Donald, „	
	And four cottars,	
	Trialan.	
1776.	Mrs Janet M'Lean, tenant,	
	Dugald M'Donald, sub-tenant,	
	John M'Innes, „	
	Roderick M'Lean, „	
	Gallanach.	
	Capt. Lachlan M'Lean, tacksman,	
	Charles M'Lean, sub-tenant,	
	Donald Beaton, „	
	John M'Kinnon, „	
	John M'Donald, „	
	Lachlan Paterson, „	
	Roderick M'Kinnon, „	
	John M'Kinnon, „	
	John M'Donald, „	
	Arnabost.	
1854.	Lachlan Johnston, two crofts,	20 13 0
	Angus M'Fadyen,	10 6 6
	Neil M'Kinnon,	10 6 6
	John M'Lean,	6 7 6
	Donald M'Kinnon,	6 7 6
	Lachlan M'Donald,	6 0 0
	Donald M'Donald (four cottars),	6 0 0
		£66 1 0

Coll, Argyllshire.

John Johnston.

	Cliad.	
	Mrs Campbell (four cottars),	£40 0 0
	Mibost.	
	Donald M'Lean,	17 10 0
	Hector M'Dougall (two cottars),	20 0 0
		£37 10 0
	Grisipoll.	
	Widow M'Eachren,	11 1 0
	Alexander M'Dougall,	7 0 0
	Duncan Campbell,	11 12 0
	Lachlan M'Kinnon,	11 10 0
	Murdoch M'Lean,	8 4 0
	Neil M'Lean,	6 18 0
	Neil M'Donald,	6 18 0
	Allan M'Kinnon,	7 15 0
	Hector M'Kinnon (four cottars),	3 11 0
		£74 9 0
	Ballahough.	
	Donald M'Lean,	12 15 0
	Charles Campbell, two shares or crofts,	25 10 0
		£38 5 0
	Totronald.	
	Archibald M'Donald,	17 11 0
	Neil M'Donald,	16 3 0
	Neil M'Lean,	13 1 0
	Donald M'Lean,	9 10 0
	John M'Lean,	9 10 0
	John M'Kinnon,	11 2 0
		£76 17 0
	Grimsary.	
	Donald M'Kinnon,	11 4 0
	John Kennedy, junior,	11 4 0
	John Kennedy, senior,	8 13 0
	Donald M'Fadyen,	11 13 0
	Lachlan M'Lean,	8 15 0
		£51 9 0
	Arileod Crofts.	
	John M'Lean,	4 5 0
	Widow M'Callum,	7 14 0
		£11 19 0
	Broadhill.	
	Roderick M'Kinnon,	3 15 0
	Mrs Nicholson,	3 15 0
		£7 10 0
	Arileod.	
	John M'Lean,	54 0 0
	Breckacha and Gallanach.	
	Donald Campbell, Esq., factor,	486 17 0
	Crosspoll.	
	Neil M'Lean, Esq.,	262 15 0
	Fresland.	
	Norman M'Lean,	11 10 0
	Neil M'Lean,	5 2 0
		£16 12 0
	Acha.	
	Allan M'Lean,	20 8 0
	John Smeaton and Gorten Croft,	30 0 0
		£50 8 0
	Gorten.	
	Donald M'Kinnon,	12 15 0
	Lagmore.	
	Duncan M'Kinnon,	3 17 0
	Hugh M'Fadyen,	5 11 0
		£9 8 0

KILBRIDE.

Alexander M'Lean,	£11	18	0
Donald M'Lean,	11	18	0
John M'Lean,	8	8	0
John Kennedy,	8	10	0
	£40	14	0

HYNE.

Hugh M'Lean,	9	7	0

FISGARY.

Neil M'Lean,	10	4	0

ARINTLUIC.

John Kennedy,	9	7	0

ELENORONSAY.

Hector M'Lean, two crofts,	14	12	0

AIRIDH-NAN-GOBHAR.

Peter M'Pherson, inn and croft,	12	0	0
Neil M'Innes,	2	0	0
Donald M'Lean,	2	14	0
Hector M'Kinnon,	1	16	6
Malcolm M'Fadyen,	1	15	0
Lachlan M'Kinnon,	3	0	0
Neil M'Donald,	6	8	0
John M'Kinnon, senior,	7	0	0
James M'Lean,	2	0	0
Hugh M'Lean,	2	0	0
Allan M'Lean (merchant and crofter),	1	15	0
John M'Kenzie,	3	8	0
John M'Innes,	2	0	0
John M'Fadyen,	1	17	0
John M'Kinnon, junior,	1	0	0
Allan Johnston,	1	14	0
John M'Dougall,	0	18	0
Michael M'Innes,	0	18	0
John M'Lean,	1	18	0
	£56	1	6

1854. Total Rental, Coll Estate,	£1286	3	6
1885–6. Total Rental was,	3577	15	10
1893–4. Total Rental,	2962	12	7

Population of Coll.

In 1841,	1409
1851,	1235
1861,	781
1871,	
1881,	643
1891,	536

On 20th June, 1811.

Inhabited houses,	224
By how many families,	229
Families employed in agriculture,	173
Families employed in trades,	28

Males 623; females, 654; total—1277

AIRIDH-NAN-GOBHAR TOWNSHIP.

Rent in 1856, including all the land of the Township,	£56	1	6
Rent of the houses alone, 1893–94, including the shop,	74	0	0
Peat rent, do., 10s. each (13),	7	10	0
Total year 1893–4,	£81	10	0

Two Pauper Cottages, 1893–4.

TENANTS OR FARMERS, WHO FAILED OR HAD TO GIVE UP, FROM 1861 TO 1893.

1. Kirkwood, Ballihough.
2. M'Callum, Totronald.
3. Glassford, Balard.
4. Craig, Crosspoll.
5. Craig, Totronald.
6. M'Millan, Gorten.
7. Andrew, Loanban.
8. M'Donald, Airidh-nan-gobhar.
9. M'Corkindale, Balard.
10. Gilchrist, Arintluic.
11. M'Gregor, do.
12. M'Lean, Acha.
13. M'Lean, do.
14. Murdoch, Hyne.
15. Bain, Kilbride.
16. Gilchrist, Totronald.
17. Taylor, do.
18. M'Fadyen, Balard.
19. M'Lean, Elenoronsay.
20. Mrs M'Callum, Seaview.

CAOLES ESTATE.

About 1840.	Neil M'Kinnon,	£50	0	0
	John M'Kinnon,	50	0	0
	Charles Campbell,	50	0	0
	John Kennedy,	50	0	0
		£200	0	0

In 1776 there were nine crofters on Caoles.

1893–4. Total Rental,	£264	4	0

JOHN JOHNSTON.

COLL, 15*th May* 1894.

DONALD MACINNES, Mason, Uig (29)—*examined.* Donald Macinnes

36,773. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a statement to submit to us?—I have.

36,774. Would you kindly read it, please?—In submitting a detailed statement of the lands available and suitable in Coll for allotments and small holdings, I may be allowed to give a short account of the past and present social condition of the island. In 1776 we find the population at 925, inhabiting 185 houses. The number of inhabited houses in the island during the census taken on 20th June 1811 was 224, in which resided 229 families, the total population being 1277 souls. From that year to the year 1841 the number increased to 1442, but an extraordinary decrease is evident in the course of the census taken in 1861, when the population was declared to be as low as 781; while in 1881 the number was reduced to 643. At present the population is about 500 souls. Previous to the late J. L. Stewart purchasing the estate in 1856, one Captain Donald Campbell was the ruling power in Coll. In his time he is reported to have removed 700 people from the island, *i.e.*, between 1841 and 1861. When the late Mr Stewart got possession of the estate there were 68 tenants. The very first year of his rule the baneful work of clearing away the people commenced. Totronald, Grimarsay, Totamore, Gressipol, and Airidh-nan-gobhar were cleared of comfortable and respectable crofters. A large number of these people went to America, Australia, and other cities, as their individual circumstances enabled them to do. But, alas! few of them outlived the voyage, having died of fever on the passage, and were committed to the Atlantic as a watery grave. Verily, that was a year of gloom and doom in the calendar of Coll. Helpless old people with a helpless family might be seen weeping and wailing, leaving the homes of their childhood and sent adrift upon the world, with nothing before them but to quit the island or jump into the sea. But, to the immortal praise of the late Mr Campbell of Cornaig, all these poor families were, out of compassion,

accommodated on his estate, where they or their descendants are living witnesses to this day of the heartless evictions of that year. In addition to 16 tenants, there are six landless cottars on the Cornaig Estate who are only waiting the opportunity of returning to their former homes on the Coll Estate. There are also a large number of cottars and labourers throughout the island who applied to the County Council for small holdings, but we are still without land, and will always be, if Colonel Stewart can help it. For 35 long years the estate officials have subjected the native population to the utmost contumacy and oppression, which could not be tolerated but by a long-suffering and law-abiding people. Now, however, our patience is exhausted and our sufferings unbearable. Around us on every side we see land lying waste under sheep and rashes, while the people starve for the want of it. They who have been reduced to such an unfortunate position have been brought to that position by an unfair system of land laws, by which Colonel Stewart and his father were enabled to sweep out of existence many townships throughout the island, leaving in many cases no trace behind them but the ashes covering the spots where former happy homesteads stood. In the majority of cases these people were comfortable and happy, and poverty unknown amongst them. The presently impoverished landless cottars, as some love to describe them, did not leave their crofts and homes of their own accord, but, on the contrary, were practically driven out of them, when extensive sheep walks became the order of the day. Colonel Stewart has in his own hands, without interfering with any of the farms with tenants, sufficient land to provide fully 200 holdings of say 100 acres each. The farm of Gallanach alone is 5000 acres in extent, and consists of excellent hill grazing and good arable land. It may be remarked that in Torastan, which has been added to Gallanach, there were some nine or ten families who had a share of the land. Some of these old tenants might be called to give evidence if necessary. In the township of Gressipol 36 years ago there were eight crofters and a few cottars. I have been informed that when Mr Stewart collected his first rent in the parish church, he exhibited a six-chambered revolver on the table. For what purpose I am not in a position to say,—probably to terrify the people. On the day in question one incident occurred which ought not to go unrecorded. One Allan Mackinnon went in to pay his rent, which he had in full, but not a penny more. It was about that date that it became law that all receipts for sums over £2 should be affixed with a penny stamp. Allan was asked for the penny, and when he told that he had not a penny, he was ordered to go and get it, while his Glengarry bonnet was kept as security for the payment of the postage stamp. That is but an instance of the treatment which was being meted out to the Coll people in the past. And truly equally harsh treatment is to be seen under the present management of the estate. I cannot conclude my statement without stating a case in proof of my assertion. For some years past the respected Free Church minister of Coll has incurred the loyal displeasure of the powers that be for advocating the cause of the poor people, with the result that he is boycotted beyond human endurance. The latest move against him was the erection of a six row barbed wire fence to the front door of the manse, while the same was done to the kitchen door. A more scandalous action was never before committed in Scotland. Not only was it put up one time, but three times in succession, and pulled down on every occasion. In addition to this, the well from which the manse was supplied with water was filled in with all sorts of rubbish, but more may be heard of the matter before long. It has been a most cowardly action on the part of Colonel Stewart and his representatives, and they may yet live to see that it is so. In conclusion, and apart altogether from this, I beg to impress upon your Royal Commission that, with the view of the creation of new holdings, it is absolutely necessary that advances be made by the State in the way of loans to assist in the reclamation of holdings, the houses thereon, and the purchase of stock. I anticipate your favourable consideration to my imperfect statement. Coll, Argyllshire.

(Signed) Donald M'Innes, Mason. Donald Macinnes.

Uig, Coll.

36,774*a*. You have heard the evidence that has been given by the former witnesses?—Yes.

36,775. And I observe that you concur as to the general want of new holdings, and also as to the necessity for Government assistance or some assistance in the shape of a loan for building or fencing or stocking, should such holdings become available?—Yes.

36,776. Do you think there are any people in the Island of Coll who could start on their own account without assistance?—There are a few.

36,777. But the majority could not?—No, they could not.

36,778. Have you any ideas of your own as to the size of holdings that would be most desirable in Coll?—Twenty acres arable.

36,779. And some hill grazing?—Yes.

36,780. *Mr Munro.*—From the statement which you have submitted, I understand that the relations of Colonel Stewart with the people of the island are not at all friendly?—Far from it.

36,781. Does he harshly govern the small tenants on his property?—He does not do so personally, but his factor does.

36,782. And do you think his factor does so, acting on instructions received from Colonel Stewart?—He says so.

36,783. You have mentioned the case of Mr Ross, the Free Church minister. Do you know for what reason it was that his house was barricaded?—Because he takes the part of the people: that is the only reason I can think of.

36,784. And is his house at this moment barricaded with a barbed wire fence?—I suppose not at present: it has been broken down.

36,785. Now, with reference to this question of State advances, you said you thought, if the people were to be reinstated in the land, they would require to be assisted by advances from the State?—Yes.

36,786. Is that the general feeling of the people here?—Yes, in this island.

36,787. Mr Johnston, the previous witness, as you would have heard, gave it as his opinion that a majority of the crofters could take and stock holdings and erect the necessary houses without any outside assistance?—Well, a few can do so, but the majority cannot.

36,788. If the people were reinstated in these holdings, is it your opinion that they could turn them to advantage?—Yes, on fair conditions.

36,789. And do you think they would be fairly prosperous, under fair conditions of occupancy?—Yes.

36,790. Could they pay a rent at all equal to what the present tenants pay,—say for the large farms?—They could pay the same rent per acre as the large farmers.

36,791. And erect buildings at their own expense, or would they look to the State to erect buildings for them?—The majority would look to the State.

36,792. Do you think they would be in a position to repay the advance made by the State, as well as pay a fair rent?—At a fair interest.

36,793. Say 3 per cent.?—Or 3½ per cent.

Hugh Macinnes, Airidh-nan-gobhar (72). Hugh Macinnes.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter, the Secretary.)

36,794. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a house in Airidh-nan-gobhar?—Yes.

36,795. Do you hold it on yearly agreement, or under lease or feu?—(*Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—This witness produces a statement taken down from his word of mouth on 16th May 1890, which goes minutely into the tenure of the houses: perhaps it must be read on behalf of the witness.)

36,796. I see the statement referred to says that all

Coll, Argyllshire. Hugh Macinnes.

the houses in Airidh-nan-gobhar occupied by cottars were built by the original inhabitants, some of them having the assistance of masons from Mull, &c. When were these houses built?—A long time ago.

36,797. Can you tell the number of years?—No, I cannot say. My father purchased the house I occupy myself: it was not well built originally, and it tumbled down, so my father rebuilt it.

36,798. There is no lease of any kind for these houses?—We have no 'writing' on the houses. My father had land originally that carried two cows and a horse.

36,799. Do you wish to come forward here with a view to getting some land,—is that your desire?—To get a little land in which I could plant potatoes.

36,800. But you do not wish a larger holding?—No, but I have children from home, and if I got land they would come home.

36,801. And you think if you had your family at home it would be better for you?—Oh, yes.

36,802. *Mr Munro.*—To put the matter shortly, is it the general complaint of the people here that they are shut out from the use of the land?—Yes.

36,803. *Mr Gordon.*—Were you one of the men who applied for the 2-acre lots?—Yes, I was asking 2 acres.

36,804. Were you one of the ten or twelve people who applied for these 2-acre lots?—(*Rev. Mr Ross.*—I may be allowed to say that he is.)

36,805. Are you one of those who signed the petition to Mr Stewart?—Yes.

36,806. On consideration, you and the others did not see your way to accept the land on the conditions laid down by Mr Darroch?—We did not get it.

36,807. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*— You stated that your father had bought the house which you now occupy. What did your father pay for it?—I don't know: it was before I was born.

36,808. What became of the man who sold it?—He went to America.

36,809. Then who built your present house?—My father built a house for himself originally. The occupant of this house, as I said, went to America, and my father, preferring it to his own house, sold the latter and bought this one.

36,810. In your younger days, was there any rent for the houses?—No: we had land to keep two cows and a horse.

36,811. Had each house a croft?—Yes.

36,812. What rent were you yourself paying?—About £2, 10s. a year.

36,813. Had you peats for nothing at that time?—Yes.

36,814. Have you peats for nothing to-day?—Yes, for I cannot pay for any. They charge 10s. each for the right to cut peats.

36,815. What rent does the laird demand to-day for the house alone?—£3, 10s. between the house and the right to cut peats.

36,816. Have you consented to the payment of that?—I did not consent; I was working, and they retained the rent from my wages.

36,817. Were you summoned out of the house?—We were not summoned out, but he was trying to put us out: we got a notice to remove.

36,818. When the cottars of Airidh-nan-gobhar applied for 2 acres from the laird, were the estate officials holding that you were in arrear for the rent of the house, and that therefore you could not get land?—They did not give us the land, at any rate.

36,819. Were the people of Airidh-nan-gobhar, at the time when they had the land, more comfortable than they are to-day?—Yes.

36,820. Do you remember when the big farms, now in the hands of the laird, were occupied by tenants?—Yes.

36,821. In what condition were they at that time?—They were very well off.

36,822. Were they able to pay their rents?—Yes.

36,823. Do you believe that giving the land to the people, apportioning it out to them as they occupied it before Mr Stewart became proprietor, would put the people of Coll into comfortable circumstances?—Yes, if the place was re-settled as it was formerly, in the olden times.

Coll, Argyllshire. Hugh Macinnes.

CHARLES MACFADYEN, Airidh-nan-gobhar (about 50). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Charles Macfadyen.

36,824. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a house at Airidh-nan-gobhar?—Yes.

36,825. Have you heard the statement of the former witnesses as to the desire for land?—Yes.

36,826. Do you agree with them?—Yes.

36,827. Would you like to have a holding yourself if you could get one?—That is what brought me here to-day.

36,828. Supposing that land were available for a holding, would you be able to build and stock and fence without help?—No.

36,829. You would require help?—Yes.

36,830. Do you think you could pay interest on a loan, and a fair rent as well?—I would not require to build a house: the house that was always attached to the land is still in my possession.

36,831. Then it is a certain piece of land you are looking after,—not just any that may be available?—Land in the neighbourhood of Airidh-nan-gobhar.

36,832. Are you a boatman and fisherman as well?—I sometimes fish for 'cuddies.'

36,833. But you earn your livelihood by acting as boatman here to the steamers, and otherwise?—Yes, the kind of living I make.

36,834. Then, if you got land, you would want it near here?—Yes.

36,835. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you get a croft yourself at one time on the farm of Airidh-nan-gobhar?—My father had one.

36,836. How long is it since it was taken from him?—When it was taken from the other tenants.

36,837. How many years ago?—I cannot tell the year.

36,838. Had Mr Stewart been laird long when he did that?—No.

36,839. What rent did your father pay for the house and peats, and the common grazing, and the croft?—I think it was £2 he paid; all the tenants had two crofts, one inside at Airidh-nan-gobhar, and the other on the hill,—an infield and an outfield croft.

36,840. What stock had your father on the croft?—Two cows and followers and a horse, along with the sheep on the hill.

36,841. What rent are you charged to-day?—Till three years ago I was paying £5.

36,842. For what?—For the house. Three years ago it was reduced by £1.

36,843. So that for the last three years you have paid £4 for the bare house, and before that £5?—Yes.

36,844. Who built the house?—The houses were built before, I don't know by whom. They were built before I was born.

36,845. Was it your father's house?—No, not where I am.

36,846. Can you tell whether the tenants, who were put out of the townships that are now farms, were paid compensation for the holdings they left?—No.

36,847. Have you been in the estate employment yourself some time ago?—Yes, 19 years till a year ago.

36,848. Why did you leave it?—I left it on getting three days' notice.

36,849. Who gave the notice?—Mr Darroch gave me notice.

36,850. What was the reason?—I will tell you that. It was because I voted against Mr Stewart at the County Council election; who told him so I don't know.

36,851. Did he state distinctly to you that that was the reason you were dismissed the service?—Yes.

36,852. Did he make a threat at the time against others?—I don't know what he did to any but myself.

36,853. Did he state to you that he would be revenged on others?—He said he might send away every other one as well as myself.

Donald Maclean, Airidh-an-t-Sluic (70). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

36,854. *Mr Forsyth.*—Where do you reside?—In Airidh-an-t-Sluic.

36,855. Have you a croft?—No, I have nothing but a house.

36,856. How do you get your living?—My family maintain me.

36,857. Have you a desire to get a holding in this island?—Yes.

36,858. And do you concur with what has been said before?—Yes.

36,859. Is there any additional evidence you can give us?—No.

36,860. Then we shall simply take you as concurring generally in the evidence already heard.

Angus Macfarlane, Soddisdale (60)—*examined.*

36,861. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft at Soddisdale?—Yes, my brother has a croft, and I live with him.

36,862. What rent do you pay for it?—£10, 10s.

36,863. Do you find that croft sufficient to maintain you?—No.

36,864. It is too small, is it?—Too small.

36,865. Are you a married man yourself?—No.

36,866. Then you simply live with your brother?—He is not married.

36,867. There is no family, but just the two of you?—Yes.

36,868. Have you a sister who keeps house for you?—Yes.

36,869. And you find the croft smaller than you need?—Yes.

36,870. You would like a larger one?—Yes.

36,871. Do you fish at all from Soddisdale?—No.

36,872. Have the people of Soddisdale got much hill pasture along with their crofts?—Yes, they have.

36,873. Sufficient?—They would take more if it could be got.

36,874. Then is it more in the way of an addition to your croft that you are asking?—Yes.

36,875. Would you move to a good croft elsewhere in Coll? Supposing good land were available, would you be willing to leave Soddisdale?—Oh, yes.

36,876. But you would prefer to get more land where you are?—Well, yes, but I am not very particular; I am getting old now, and I have no family.

36,877. You would prefer an addition to the croft as it is?—Yes.

36,878. Some of the crofts there are much smaller than yours, are they not?—They are just about the same: some of them have only half a croft.

36,879. We have heard evidence to-day, showing that the people on the Cornaig Estate, generally, would be pretty comfortable if they had better prices for stock, and their holdings were enlarged: do you agree with that?—Yes.

36,880. Then I suppose they are fairly comfortable as it is, are they not?—Yes, they are not ill off.

36,881. And you consider that similar holdings could be formed in the other parts of Coll, successfully?—Yes.

36,882. And that people could raise their families on them in comfort?—Yes.

36,883. *Mr Gordon.*—Are there many of your neighbours who would be able to stock new holdings if they got them of a larger size than they hold at present?—Yes, there are some.

36,884. Are the Cornaig crofters in fair circumtances?—Yes.

36,885. Do they live mostly from the produce of their crofts?—Yes.

36,886. Or do they go to work elsewhere?—A very few: some of the young folks do.

36,887. But the older men live solely on their crofts, and make a livelihood there?—Yes.

36,888. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Were you one of the tenants removed from Coll?—No. Coll, Argyllshire.

36,889. Do you know tenants in Cornaig now who were removed from Coll?—Yes, they are along with me in Soddisdale. Angus Macfarlane.

36,890. Did they leave of their own will, or were they cleared out,—forced out?—They were practically forced out when they were rack-rented and unable to pay their rents.

36,891. Were they paid compensation for the holdings they left behind them?—No.

36,892. Did they get assistance for the holdings they are in now? Did the estate help them to build new houses?—No.

36,893. So that, if cottars got holdings, do you believe that cottars in the future would be as able to build new houses on new holdings as the Cornaig crofters were when they were sent to Cornaig against their will?—Yes.

36,894. Without any Government advance, if they got the land at a fair rent?—Yes.

[Adjourned.]

FORTY-THIRD SITTING.

TOBERMORY, MAY 18, 1894. Tobermory.

Present:—

George Gordon, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

Duncan Cameron (79), Portioner, Tobermory—*examined.* Duncan Cameron.

36,895. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at present?—Yes.

36,896. Have you a croft near this?—Yes.

36,897. Can you tell us anything about the land of Morven?—I was born there, and have known it all my life.

36,898. Were you a crofter in Morven?—My father was.

36,899. And did you live most of your life there?—No.

36,900. You left it early?—I left it when I was sixteen years of age; but I have been back there again.

36,901. Do you know the country of Morven?—The whole of it. I was a police constable for some time.

36,902. And do you know the history of the country?—Middling well.

36,903. Do you know any part of Morven in which there is available land for crofter settlements?—A good deal of it.

36,904. You know what the object of this Commission is, no doubt?—Yes.

36,905. Can you furnish us with any evidence that would assist in directing our attention to land suitable for crofters?—Only that I know where crofters were before.

36,906. Please mention the places you refer to.—There were crofters at the very top, the highest place in Morven, called Beathach, and they were at the next farm, Claonleathad, also at Altachonaich and Uileann.

36,907. What estate are these places on?—Altachonaich is on Kingairloch estate, which was bought, I think, by Mr Sheriff: he was there then; I don't know who has it now.

Tobermory — Duncan Cameron.

36,908. And where is Claonleathad?—On the estate of Mr Smith of Ardtornish.

36,909. Do you know any other place?—The next place is Muicrach, a small place, also on Mr Smith's estate.

36,910. Is there any other place?—Uilladale.

36,911. Is that also on the same estate?—Yes. There were no crofters on the next one, but I saw six good farmers in Acha-nan-gamhua, on Mr Smith's estate.

36,912. Any other place?—Next is Kinlochaline, and that was in the same way. There were two tenants there.

36,913. Is that also on Mr Smith's estate?—Yes.

36,914. Do you remember any other place?—Yes, Knock, where there were twenty-two or twenty-three.

36,915. Were they crofters?—Yes.

36,916. Is that still on Mr Smith's estate?—Yes.

36,917. Anywhere else?—Keill, next to that.

36,918. Was that a crofters' town?—Yes, there were none but crofters in it.

36,919. You do not know how many?—Well, my grandfather lived there, and I think there were eight or nine altogether.

36,920. Tell us when you come to another estate?—No other estate yet; this one is not yet finished. At Acha-beag there were about eight, and that finishes those on that side.

36,921. Now tell us, in the first place, in what condition is the land now: how is it occupied?—It is under sheep,—grazing land.

36,922. In large farms?—Sheep and deer, and everything that can come to it.

36,923. It is in large grazings?—Yes, large grazings.

36,924. Do you know the names of the farms there? There will not be so many farms as townships?—These are just the same as the rest, waste.

36,925. Are these names which you have given the names of the farms now?—Yes.

36,926. Are they occupied by tenants, or in the hands of the proprietor?—No, there is not a tenant. There are two crofters, one at Keill and one at Sabharaidh. Sabharaidh is a place I have not mentioned yet, but there were six in it, good farmers.

36,927. You say that, with the exception of two crofters, the whole of the land you have mentioned is under sheep or deer, and in the proprietor's hands?—Shepherds and all that sort of thing: there is no crofter. On the other side, you begin with Inniemore.

36,928. What estate is that on?—Miss Beattie's estate. In Inniemore there were six good crofters.

36,929. The next place?—The next place is Aird-an-tiobairt; I saw eleven in it. The next crofters in my time were in Druim-buidhe.

36,930. How many crofters would be there?—I think there would be seven.

36,931. After that, any other place?—The island of Carna opposite; it belongs to Mr Dalgleish now. It is an island at the mouth of Loch Teacuis.

36,932. And the next?—The next farm to Drumbuidhe was Poll-a'-chorran.

36,933. How many were there?—Two.

36,934. Is that still on Miss Beattie's estate?—No, it is on the estate of Mr Gordon of Drimnin. Drumbuidhe is on the same estate. The next place is Sornagan.

36,935. How many crofters were there?—It was one family, but there were three houses occupied by three brothers. There were really three crofts.

36,936. Was it a joint tenancy?—No, they were not joint.

36,937-8. There were three different farm-houses?—Yes, there were three farm-houses, but the sheep would go together. That is on the same estate, Drimnin.

36,939. What is the next place?—Port-a'-bhata, on the same estate; and then comes Carraig.

36,940. How many were there?—Four. My uncle was there. Next comes Auliston, where there were six, I think. That is the last upon Drimnin, and the last in Morven too.

36,941. That is just opposite here, is it not?—Yes, and there is nobody in it.

36,942. Do you know anything about the Killundine estate?—There were no crofters in it in my time. Tobermory. — Duncan Cameron.

36,943. Now can you tell us how this land is occupied? Take Inniemore and Aird-an-tiobairt on Miss Beattie's estate; how are these places occupied at present?—Under sheep.

36,944. Let to a tenant?—Yes, it is let to a Mr Hay, the whole estate.

36,945. Then how are Druim-buidhe and the other places upon Drimnin estate occupied?—One farmer has the whole of the side,—Druim-buidhe and Polchoman and Port-a'-bhata.

36,946. What is the name of the farmer?—Donald Macmaster.

36,947. What is the name of his farm?—He lives in Druim-buidhe; the rest is under Mr Gordon's own management.

36,948. And do you think the whole of the land is suitable for being repeopled with crofters?—I think so.

36,949. Do you know anything about the circumstances of the crofters who were on it in your day?—I do.

36,950. What sort of circumstances were these people in when you knew them?—I knew all who were in Inniemore and in Acha-nan-gamhna; they had about eight cows and followers each in Acha-nan-gamhna.

36,951. What size of croft had they? What rent did they pay?—I cannot say, but I can tell what rent they paid at Keill.

36,952. But they had all more or less stock?—Every one of them, sheep and cattle.

36,953. And, to the best of your recollection, they were in fairly comfortable circumstances?—Well, there was not so much complaint as there is now, or anything like it.

36,954. Can you tell us anything more?—There is no more land in Morven. I saw a place called Ach-a-ghabhail, where there were two tenants: I passed it.

36,955. *Mr Munro.* — How long is it since the evictions took place?—Immediately after Sellar came: about the year 1840, or thereabouts.

36,956. Was it 1840, or was it 1849–50?—Oh, it was not so far on as that, I think.

36,957. Was it before or after the potato failure?—Whatever time he came, or a little after he came, he had all that I mentioned on Mr Smith's estate.

36,958. Were they all evicted about the same time?—About the same time: they went to Australia, most of them. The evictions in the other places happened at different times.

36,959. *Mr Maccallum.* — The largest estate in Morven, I suppose, is Mr Smith's?—Yes, it is about the half of Morven: there is another estate as large.

36,960. What estate is that?—Mr Newton's.

36,961. You did not refer to it before, did you?—There were no crofters on it in my time at all.

36,962. But Mr Newton's is a very large estate?—Very large.

36,963. On what estate is Beathach situated, that you spoke of first?—I did not speak about any of Mr Newton's land at all till now.

36,964. Then you do not remember of any crofters being on Mr Newton's estate?—No.

36,965. Do you think there were no crofters on it at any time? Was it always let in large tacks?—There were no crofters; it was all under sheep and cattle, principally black cattle, since I remember.

36,966. Are you acquainted with the land?—Thoroughly.

36,967. Then, can you mention the large farms on Mr Newton's estate?—That could be turned into crofts?

36,968. Well, mention them at any rate?—There is Kinloch, a very good place.

36,969. Do you think that it might be broken up into smaller farms?—Indeed it could.

36,970. Is there a proportion of arable land in it?—A good proportion, and in Rahoy too.

36,971. What is the rent of Kinloch farm?—There is a good deal along with it; there is Kinloch and Rahoy and Beinn-aitinn all go together.

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36,972. All these were separate farms which have been consolidated into the farm of Kinloch?—Yes.

36,973. Is there a resident farmer there?—There was a roup there two days ago, and the tenant is leaving; I cannot tell who is coming.

36,974. Do you know if the place is let?—I never heard.

36,975. But it is your opinion that that large farm might profitably be divided into smaller holdings?—It has a good deal of excellent land, the best in Morven for grazing.

36,976. Did you yourself see Rahoy let as a separate farm?—I saw Mr Newton's estate under five tenants.

36,977. And how many are there now?—Only two.

36,978. Are there two tenants on that estate yet?—There were two brothers living at Rahoy, and there was the man at Kinloch who had the sale the other day.

36,979. But just now, how many tenants are there?—He has the whole in his own hands, except Kinloch, and it will be in his hands at the term, I believe.

36,980. And you do not know whether that is re-let?—I cannot say whether it is or not.

39,981. Of course if it is not let it must be in his own hands?—Yes.

36,982. The most thickly populated part of Morven, I suppose, was the estate now held by Mr Smith?—That was the principal place for crofters.

36,983. And do you state that there is no farmer on that estate?—Not one.

36,984. Where there once were so many tenancies?—There are just two crofters, as I had told you.

36,985. How are the people on that estate occupied?—They were getting plenty of work from Mr Smith, those who are in the village of Lochaline.

36,986. They are almost all in the employment of the proprietor?—Yes.

36,987. Do they get grazing for a cow or cows?—Among them all I think there were twenty houses, and only four or five have cows. There is a little farm that the shopkeeper has got, also: he had five or six cattle in my time, and last year he got perhaps as many again.

36,988. The shopkeeper had a farm, and it was added to?—Yes, it was added to; but with that exception there is no one but these two crofters.

36,989. And there are twenty other families, you say?—Thereabouts; they have just a small park, and four or five cows in it, I think.

36,990. These twenty families have a small park fitted for four cows?—Those who have a cow; I think there are only four or five.

36,991. And they get employment on the estate?—Yes: he has a great deal of cattle, and he ploughs the land, and these people work it, cutting the hay and the corn and potatoes and everything else.

36,992. But is it not the usual thing for shepherds and ploughmen to have a cow or two?—There are only three who have a right to a cow, which they got when they built the houses themselves; the rest of the houses belong to himself. I was not considering the shepherds.

36,993. What is the name of the place in which these people live? or are they congregated in one place?—In this one spot, the village of Lochaline.

36,994. And is there in the neighbourhood of that village land suited for forming crofts for these people?—Any amount; did I not mention two score or so just in the immediate vicinity of Lochaline?

36,995. How do these families get the milk they require for the household?—They are working for him; every one he could get was employed in building the house, even hundreds from other quarters.

36,996. And is it your opinion that these people would be benefited by having land given them?—If they had anything proper so as to live on it, but they would not do without a cow or two.

36,997. They would need larger crofts than that?—I think so.

36,998. And is there a desire, do you think, on the part of these people to get crofts?—That is more than I know; they did not tell me what they desired, but I am certain a number of them would want crofts.

36,999. The proprietor, however, has made no attempt to provide them with the land? The policy has always been to take the land into his own hand?—There is not a vestige of a dyke between the crofts that was not put into holes or quarries, out of sight; you will not see where a house was. Tobermory. Duncan Cameron.

37,000. And do you think that these people now are in a sufficiently independent position to come and give evidence with regard to their desire for getting land?—Some of them are sensible enough to tell what they want, surely.

37,001. But are they not dependent upon the proprietor for their employment?—Of course they are.

37,002. And you think that possibly there might be some risk in their giving evidence that would be distasteful to the proprietor?—He never found fault with them. They gathered there in connection with the land league, some of them who had been working for him for fifteen or twenty years, and he did not find fault with them.

37,003. But, however, they are dependent upon the proprietor for employment?—Undoubtedly; there is nothing else.

37,004. They are entirely in his power?—Yes; no doubt.

37,005. Do you not think it would be distasteful to the proprietors to give evidence that there is a great deal of their estates that is laid waste?—I am certain they would give evidence.

37,006. (*Question repeated*).—I think so.

37,007. And they have it in their power to punish those who give such evidence?—Undoubtedly.

37,008. You find that the large farms are now falling into the proprietors' hands, generally speaking?—Mostly.

37,009. So that the people are getting more and more into the power of the proprietor; is not that so?—That is so.

37,010. Being in his own employment?—Yes.

37,011. So that giving distasteful evidence before the Commission might be at the risk of losing their livelihood?—Might be.

37,012. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—You mentioned a place called Keill; how many tenants were there within your own recollection?—I don't know how many.—(*Mr Gordon.*—The witness said eight already).—*Witness*—Yes, but there were two ends in it; I believe there would be more than eight people. Some of them were larger than others; those under the road were larger than those above.

37,013. Take one of the crofts under the road; what stock would a tenant there have?—I know the names of them all on the road all the way to the village, and I have a guess of how many cattle they had.

37,014. Well, give us an idea.—One Cameron had six cows and followers.

37,015. Had he horses?—A horse, but no sheep.

37,016. What rent was he charged for the holding?—I cannot say.

37,017. Take another crofter near him; what stock had he?—Not so much,—perhaps four cows all along under the road; there was one of them who had six.

37,018. From four to six cows and their followers?—Yes.

37,019. Had they all a horse?—Yes.

37,020. Was there poverty among those in that town? Had they plenty to eat and drink?—Plenty of a kind; they had plenty of potatoes, and milk, and butter too.

37,021. Do you believe the kind they had was as good as the kind they have in Tobermory to-day?—I cannot say, but I know they were healthier and stronger men than they are now.

37,022. Was the food better?—I cannot say about that.

37,023. Did they fare better?—I don't say it was better.

37,024. But the men were better?—The men were better, undoubtedly.

37,025. Did you ever count up roughly the number of tenants who were cleared out in the whole of

Tobermory. Duncan Cameron.

Morven in your day?—Every one of these that I have mentioned.

37,026. Did you count up the number, how many there were?—I did not, but there would be a great many.

37,027. Would they fill a Free Church?—It would fill more than there are in Morven now, at anyrate.

37,028. There was a large population?—There were more sent out than are in it.

37,029. Do you know what the population of Morven was in the olden time when you were young?—I have it in a printed book, but I have not looked at it for some time. It was in the year 1836 when Campbell of Islay was canvassing here. I could have told you all that had votes then, and the number of people in the parishes of Mull and Morven.*

37,030. Was that the time when several townships were cleared?—I cannot say the year.

37,031. But you remember it?—I remember it.

37,032. Do you know who built the houses in which they live?—I suppose it would be themselves: I did not see anyone build a house except the big farmers.

37,033. You never in your life saw a Highland laird build a house for a crofter?—Never.

37,034. It is the crofter himself who does that?—I think so.

37,035. Did these men get payment for the houses when they were put out?—They did not.

37,036. Cleared out?—Cleared out, and never got a fraction for them.

37,037. There was no word of such a thing as compensation for them, but, out you go?—No, they did not expect it.

37,038. *Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the evictions at Achabeag and Knock, do you know now why the people were put out?—Mrs Paterson, the then proprietrix, in order to get the land into her own hands, evicted them all about 28 years ago.

37,039. Were the old tenants in arrear of rent?—I heard they were not a penny in arrear.

37,040. And that they were sent away simply to make room for sheep?—Yes.

37,041. Can you compare the land on Mr Smith's estate, which is now in his own occupation, with the land that is held by crofters in Mull,—say in Ross of Mull?—It is much better,—twice better.

37,042. Do you know of any land at all held by crofters that is so good?—Not in this part.

37,043. This large parish of Morven you think is, on the whole, well adapted for occupation by small farmers?—All that I mentioned, where crofters used to be.

37,044. What is your opinion as to the readiness with which small farms would be taken up in a place like Morven?—There are no people in Morven itself who could do it, because they are run out, and very poor. Those who had crofts are away in Australia and America and in every part.

37,045. And you think there are not people in Morven who would be ready to take them up?—I don't believe it; they are not there.

37,046. But if small farms were made available, do you think the people from other parts of the Highlands would come?—I am certain they would be glad to get it.

37,047. The places would let very readily?—Yes.

37,048. Did you ever hear of any difficulty in letting a small farm?—Oh yes, I have.

37,049. A small farm that could not find a tenant?—Oh no, I never heard that: they will take them anywhere they can get them.

37,050. Did you ever hear of a large farm that could not get a tenant?—I have seen some of them fall into the laird's hands; he could not get as much as he wanted, or something like that.

37,051. Did you ever hear of large farms being advertised for when there was no offer at all?—No, I think not.

37,052. You think that they got some offer?—Yes.

*Cameron has since written explaining that the population of Morven in 1836 was 2083.

Tobermory. Duncan Cameron.

37,053. But they prefer to take them into their own hands rather than accept the offers that are made?—Yes.

37,054. Because these offers are so much lower than the old rent?—That is my opinion.

37,055. But, on the other hand, you find that all small farms when they are to let are keenly competed for?—I never saw one of them lie vacant.

37,056. Then if small farms were formed, say, compulsorily out of these large farms, do you think that the letting value of the remainder would be diminished? Suppose you took parts of these large farms and made them into small holdings, would the letting value of the remainder be diminished?—I believe it would spoil the letting value of what was left, because the best would be taken by the crofts.

37,057. That is a supposition: but, suppose you took away from farms like Kinloch the farms that were once separate, such as Rahoy, don't you think that Kinloch would let quite as well without these additions as with them?—I doubt it would not, because the big farmer would like as well to have the good land himself. If the best was taken from him it would not be so easy for him.

37,058. But I do not make any such hypothesis. Supposing you just divide the large farm into the old farms of which it is composed, and offered to let them separately?—Rahoy would let without Kinloch, but if tenants were put into Kinloch they would have cattle and sheep at the top: they wanted the hill as well as the low ground. That is the way they had it in my time.

37,059. Then don't you think it would be advisable, even from the point of view of the proprietor, that the farms should be a good deal diminished in size? Looking to the proprietor's interest, don't you think it would be better for them to have the farms divided into smaller holdings?—I believe they would let for a higher rent.

37,060. And more readily?—And more readily.

James Nisbet, Crofter, Ormsaigbeg, Ardnamurchan (66)—*examined.*

37,061. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at present?—Yes.

37,062. What size of croft have you got?—I was paying a rent of £9 previous to the visit of the Crofters Commission, and I am paying £4, 10s. now.

37,063. The 'fair rent' is £4, 10s., is it?—Yes.

37,064. When was the reduction made?—Three years ago.

37,065. Your croft, according to the blue book, extends to two acres arable, four acres two roods outrun, and a share in a common of 1354 acres divided into twenty-three shares.

37,066. How long have you been residing at Ardnamurchan?—I have been twenty-one years in the same croft.

37,067. Do you know the country well?—Very well; I was born in Kilmory, Ardnamurchan.

37,068. Can you tell us of any land that is suitable for crofters in the country?—Any amount.

37,069. Kindly mention the names of the places.—There is Ormsaigmore, the next township to where I am now.

37,070. How is the land occupied just now?—By one individual: there may be a company of them, but there are two cousins.

37,071. It is now occupied as a grazing farm?—As a farm, one steading.

37,072. Is it arable pasture?—Yes.

37,073. What estate is it on?—Mr Dalgleish's.

37,074. Was that place under crofters in your day?—There were eight of us there: it is thirty years ago this month since we were put out by the laird.

37,075. What is the next place you will speak of?—There are the three townships of Suardail-a'-chaoil, Suardail-mor and Suardail-chorrach: these were club farms.

37,076. Until what time?—Until forty-two years ago, when the people were put out of the three townships.

37,077. How are they occupied just now?—By one individual; one family.

37,078. Could you tell us the number of people who were there?—I think there were twenty-two between the three townships.

37,079. What is the next place?—There were other townships—Torr-na-moine,—I don't remember the removal of these, but I know there were crofters there and in the places I am about to mention,—Bourblaig, Coire-a'-mhuilin, Skinid and Glenmore—(I remember the eviction there). The first four of these are occupied by one farm, and Glenmore is another.

37,080. How many people would be in the first four?—I cannot distinctly tell.

37,081. They were once crofter townships?—Yes, and they could be club farms too in those times.

37,082. And they are now worked as one farm?—Yes; perhaps I would be safe in saying there would be from six to eight in each of these townships.

37,083. There would be about twenty-five tenants in the four townships?—Yes.

37,084. I think you said you remember the removal in Glenmore?—Yes.

37,085. Then you could tell us how many were there?—Four. Some are present here who were there.

37,086. Can you tell us of any other places?—They are the best of arable land.

37,087. Are there any other places in your knowledge?—There is Goirtean-fearna; there are still crofters there, but some were put away; and Goirtean-eorna.

37,088. These were crofting townships?—Yes.

37,089. There are a few crofters there yet?—Not one. There are a few on Goirtean-fearna but none on Goirtean-eorna.

37,090. Were they tenants?—They were all crofters.

37,091. Did they hold from the proprietor or from the tenant? Were they sub-tenants?—I could not say as to that, whether they were under the farmer or the proprietor.

37,092. Do the crofters who are still in Goirtean-fearna hold from the proprietor or from the tenant?—They got under the scope of the Act.

37,093. Well, are there any other places that you can mention that either were formerly crofting holdings, or that you consider suitable for crofting townships?—There is a place called Girigidail, at the far west end of Ardnamurchan; that is in the laird's hands.

37,094. Was it an old crofting township?—Yes, I remember when the tenants were removed.

37,095. Are these all upon one estate?—All on Mr Dalgleish's estate. There is also Tairbeart, in Ardnamurchan, but perhaps I need not go that length; if the Commissioners go up to Salen, Loch-Sunart, they will see it.

37,096. Was that also a crofting township?—Yes, there were crofters there within my memory.

37,097. How is that place occupied now?—By one individual family.

37,098. It is now a farm, is it?—Yes.

37,099. Have you any idea how many tenants there used to be in that place?—I cannot say, but probably four or five.

37,100. Is there any other place in that quarter?—That is all that I can speak to from memory as having been under crofters.

37,101. Now, do you know if this land is suitable for crofting still?—To tell the truth, all this land has been made big farms. There is a place called Laga.

37,102. Was it an old crofting township?—Yes, and there was also a place called Glendryen; there were seven tenants in the former and eight in the latter.

37,103. How are these two places now occupied?—By one family in each.

37,104. You were going to tell us your opinion about the suitability of the land for crofters; do you think it is suitable?—It is all suitable; we got nothing but what they could not let as a farm.

37,105. That is to say, you were put out of the best of the land?—The best of the land, and put on these rocks, because the farmer would not take it; it was not worth taking.

37,106. And do you think if the land were made available for the people it would probably be taken up by them?—I have no doubt of it, if they got encouragement.

37,107. Where are the people who were on these crofts? Possibly many of them are dead?—There are a good few of them sent to these patches; I am one that has a patch.

37,108. Either they or their descendants, or a good many of them are still on the ground?—Yes, and some are away to foreign countries.

37,109. Now, do you suppose that many of these people would care to go back to the land again if they were offered it?—I believe they would, and glad to get it.

37,110. Do you think they would be able to stock a moderately-sized croft?—It would be far cheaper for them to stock such a croft than to be buying stuff, or their sons and daughters sending home enough to enable them to live.

37,111. How do they maintain themselves at present?—By what their families give them.

37,112. You speak of them being put on the rocks: are they on the sea-shore?—Quite close to the sea-shore.

37,113. Do any of them follow the occupation of fishermen?—Most of those in Ardnamurchan go in steamers or in vessels coasting abroad.

37,114. They are sailors, in fact?—Yes, sailors. I have three sons who are all at sea; and I am enabled to make a living by what they send me, not by any profits of the croft.

37,115. Are they employed on the steamers or vessels in the neighbourhood, or do they go abroad?—They are in the home trade; there is one abroard at present.

37,116. Are there many of the people who were removed from the townships which you have mentioned, who are still residing in Ardnamurchan and following the occupation of fishermen?—Very few.

37,117. They do not take kindly to it?—They don't depend on the fishing.

37,118. Are there any good harbours round that coast?—None at all.

37,119. There is a want of harbours?—We are wanting a harbour now, but, owing to some trifling difficulty between the County Council and the laird, we cannot get the slip.

37,120. As a matter of fact, they cannot fish at present for want of harbour accommodation?—They cannot; we have to use small boats to put them out to the steamers.

37,121. Do you think, if moderately good harbours were provided, a fair proportion of the population would take to fishing?—I believe they would, and be glad to get the chance.

37,122. But, after all, do you think that these men who might take to fishing would still like to get a small patch of land for potato ground, and a cow's grass?—I believe they would; it would be a great help to them.

37,123. Do you think there is a real want of milk for themselves or their families present?—They cannot have milk when they have no cow. We in the township are allowed to keep three cows without followers; we need all the milk for ourselves, and the poor fishermen cannot get any even to buy.

37,124. And are there many people in your neighbourhood?—No, I cannot say there are a great many of them; a few strangers come in summer time, and they cannot get the milk.

37,125. We would not mind the strangers so much if we could get the people in the locality comfortable.—If there was a harbour there, it would encourage the trade of the place.

37,126. What size of a croft would you suggest that these people should get?—Well, the country is wide enough, and there is plenty of arable land. I would recommend a two-horse holding for each, in order that he might live on it with comfort.

37,127. That is what we are pointing at, a self-

Tobermory. James Nisbet.

supporting croft. You think a croft should be big enough to keep a man with a pair of small country horses?—Quite so.

37,128. That would be from 20 to 30 acres of arable land, and with as much grazing as would keep six or eight cows, and possibly sixty or seventy sheep? Yes, I would say so.

37,129. And you think that size of a croft should be able to support a man with his family, provided always that it was moderately rented?—I would require to explain that; with cattle and other produce at their present low price, the rent would need to be very low before they could maintain themselves.

37,130. I quite understand your meaning,—that is to say, the land is not worth the same rent now as it was some years ago, and what was a fair rent twenty or fifteen years ago would not be a fair rent to-day?—No.

37,131. I quite concur in that statement, but you think that is the size of croft you would recommend, and not an £8 or £9 croft?—That would not be worth asking, I think.

37,132. Take your own case as an example. The produce of your croft, even without a rent, would not support you, I suppose?—I believe my hens alone would eat up all the produce of the croft. I buy the corn I sow every year.

37,133. And you consume all the produce?—Yes, and have to spend £3 or £4 in wintering the cows, in addition, in fodder and meal.

37,134. We find, in our experience going through this and other parts of the Highlands, that the great difficulty among the crofting population is overstocking, even when they have land?—Where they have the pasture it can support them, but the patch of arable land would not keep one cow, giving her justice.

37,135. I must say this, that where we found the crofters most comfortable in circumstances it was always where there was a good extent of hill grazing attached to their crofts?—Yes the pasture is useful; but, as for our patch of arable land, it is just on rocks. If you go three yards you are sure to meet a rock.

37,136. But a good part of this ground which you have mentioned is not rocky ground, but such arable ground as could be tilled?—Yes, besides the outrun. In Laga there are parks, and in Glenmore there are parks; and, coming to Skinid, Coire a'mhuilinn, and all these places, there are fields which are just going wild under sheep. White grass is to be seen in them when it should be eaten in the winter.

37,137. *Mr Maccallum.*—You said Ormsaigmore is now held as one farm?—Yes.

37,138. Do you know the circumstances that led to the removal of the people and the formation of it into one farm?—We could not understand it. We were paying £140, 10s. at the time we were there, eight of us, and it is now less than £100 of rent. The proprietor built a square of houses, and a byre and stable, and put dykes in for the tenant.

37,139. For the man who has the whole farm?—Yes.

37,140. Then you think that if the place were again divided into small holdings it would let very well?—I have no doubt of it. I am not saying that it is the best of land, this Ormsaigmore, but still it is the best there.

37,141. But you think it would be more easily let in that way than as one farm?—Undoubtedly.

37,142. Is there much in the proprietor's own hands that is suitable for being made into small holdings in your opinion?—There is. There are places like Glenbeg and Glenborrodale.

37,143. Are these two in the proprietor's own hands?—Yes.

37,144. Were they formerly let to a tenant?—They were. You have other witnesses who lived near, and who can speak to the former tenancy.

37,145. Is there any other place in the proprietor's own hands that might be suitable for the formation of small holdings?—I think not, so far as I know.

37,146. What is the name of the farm that includes Torr-na-moine, Bourblaige, and the other townships you mentioned, Coire-mhuilinn and Skinid?—It is called Mingary. In my time Mingary was always under one party.

Tobermo James Ni

37,147. In your recollection it was always one farm?—Yes. Of course I was but a boy when they were put out of these townships. It was one Maccoll who put them out, and took the whole of these farms. He had Mingary before that, where Castle Mingary is.

37,148. But you think it is quite capable of being divided into four farms, following, say, the old marches, the old boundaries of these townships?—In my opinion that is so. Those who were there were comfortable enough.

37,149. Then do you find that the proprietor encourages small holdings in any way?—I could not say.

37,150. Was there any offer made to the crofters of any of these lands that you have spoken to?—No offer that I am aware of.

37,151. Seeing that small farms let so readily, and large farms with so much difficulty, how can you account for the proprietor being so averse to forming small holdings?—So far as I could learn, he found some difficulty in collecting his rent, and, with only one tenant, the matter was much easier. I might not be so ready with my rent as a big farmer.

37,152. But don't you find now that, when these farms are offered to let, the rent is very much reduced, and the offers made for taking it very much less than the old rent?—They are bound to be. In the case of Ormsaigmore, which I mentioned, the place where I myself was, I know the rent we paid, and I know pretty nearly what is paid now; and this is the second farmer who is there since I left it.

37,153. I can easily see that it is more convenient to get the rent from one man; but when the rent that is to be paid by one man is so very much lower than the rent that would be paid by smaller tenants, I do not see that that would be a sufficient inducement to the proprietor to make it a large farm?—I believe that is the rule, supposing he would lose a few pounds, a pound on one here and there. But it would take a year's rent, or thereabouts, to pay for all the improvements that he made on the three Swordales, in the way of dykes and fences and a steading.

37,154. Do you think that if the proprietor paid the same attention to the small farmers as he is doing to the large, they would be ready enough to pay their rents?—If they had got their land at its value.

37,155. You say that the large farmers get houses and fences put up for them, but that nothing is being done for the small tenants?—I put a roof on my house, and on my byre and barn, and I had to pay Mr Dalgleish for every stick of it, and I had to get it built and thatched myself. The very 'staps' that were required to fence the place, we had to pay 3d. each for, in addition to the freight by boat. That is no encouragement to improve.

37,156. Are there many crofts in Ardnamurchan that are self-supporting?—I do not know one in the whole of Ardnamurchan, and I know all Ardnamurchan. It is fifty-nine years since I first remember it, and every one that has a croft is supported by the family.

37,157. The crofts are all too small?—Too small.

37,158. Are there many cottars?—There are not many cottars either; there are some at a place they call Achteny, and there are others about Ardslignish, and these places.

37,159. Are there not cottars about your own place, Ormsaigmore?—No, none.

37,160. How many crofters are there?—We are twenty-two.

37,161. Now, among these crofters, are there many who would be prepared to take a self-sustaining holding?—In my opinion there are.

37,162. They would be willing to remove from that to the lands that you have mentioned, if they were divided into small holdings?—I believe they would.

37,163. What reason have you to believe that they would do that?—We are there working and digging away where there is no ground, but if we had some soil

to work on we would have some promise of something at the end of the year for our labour.

37,164. Have they expressed their desire to leave? Have they held meetings?—Every one I was asking was anxious that the Crofters Commission should come round and enlarge their holdings.

37,165. They have shown, by holding meetings and delegating you, for instance, that they are anxious for it?—Quite eager for it.

37,166. And would some of them be able without outside help to stock such holdings?—Not at the rate that I am counting for a pair-horse holding. There would be a good many of them who could not do that without help, even getting the ground at a fair value.

37,167. But do you think now that these could pay as good a rent as is being paid by the large farmers?—In former times, before the farmers got it, there was more rent paid for the farms, but what would follow I cannot say.

37,168. The large farmers have got great reductions?—We crofters in Ormsaigbeg pay far more rent than better townships round about us.

37,169. Do you think you are paying at a higher rate for your crofts than is being paid by the large farmers now, after the reductions they have got?—It is my opinion that, in the case of the farmer paying 7s. 6d. per acre, for instance, I am paying £1. Our township of twenty-two crofters pays from £5 to £3, 10s. for each croft.

37,170. And that is after all the reduction that has been given you by the Crofters Commission?—After all the reduction.

37,171. Still you think it is much higher than a farm?—Much higher than a farm.

37,172. You think then that the people would be very much benefited by having larger crofts, and that there is land suitable for the purpose in Ardnamurchan?—That is my opinion. I know that, for myself, I have nothing even to show for the soil we have. Their soil brings two crops after having potatoes; but we have to manure every year before we can trust to anything put in the ground yielding a crop. That shows the coldness and poorness of the soil. The seaweeds even have to be brought from another country, from Mull there.

37,173. Then is it your opinion that these townships that were formed into large farms were so formed because they were better than the townships which were left under the crofters?—It was because the farmer thought they would pay that he took them; he saw by looking at it that it was good ground.

37,174. So it is your opinion that all the best ground in the parish was consolidated into large farms?—I tell the Court that all the crofters are on these patches which no farmer could take, and the laird could get no tenant for.

37,175. Then you think that, if the farms were made available now for small holdings, they could pay as good a rent as is now paid by the farmers?—According to the rate we are paying, even after the reduction. The township of Ormsaigmore beside us is, I think, a good deal cheaper than ours.

37,176. *Mr Munro.*—In answer to one of the Commissioners you stated that one reason why proprietors were afraid to break up their farms and divide them into small holdings was the difficulty of collecting rents from small holders?—That was a rumour that was current at the time, whether it came from the laird or elsewhere I don't know, that there was less bother about the collection in that way. Whether it is a fact or not is a matter that I cannot say as a truth, but that is the reason that was given.

37,177. Why should there be more difficulty in collecting rent from a number of small tenants than from one large tenant?—The thing is this: a man will take a big farm or a township, and he is supposed to have means before the laird will give him it. There is no difficulty in collecting his rent, because he had it ready even if the place did not pay. And, suppose, in a year or two, he would lose all he had, of course the laird was all right.

37,178. Do I understand you to mean by that, that the man taking a large farm would be expected to pay the rent out of his capital, instead of out of the produce of the farm?—Well, he had the means at all events. If the place paid him, it would be very good; but, if not, the laird was all right; the money would be in bank.

37,179. But, supposing a farm were divided amongst a number of small tenants, could they not as readily pay the rent out of the produce of the small farm itself as the large tenant could do?—If the land were divided the crofter would have a chance, because he would have the land.

37,180. But I am speaking about the difficulty of collecting rents from the small tenants just now, which you have not yet explained to me?—There would be no difficulty in collecting the rent, when the place paid the tenant.

37,181. I assume that the place would pay him?—But when I have no capital?

37,182. Assuming that a number of small tenants got a sheep farm broken up and divided amongst them, under fair conditions of rent and occupancy, could they as readily pay their rents as the large farmer does at present?—In my opinion they would.

37,183. Then, do you think the landlord has any apprehension that they would not?—If a township was broken up into five shares, I suppose you are meaning, that these parties would require to have capital before they could get into this township. And if I had no means to take a fifth share of the township I would not get it from the laird, for I was speaking to a laird not many days ago, and this is what he said. 'Did you 'think we were going to give our land without security 'for the rent'? That was a Member of Parliament, or, at least, one who intends to be a Member, who is going about.

37,184. May I put the matter to you in this form? Supposing a sheep farm were offered just now, say, to five or six small tenants, would the farm be readily taken up?—I believe it would; jumped at.

37,185. And could these small tenants pay their rent as readily as the large farmer presently does?—It depends greatly on whether they got the ground at its value.

37,186. I assume, of course, that they get the land at a fair rent, and under fair conditions of occupancy?—It is very difficult to answer that question, because I have no capital except what I put in, in the way of stock and so on; and if the price of stock were to fall, the produce of that ground would hardly keep me. But the big farmer, as I said before, has funds to fall back on, if his produce did not pay him.—(*Mr Gordon.*—If his stock did not sell on a certain day he had money to pay his rent with, and could wait until his stock did sell?—Quite so).

37,187. He had his capital to fall back on?—Yes, he could take money out of bank to pay the rent.

37,188. So that, by means of his capital, the large farmer has greater facilities for paying his rent than the small farmer?—Quite so.

37,189. You mentioned that, at present, the crofters were mainly supported by their families, sons and daughters taking employment elsewhere, and contributing out of their earnings for the maintenance of their parents?—I tell the Court that there is not a crofter in Ardnamurchan, from Salen, Loch-Sunart, to the point of the lighthouse, whose croft is self-supporting.

37,190. Now, supposing that they got reasonably-sized holdings, could the crofters maintain themselves out of these holdings without the assistance of their families?—To a great extent.

37,191. But could they altogether?—Well, it would depend, as I said before, on how the markets went.

37,192. But you could take an average of years and estimate in that way?—There is a good deal of speculation in it.

37,193. What I want to be at is this: could the crofters occupy these increased holdings, that we are now speaking of, to profit and advantage?—They would; I believe they would.

37,194. Then their families could maintain themselves, independently of outside labour?—Yes.

Tobermory. James Nisbet.

37,195. Could such holdings be readily stocked, and the necessary buildings erected, without any Government assistance?—Well, we had to do it in Ardnamurchan since I remember. I have got no assistance from the laird or any one else, so I think we could do it yet if we got a place worth building a house on.

37,196. You are aware that the large farmers contribute nothing to the building of steadings?—I do not know the agreement between the landlord and the farmer, but the dykes and the places are built; by whom, I cannot say.

37,197. You are quite positive on one point, however, that if the crofters got access to these increased holdings they could cultivate them to profit and advantage, and maintain themselves and their families?—Yes.

37,198. *Mr Gordon.*—I think you mentioned incidentally that you were appointed a delegate at a public meeting; is that so?—Yes.

37,199. Where was the meeting held?—I was not at the meeting, but I was appointed by it. A meeting was held after they got notice from the Commissioners of the intended sitting, and they appointed me to give evidence.

37,200. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—You mentioned several crofting townships that were cleared within your own memory, and made into large farms?—Yes.

37,201. Now, I am going to ask you a question or two with regard to the rents that the old crofters, who were in those townships, had to pay. Were the crofters who were tenants in those farms, those old townships, paying larger or smaller rents than the crofters where you are have to pay? In the old times, were these crofters in the old townships rented as heavily as the crofters have been?—The rent has been raised. Mr Dalgleish raised the rent of Ormsaigbeg three times since he came to the estate. He did not raise it since I came there, but before that.

37,202. What was the first rent?—I could not tell exactly, but it was raised three times.

37,203. Do you mean that the rents of Ormsaigbeg were raised on three different occasions, or that the rents of Ormsaigbeg were raised three-fold?—It was in this way. Before the Commission came, if a crofter went out, it was like a roup,—put in an offer for the place. It might be that I was working in Glasgow, and had a small family, and would like to have them out of the city and away from the town's mischief to rear them in an honest place, so I might give a pound or two to secure this opportunity.

37,204. When crofts became vacant in Ormsaigbeg they were put up to auction, and knocked down to the highest offerer?—Yes.

37,205. Were the rents of Ormsaigbeg raised by Mr Dalgleish on three different occasions, or do you mean that the whole rent of the township was made three times what it once was?—No, I mean it was raised three different times, *—e.g.*, £1 added this year, another £1 next year, and a third the next.

37,206. When crofts fell into the hands of the laird, or when tenants left, or were sent out of a croft for some reason or other, did Mr Dalgleish pay compensation to the outgoing tenant for the buildings left behind?—I stopped in Ormsaigmore for three years until the farmer came in, waiting to see if I would get a spot. That shows that I was eager for a place, and my house was demolished whenever I left it. All the persons that I knew, when they left their crofts, never got anything, so far as I could learn.

37,207. Never got a penny of compensation nor a penny of assistance towards building houses?—Nothing whatever; I never heard of a crofter receiving a stick without paying for it, as concerning the building of a house.

37,208. I want you to go back now for a little to the old townships that were cleared within your own recollection. Were the tenants, who were in these old townships, as comfortable as the crofters of to-day?—In my own youth.

37,209. I want the answer to be perfectly clear; were they as comfortable, or more comfortable, or less comfortable?—In my young days they had what they have not to-day,—they had milk and butter, and all produce of that kind. Of course it is different now; at that time it was all home made, but now, of course, things can be bought cheaper; but as to the rents, they were a heap cheaper then than they are at the present day, even after the reductions.

37,210. You say that the tenants, who lived in the old crofting townships that were cleared by the laird, were much more easily rented than the crofters under the 'fair rent' of to-day?—They were.

37,211. You are perfectly satisfied upon that point?—As to the three Swordales. I don't know what is the rent of these places now, but I know that we are paying dear enough in our place.

37,212. Mention again what stock you are entitled to keep yourself, to-day.—Three cows without followers.

37,213. What would be the rent under the old order of things, before the evictions and before the big farms were made, that a crofter would be expected to pay for a holding that would just carry the stock you have just now,—three cows without followers; or, put it in this way, what stock could a crofter have under the old system in the old townships for the rent you pay to-day, £4, 10s.,—in one of the townships you mention as having been cleared within your memory?—I know it was cheaper than it is to-day, at any rate.

37,214. Could you brace up your mind to the amount of stock, as nearly as possible, that a crofter could keep who paid the rent that you pay to-day as a 'fair rent'?—I cannot speak of these parties that were removed, because I was not near them, but you will get in the books the names of those who were tenants there.

37,215. Could you give us those names?—One, Mr Macphee here, was in Swordale.

37,216. You say that those tenants were far more comfortable than the crofters are to-day?—Far more; they had everything they wanted.

37,217. Did they find it easier to pay rents then than you find it to pay the fair rents to-day?—They did, because they had the soil, they had the ground.

37,218. And they had the stock?—They had the stock; the cows had milk, as I would call it.

37,219. And they grew plenty food from their farms?—Plenty food for themselves and for the stock.

37,220. Now are the crofting townships in Ardnamurchan short of hill grazing? Have they too little hill grazing?—They have.

37,221. Have any of them been complaining that their hill grazing is too limited?—For our part, at Ormsaigbeg, where I am, to winter the cattle on the scraps I have, the grazing is plenty.

37,222. It is of arable land you are short?—If I had the arable land to winter them I would be better off.

37,223. But do you know of other townships that are short of hill grazing?—I believe Achosnich is; but you will get witnesses to speak to that part.

37,224. Are there delegates from Achosnich?—I am not going to say what I am not sure of. Mr Macphee is a man who has been hunted from one township to another for the last fifty years.

37,225. By whom was he hunted?—It was Sir James Miles Riddell that removed him first from the Swordales.

37,226. I am going to ask you one other question. Has your township been considering the question of migrating, or a few of you leaving the place and going to new lands that might be opened by Act of Parliament? Have you, in view of the limited extent of your arable ground, been considering the question of migrating?—I have been considering that since ever I came to the township I am in, that is twenty years ago, but I never got the chance.

37,227. But has the township been discussing the matter, and talking about it among themselves, that some would leave?—Often they are crying out for land to work.

37,228. And you then have come to the conclusion in your township that, if lands are made available, some of you will leave and go to those places?—Yes.

37,229. Do you believe that a sufficient number would leave Ormsaigbeg and take up new lands—larger holdings on better soil—to such a degree that those who would remain in Ormsaigbeg would be made comfortable by putting two or three crofts together?—Undoubtedly, that is what we are wanting, but we never had the chance till now; and I hope they will take the chance.

37,230. But when you get the chance you will take it in sufficient numbers?—Yes.

37,231. And you will undertake to put up the necessary buildings to serve your purpose?—Yes.

37,232. And, do you believe it would be better to begin a new holding with a limited amount of stock at first, than to borrow a large sum of money and incur a debt?—If I could help it at all, I would borrow nothing, because there is something to be paid for borrowed money.

37,233. You would begin with the three cows?—I would.

37,234. And trust to the natural multiplication of stock?—And work my way up.

37,235.—*Mr Robertson, of the firm of Dalgleish and Bell, W.S., on behalf of Mr Dalgleish.*—You used the expression that if one of the farms on the estate were to be opened for crofters five or six in your township would jump at it?—I believe so.

37,236. Who are they?—I have no right to answer that question, at least I leave it to the Court. I am not to judge any one.

37,237. Are you one of them?—Yes.

37,238. You spoke of Girigidail. That place is nearer to your township than Glenbeg?—Yes; and I know it to our loss, because the deer are on the top of us every day.

37,239. Are you aware that the farm of Girigidail has been to let for the past two years?—It is a good many years since the Camerons were put out of there, and there were three of them there.

37,240. Are you aware that it is to let just now?—I know nothing about it. I mind of seeing it in the papers at one time.

37,241. It is in the proprietor's hands just now, you say?—I suppose so; I have nothing to do with these things.

37,242. *Mr Maccallum.*—How was it held last?—There were three in Girigidail in my time.

37,243. Three tenants?—Yes; they were three brothers, called Cameron, at first. I don't know whether there were only two at last, but they left it.

37,244. *Mr Robertson.*—Do you know the value of the sheep stock in Girigidail?—I cannot tell; I have nothing to do with it.

37,245. Would you be surprised to hear that it is about £1000?—I have nothing to do with that.

37,246. You are one of the parties who would take the farm, are you not?—I am not here for that purpose.

37,247. You are aware that the sheep stock on any of these farms would require to be taken over by the tenant; you know that that is the custom of the country?—If it is a law.

37,248. It is the custom?—Well, does law go by custom?

37,249. Do you know half a dozen of men, including yourself, in the township who have £1000 of capital at their command at present?—I have nothing to do with other folk.

37,250. Yourself then,—have you a sixth part of £1000?—When that comes it will be seen.

37,251. You must answer that question direct.—No, I have no right to answer such questions till I get the offer of it first; at least I want the protection of the Court.—(*Mr Gordon.*—You are not obliged to answer any question that you do not feel perfectly disposed to).

37,252. Was your rent fixed by the Crofters Commission four years ago?—Yes.

37,253. You said, in the course of your examination by the Commissioners, that you wished the Crofters Commission would come down in order that there might be an application for an enlargement of holdings. The Crofters Commission have been round, have they not?—No, they had no Commission to enlarge our holdings.

37,254. The Crofters Commission have power to enlarge holdings?—They have not; in some farms, but not in ours. How many of the holdings were enlarged through the Highlands of Scotland?

37,255. I was about to ask you whether there was any application by the Ormsaigbeg township for enlargement of holdings to the Crofters Commission?—No, but I am telling you the reason; they had no grounds for it.

37,256. Did you not say that they wished additional land?—They would have taken land if they had got Ormsaigmore near to them.

37,257. Why did not you apply to the Crofters Commission?—Because the place was above £100; and there was no farm that they could touch that was not above £100.

37,258. *Mr Gordon.*—If it was over £100 they could touch it, if under £100 they could not touch it.—Oh, was that the way? I thought if the rent was as high in a township as £100.

37,259. It is not the township but the farm to be broken up, that it applies to; if the farm, from which they propose that land should be taken, is under £100 of rent, they cannot touch it: if over £100, the Crofters Commission have power to take from the farm such portion as they may deem suitable for the enlargement of small holdings.—However, we never got the chance; we never applied.

37,260. *Mr Robertson.*—You never applied. Do you think any of the crofters on the estate applied?—No; I can only speak, of course, for the township I am in.

37,261. You were speaking pretty generally at one time?—Of what I know about Ardnamurchan.

37,262. There was no application for enlargement?—I cannot tell.

37,263. Then is this desire for additional land quite a new thing?—It was a desire since I remember. When I had to put a pound or two on a croft before I got it, it was my desire that I should have a croft. There was a desire there, but I knew it was twice the rent it was worth.

37,264. That is an old desire, then?—That is what I am speaking about, twenty or twenty-one years ago. I had to put £1 on the croft I have.

37,265. Then you had the desire at that time?—Yes, before I would get it.

37,266. But you have made no application for it?—If there had been plenty of land in the market then I should have got the croft for less than I am paying for it to-day. I think that is a demand for land.

37,267. I have mentioned Girigidail farm. Could you get half a dozen colleagues to subscribe £1000, and apply to the landlord for that farm?—Do you think for a moment that anyone would take Girigidail with the stock of deer on the place?

37,267*a*. You would get the deer for nothing?—I would not take them for nothing.

37,268. Speaking for yourself and the other members of the township, would you object to crofters from other counties or from other parishes coming in among you?—I would not. I would go to another country if I got the chance, and it is not likely I would object to any other party coming here.

37,269. You would not object?—No. It is the whole of Scotland that wants justice done to each other. I would be very glad to see them here, but I would not like to see them if the rents were raised in consequence.

37,270. *Mr Maccallum.*—I think you stated that you have been looking out for a small farm for many years; did I understand you aright?—I have been looking for a better spot than the one I have, if I could get it at what I would call a fair rent.

37,271. But such places are not available,—small farms that would be suitable for crofters, such as you and those in your township?—Quite available.

37,272. But is it not the case that there is no farm at all between the large, the very large farm, and the crofts in Ardnamurchan? Is not the land either let as a very large farm or as small crofts?—I don't understand you.

Tobermory.

James Nisbet.

37,273. Do you find farms of a medium size in Ardnamurchan?—Yes, I do. They are all big farms; they are all townships. There are some four townships in the one farm. There are Mingary, Skinid, Torr-na-moine and Coire-a'-mhuillin, all in one farm now.

37,274. So, however willing you might be to take a place somewhat larger than you have, you have no opportunity of getting it?—No opportunity of getting it.

37,275. Supposing you were able to stock it, and willing to take it, you have no way of getting it?—No way of getting it.

37,276. And you think that if such farms were available, farms of a medium size, they would be easily let?—I, for one, would take one of them.

37,277. Mr Robertson put it to you that the sheep stock on the large farms would have to be taken at valuation. Now, can you tell me whether, when the tenants were put out of the townships, their stock was then taken over at valuation by the large farmer who came in and took the place?—In the township I was in, at Ormsaigmore, it was just given to the man as I suppose he offered.

37,278. How did you dispose of the sheep stock that you had?—There is nothing that I can tell; if you ask Mr Macphee he may be able to say, as he would know whether the stock was taken by valuation or not, before he left one of the Swordales. I cannot speak as to that.

37,279. Cannot you speak of Ormsaigmore, whether the crofters stock was taken over by the tenant who took the farm at valuation?—Mr Henderson, who came into it at the time, got it on his own terms. I was not at home at the time the place was broken up; I was in Glasgow; but I believe he got it at half price, as I would call it.

37,280. Do you mean the stocking at half price?—Yes; but, as a rule, I suppose that, as Mr Robertson says, one has to take over the sheep stock at valuation.

37,281. I don't doubt that; but the proposal now is, that the people who came and took the crofters' places are to be treated very differently from the way in which they treated the people who were there before?—Quite differently.

37,282. They got the land without any valuation for the stock that was on it?—Yes.

37,283. And now the proposal is that they should have a higher valuation than even the market price for the stock that is now upon the large farms?—When I came to Ormsaigbeg I had to take the sheep by valuation; and what I paid for each sheep at that time I could not get in the market;—not more than 18s. out of 30s.

37,284. So the valuations that are generally made on sheep stock are much higher than the market value?—Yes, by far.

37,285. And you think that that would be very unfair to those who come to re-occupy these lands?—I would say so.

37,286. *Mr Robertson.* — How are valuations of sheep stock generally made; is it not by two valuators?—Yes; I am afraid there are three.

37,287. There is an oversman?—Yes.

37,288. Each party nominates a valuator?—Yes.

37,289. So that there can be no unfairness in the valuation?—That is all very good; but it is all big farmers who come here to value, and, on account of their own stock, they keep up the prices. There is a wheel within a wheel.

37,290. If you pay a high valuation to commence with, you get the same valuation at the end of your lease?—This is not in the bargain. I may be a poor man.

37,291. But you nominate your own man?—We must go at the price that they took in the stock: that is the English of it.

37,292. *Mr Maccallum.* — Is it your experience that valuations are not always absolutely fair?—I think not.

ALEXANDER MACDIARMID, Ormsaigbeg, Ardnamurchan (32).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter).

Tobermory.

Alexander Macdiarmid.

37,293. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—I am the son of a crofter.

37,294. Were you appointed a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

37,295. Did you hear what the last witness said?—Yes.

37,296. Is there anything else you would wish to say in addition to what he has stated?—Nothing further.

37,297. If there is not, we may hold you as concurring in Mr Nisbet's evidence?—Mr Nisbet said all that I can say.

DUNCAN LIVINGSTON, Port-Uarick, Ardnamurchan (59)—*examined.*

Duncan Livingston.

37,298. *Mr Gordon.* — Were you appointed a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

37,299. We have had very full evidence from Mr Nisbet; did you hear what he said?—I did.

37,300. Do you agree with his evidence?—Yes.

37,301. Have you anything further to add to what he stated?—Nothing at all.

37,302. He stated his case very clearly and very fully?—Very fully, so far as I know.

37,303. *Mr Maccallum.* — You are from Port-Uarick?—Yes.

37,304. How many crofters are in the township?—Eleven.

37,305. Are you a crofter?—Yes.—(*The Secretary.*—The extent of his croft is 1 acre 2 roods arable, 2 acres outrun, and one share in a common of 152 acres, divided into eleven shares: rent £4, 1s., reduced by the Crofters Commission to £2: arrears, £6, 12s. 11d., cancelled).

37,306. What is the view of the people of your township with regard to the size of the crofts they would like to have? Are they satisfied with the present size, or would they like a larger size?—They would like to get larger holdings, as far as I know; they are all looking for more if they could get it.

37,307. Then, in your neighbourhood, is there land that would be available for making crofts of a larger size than at present?—Girigidail is the only place that I know of.

37,308. Do you consider it a suitable place for forming into crofts?—It is better than the place we have.

37,309. It would be an improvement?—Yes.

37,310. Were the houses in your township built by the crofters or by the proprietor?—By the crofters.

37,311. If they got larger crofts than those they have at present, do you think they would be able to put up buildings and to stock these crofts?—Yes, as far as I know. That is what they are looking for, at any rate.

37,312. And would some of the crofters in your township be willing to leave it and take crofts elsewhere?—Yes.

37,313. Are there any cottars in your place?—No.

37,314. Can you speak about any other land except what was spoken to by Mr Nisbet?—No, I cannot; he has mentioned all that I know.

37,315. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Have the tenants in your township been complaining that their hill pasture is too small?—Yes, they have.

37,316. Have they ever complained to the landlord or to the factor?—Not much that I know of; of course I am not often at home, and I never heard of it.

37,317. What stock are you supposed to have in this township?—Two cows and followers.

37,318. No sheep?—No sheep.

37,319. Can your crofts carry the 'souming'?—We have to buy wintering for the stocks.

37,320. Did you apply to the Crofters Commission

for a piece of the big farm in your neighbourhood?—No.

37,321. Why not?—I was not at home at the time: I was in Montreal.

37,322. How do you know that a number of the tenants of that township would go to the farm if the farm was opened up for them?—Because they tell me so,—that is all I can say.

37,323. How many tenants are there in this township altogether?—Eleven.

37,324. How many do you think could live comfortably in it?—The half of them.

37,325. And would the other half go willingly and gladly?—Yes, I think they would: that is what they are saying.

37,326. Were they speaking of asking Government help?—No, I never heard them.

37,327. They would depend entirely upon their own industry?—I think so.

37,328. They would undertake to put up the dykes and houses?—Yes; they would try all they could do themselves, without any help.

37,329. Is it an old township that you are in?—No, not very old.

37,330. When was it made into a crofting township? How long ago?—I cannot tell you the exact time.

37,331. You can come near it?—I came into it myself when I was a boy.

37,332. Was it quite a new township then?—Yes.

37,333. Where did the tenants come from?—From all parts.

37,334. Were they crofters before they came there?—Well, they were better than they are now.

37,335. Had they crofts in other places before they were put to this place?—Yes, they were mostly crofters. I do not remember them all, but some had a croft and some not.

37,336. They were not all crofters?—I do not think so; they were put out of places.

37,337. Tell me one place they were put out of, any of them?—Some from Swordale, and some from Ockle.

37,338. Did they leave these other crofts of their own free will, or were they put out?—Some of them, at all events, were put out.

37,339. Did those who were put out against their will receive money down for the houses they had left behind?—Not that I know.

37,340. Was their stock taken over by the laird at valuation?—I cannot say as to that.

37,341. Did they get not a penny for the houses they left behind?—Not that I heard.

37,342. Nor a farthing to help them to build new houses?—Not that I know of.

37,343. *Mr Gordon.*—You are a sailor, are you?—Yes.

37,344. Would you be able yourself to stock a larger holding if you got it?—A little, anyway.

37,345. And be able to earn a little more?—It would be better than where I am.

37,346. Do you carry on the croft although you are at sea occasionally?—The family do.

ARCHIBALD GRAY, Port-Uarick, Ardnamurchan (46)—*examined*. Archibald Gray.

37,347. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—A crofter's son.

37,348. Did you hear the evidence given by Mr Nisbet?—Yes.

37,349. Do you agree with what he said?—Yes.

37,350. Have you anything to add to it?—Not with regard to the townships he was speaking of. He mentioned all the large townships fit for crofter occupation.

37,351. Are you the son of one of the eleven crofters whom Mr Livingston mentioned?—Yes.

37,352. And do you agree also with what Mr Livingston said?—Yes.

37,353. Have you anything else to tell us?—No, except that I would like to have a larger croft myself.

37,354. And would you be able to stock it yourself?—If I got a holding of from £6 to £8 I would be able to stock it myself.

37,355. *Mr Maccallum.*—What is your father's name?—Archibald Gray.

37,356. And what rent does he pay?—£2.

37,357. The same as the rest?—Yes.

37,358. The great complaint in the township is the smallness of the holdings, I suppose?—Yes, the smallness of the holdings; and they are too close together, which leads to constant disputes in the township.

37,359. What extent of arable land is it that you have?—I am not exactly sure, but about 1 or 2 acres, I think.

37,360. Just potato ground?—Yes.

37,361. That is quite insufficient for a crofter?—Yes.

37,362. What extent of arable land do you think would be suitable for a croft in Ardnamurchan?—About 12 acres of good arable land.

37,363. And what stock do you think a crofter would have with that arable land, and a corresponding amount of grazing?—I think from eight to ten cows, a horse, and maybe fifty or sixty sheep.

DAVID MACPHEE, Achosnich, Ardnamurchan (54)—*examined*. David Macphee.

37,364. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—A crofter's brother.

37,364*a*. You are not the tenant of a croft?—No.

37,365. How many crofts are in the township of Achosnich?—Five.

37,366. What size are they?—Middling big; from 4 to 8 acres arable.

37,367. Is your brother's name Allan Macphee?—Yes.—(*The Secretary.*—The croft extends to 8 acres 3 roods 1 pole arable, 14 acres 1 rood 10 poles outrun, and three shares in a common of 961 acres, divided into twelve shares. The old rent was £27, 10s., the new rent is £16: the arrears were £41, 3s., of which £33, 3s. were cancelled, and £8 ordered to be paid).

37,368. You heard what the witness, Mr Nisbet, stated with regard to the townships in which he thought there was land available for crofters?—Yes.

37,369. Do you agree with what he said?—Yes.

37,370. Are there any other parts of Ardnamurchan which you consider suitable for crofters, that he did not mention?—No; he mentioned all the townships that I know.

37,371. And do you concur generally in what he said, and in what the last two witnesses have said?—Yes. Of course he was speaking about some places that I don't know about.*

37,372. But you do not know of any place which he did not mention?—No.

MALCOLM MACMILLAN, Achosnich, Ardnamurchan (51)—*examined*. Malcolm Macmillan.

37,373. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

37,374. Do you hold one of the five crofts in Achosnich?—Yes.

37,375. You heard what the previous witness said?—Yes.

37,376. And do you agree with it?—Yes.

37,377. You seem to have a larger size of croft in Achosnich than is generally the case in other townships in Ardnamurchan?—Yes, it happens to be that way.

37,378. Are there any cottars in your township?—Not at present.

* On 4th July the witness wrote:—"The last two witnesses made no mention of the havoc the deer make to our corn and potato crops. Previous to the Crofters Commission fixing Fair Rents, my neighbour L. Maccoll and I received from Mr Dalgleish the sum of £3 for herding the deer. Since the Fair Rent was fixed the proprietor has invariably turned a deaf ear to our complaint, and has declined to pay us any compensation, alleging that it was taken into account at the time of fixing the Fair Rent."

Tobermory. —— Malcolm Macmillan.

37,379. Would you like an enlarged holding if you got it?—Yes.

37,380. You would like a still larger croft?—Yes.

37,381. Are there any other lands you can mention, as suitable for crofters' holdings, besides those mentioned by Mr Nisbet?—I think they were all mentioned.

37,382. Then, may we hold you as concurring generally in the evidence given by those witnesses who have already spoken?—Yes; I think I agree with all that was said here to-day. Achosnich would like to get more ground,—more pasture and more arable land.

37,383. You have a share of over 900 acres?—Yes.

37,384 Have you more than one share?—I have just one share.

37,385. How many shares is it divided into?—Five. There are twelve shares, but five holdings.—(*The Secretary.*—One tenant has two shares, other two have three each, and the remaining tenant has one share; and there are three shares that were not dealt with by the Crofters Commission).

37,386. What stock have you?—I have nine cows and nine followers, a horse and a half, and seventy-five sheep. I pay rent for half a horse.

37,387. What is your rent?—£16, 10s.; that is the Commission rent.

37,388. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is there a desire to extend the pasture of the township?—Yes, and there is a desire to have more arable land amongst the Achosnich crofters. One of them was applying for Girigidail.

37,389. Some of them would remove to other places, would they?—Yes; they are tired of the place where they are, and would be very glad to move to any place where they think they would be better.

37,390. Is there, in the immediate neighbourhood of Achosnich itself, land suitable for adding to the present township?—There is Girigidail there, at the march.

37,391. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—What is the name of the farm near you?—Girigidail; there is just a march between us.

37,392. You heard to-day that that farm is in the laird's own hands?—Yes.

37,393. How long has that been the case?—I think about thirty-seven years. There were some tenants there when Mr Dalgleish bought the estate; I remember them well.

37,394. For how many years has the laird had this farm in his own hands?—Thirty-six or thirty-seven years.

37,395. What rent is down in the valuation roll for it, do you know?—I did not see it in the valuation roll, but I heard that it was somewhere about £140 or £150. I heard that they were paying rates upon that, but I don't know for certain.—(*The Secretary.*—The amount given in the valuation roll for 1893–4 is £90).

37,396. Is it of the want of arable land or the want of hill grazing that you have reason to complain most?—The want of both. My arable land is not nearly sufficient to provide for my stock in winter; and in summer time the grazing is very poor; it only half feeds the number I am allowed to keep.

37,397. Do you remember, in recent years, this farm of Girigidail being entered in the valuation roll at a figure considerably above £100?—I cannot say, except as to what I heard from others about the rates. I heard that the landlord was paying far more rates than he should, and that the farm was valued at far more than its value.

37,398. Have you any idea what was the highest rent put against this farm in the valuation roll, during the last six or seven years?—I could not say.

37,399. Did you tenants apply to the laird or to the factor for an addition to the township?—No, we did not apply, for I believe it is in the Act, seeing we were paying above £15.

37,400. That is the reason?—That is the reason.

37,401. Then have you that as a grievance, that there is a clause in the Crofters Act that prevents small crofters from improving their condition?—We are very much against that point in the Act, that we cannot get more land, as the Act prevents us from taking the land.

37,402. Now, if that clause in the Crofters Act were removed, and crofters were empowered to apply for more land to increase their holdings up to the highest point of the crofter limit, would you in that case apply to the Crofters Commission for an addition from this farm?—Yes; and I would like my croft to be increased to £30 rent, and valued by the Commission.

Tobermory. —— Malcolm Macmillan.

37,403. What is the smallest amount of stock that a self-supporting croft should carry, one which would support a family, and keep them in employment all the year round?—I know the stock I have myself, and I know the ground I have to work, and it is not sufficient to keep a family. I could never live on the land I have although it was twice as good as it is.

37,404. Would this stock be sufficient for a small self-supporting holding, if there was plenty land to keep the stock summer and winter?—No, nor half.

37,405. Give us the size then that would be necessary?—I would like to have two horses, ten cows, and about 300 sheep, and I would require to have good land to feed them all, and good arable land to provide wintering for them.

37,406. Did you make a calculation, with the view of comparing the rents paid by the big farmers in the parish of Ardnamurchan, and the fair rents fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Well, we were discussing the matter since we got fair rents.

37,407. And which of the rents did you find the fairer,—the rents that the laird has placed upon the big farmers, or the rents that the Crofters Commission has fixed upon you?—We considered that we have not fair rent, according to the big farmers' rent, but there is a reason for that. When a big farmer goes to market, with a two-year heifer, he gets about double the price I get.

37,408. Because the land is better?—Yes. I believe that this very year Mr Coulthart gets twice as much as I get for his young cattle.

37,409. How do you account for that?—Good feeding, not good breeding, for he bought them as calves from the crofters.

37,410. The land is better?—Yes, and he could feed his stock better.

37,411. But did you compare, acre for acre, the fair rent paid by the crofters for crofter holdings, with the rent paid by the big farmer, as fixed by the laird?—No; it was not easy for the Crofters Commission to value our land at all, it was so poor.

37,412. (*Question put in Gaelic*)—A.—I think that our rents are much dearer than the farmers', in proportion.

37,413. *Mr Munro.*—Seeing you are so anxious to get an extension of your holding, did it never occur to you to apply to the landlord direct for more land?—I was anxious enough to get the land, but I knew very well that if I applied for it I would not get it, so I did not apply.

37,414. How did you know that?—Because we asked other things and did not get them; that is the very reason.

37,415. What would be the landlord's reason for refusing to give you more land?—Because he was putting others away, and we did not expect he was willing to give us more when others were cleared away. There is a township near us, Glendryen, that is taken by a farmer, and every croft that became vacant was added to his farm, and no crofter was put in the place of the crofter who left.

37,416. But, if the landlord were satisfied that you were in a position to take the additional land, and stock it, and do it justice, and pay a fair rent, do you not think he would be disposed to give it?—I have no hope, and I had no hope that I would get it.

37,417. But you never tried?—Never tried to get more; I confess that.

37,418. *Mr Gordon.*—You mentioned the number of stock that you had, and you stated that you only get half as much for your two-year old heifer as the tenant farmer?—Just about it.

37,419. You say that is because the farmers' stock are better fed than yours?—Yes, that is the very reason.

37,420. Did it never occur to you that you might

feed your stock much better if you kept fewer of them?—Yes, that is true enough.

37,421. Is it not a fact that your township is stocked far more heavily than the land is calculated to carry profitably?—The land, in the first place, is not able to feed the stock summer and winter the same as is done in Achateny.

37,422. But the common-sense practice would be to reduce the number of stock till it would not be too heavy?—That is the number that has been this while past; and I believe it was not we who made the souming.

37,423. It is 6 acres, I think you said?—Yes.

37,424. And you keep ten cows?—Nine cows and nine followers.

37,425. And a horse and a half?—Yes.

37,426. How could you expect to winter these upon 6 acres?—No, and we are not doing that: we are buying food.

37,427. If you have to buy the produce, or even part of the produce, you will not buy as much as will keep the cattle up to the mark?—It is true we would not buy so much if we had less stock.

ARCHIBALD MACGILLIVRAY, Plocaig, Ardnamurchan (36). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

37,428. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—I am the son of a crofter.

37,429. Is Plocaig a township?—Yes; a township of crofters.

37,430. How many holdings are there in the township?—Four.

37,431. What is the size of them?—About 5 acres or so.

37,432. And what stock have you?—Four cows and four calves, and a horse.

37,433. You heard the evidence given by several of the witnesses, in particular, that given by Mr James Nisbet?—Yes.

37,434. Do you agree with the evidence which you heard given by him and by the other witnesses?—Yes; the most part of it.

37,435. In what do you differ?—Where I was myself we had the Commission, and I paid for an appeal to come again: we paid the money for that; and that is all that they have seen for it.

37,436. What was your former rent?—£9, 4s.

37,437. And what is your present rent?—£7.

37,438. Did you appeal to the Crofters Commission for any improvement on the rent?—Yes.

37,439. How much did you wish it reduced?—Other £3 off. In wet weather we could go and fish for our 'stooks' or sheaves.

37,440. I have no doubt the Crofters Commission will give you justice if you have lodged an appeal. Is there anything else you wish to say?—There is a township beside us where there used to be eight, and it is now under one farmer.

37,441. What township is that?—Glendryen.

37,441*a*. That was mentioned by Mr Nisbet, prompted, I think, by yourself?—Yes.—(*Mr Macrae.*—The witness said 'there is one man living in it; whether the man is 'the tenant, or whether it is in the hands of the laird, I 'don't know.'

37,442. But there is land in the former township of Glendryen which you think would be suitable for crofters' holdings?—Yes, I think so; it is from there I went to this place.

37,443. You went from Glendryen to Plocaig?—Yes.

37,444–5. Then had you a larger croft in Glendryen than you have now?—Yes; it was larger in one way and smaller in another.

37,446. Were all the tenants removed from Glendryen at one time?—No.

37,447. When did you leave it?—Twenty-five years ago.

37,448. Then who got the croft that you had? What was done with it?—Angus Macgillivray got it.

37,449. At that time how many tenants were in Glendryen after you left it?—Eight. Tobermory.

37,450. When was it cleared altogether?—Two years ago, but there are two in it yet, though they have no sheep. Archibald Macgillivray.

37,451. There are two small crofters on it yet?—Yes.

37,452. Was it of your own will that you left, or were you removed by the proprietor?—It was of my own free will that I left: I thought the other place was better.

37,453. And it is now held by one farmer, I think you say?—I don't know whether it is in the possession of the laird or of the present tenant.

37,454. There is a sheep stock on it, I suppose?—Yes.

DUNCAN MACCOLL, Ockle, Ardnamurchan (36). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.) Duncan Maccoll.

37,455. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—A crofter's son. My mother is the crofter.

37,456. Did you hear the evidence given by the other witnesses to-day?—Yes.

37,457. Do you agree with it?—I do.

37,458. Have you anything to add to what they said?—No; I think they told you everything.

37,459. What is the size of your mother's croft?—Between 7 and 8 acres.

37,460. And the rent?—£15, 10s.

37,461. You will have pasture, doubtless, or the share of a common?—The share of a common.—(*Mr Watson, surveyor.*—It is a club farm.)

37,462. Do you find the club system to work well?—No, we are not more than pleased with it.

37,463. How many sheep are in the club stock?—About 350.

37,464. Among how many?—There are seven in the township.

37,465. Have you one shepherd to look after the sheep stock?—Yes, only one shepherd, but there is none at all just now.

37,466. What is the objection to the club farm?—It is not working right without a shepherd.

37,467. If you had a shepherd would it not work well enough?—Yes, it would.

37,468. What is your object in coming here; do you want a croft for yourself?—To see if I could get a larger place.

37,469. Is that for yourself or for your mother?—For the family.

37,470. Is the desire for larger holdings general in the township to which you belong?—No, I did not hear it from the rest of the township, I speak for myself.

37,471. Would you manage to stock a larger holding if you got it?—Yes; but I would prefer a small farm separate from other crofters.

ARCHIBALD GRAY, Port-Uarick (recalled)—*examined.* Archibald Gray.

37,472. *Mr Gordon.*—I am informed that you are desirous of supplementing the information you have already given us. What statement have you to make?—I belong to the township of Port-Uarick, where we made an application to the landlord for a slice off Girigidail, which was granted: but, by the next post, we received a letter objecting to this, and saying that, unless we took the whole township over and paid for the stock, he could not give it to us.

37,473. Is that all that you have to say?—Yes, but four more crofters told me they were willing to take a croft of from £6 to £8.

37,474. They would take a portion of the farm, but not the whole?—Unless they were all for it; three or four could not take it and pay for the stock.

37,475. They were all anxious for an extension of the present holdings?—Yes.

37,476. *Mr Maccallum.*—How many signed the application for a piece of Girigidail, do you know?—I think it was signed for all the crofters.

Tobermory.

Archibald Gray.

37,477. It was signed by proxy, as it were?—Yes.

37,478. Was the application sent direct to the proprietor?—Yes.

37,479. Did you receive a reply from him?—Yes.

37,480. From himself, was it?—From the landlord.

37,481. What did he say in the letter?—In the first letter we got he said he would give us what we wanted, but, by the next post, we received a letter saying that he could not give it to us unless we took it all over, and paid for the stock.

37,482. You have not got the letters with you to-day, have you?—No.

37,483. Can you produce them?—I cannot say.

37,484. Do you think they are preserved?—I don't know; I think it is not in my house.

37,485. Was the second letter direct from the proprietor?—Yes.

37,486. In the second letter you say he withdrew the offer made in the first?—Yes.

37,487. And stated that you could not get a slice of it unless you took the whole?—If we took the whole, and paid for the stock, he would give it to us.

37,488. And took the stock at valuation?—Yes.

37,489. And you were not prepared to take the stock at valuation?—We could not: but all those who want a croft of from £6 to £8 could stock it.

37,490. Did you think that that was almost equivalent to a refusal?—I don't know; I think it is on account of breaking the township and not taking it all over.

37,491. But do you think that, if he were anxious to comply with your request, he might have taken some means to dispose of the stock otherwise than by your taking it at valuation?—He might, perhaps.

37,492. Was that your expectation when you applied?—Our expectation when we applied was to take this slice, and have nothing to do with the stock, because it could not be much between eleven, the piece of it.

37,493. *Mr Gordon.*—It was as an extension of your present holdings?—Yes, on account of the township of Girigidail being on our march.

37,494. Does it come close up to your present grazings?—Yes, along our outrun.

37,495. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you know, afterwards, why an application was not made to the Crofters Commission?—I believe there was an application made through Mr Campbell, Solicitor, Oban, to the Commission, but they could not agree about the march.

37,496. Who could not agree about the march?—There was one of the crofters looking into it, and there was a map lost or something. The map came home, and there was a disagreement about the march.

37,497. A disagreement as to the portion that you were to ask for?—Yes. I think they could not understand the march that we wanted.

37,498. And the thing fell through in that way?—Yes.—(*Mr Robertson.*—There was no formal application.)

37,499. *Mr Munro.*—The proprietor was quite willing to give you the farm entire?—Yes, I believe he was.

37,500. You wanted a portion only?—Yes.

37,501. Which portion of the farm were you prepared to take?—The nearest portion.

37,502. Is that the best or the worst portion?—Well, I believe it is the best.

37,503. To get at the matter thoroughly, would it not involve some injustice and hardship to the landlord to take the best of the farm and leave the worst on his hands, seeing that he can let it entire?—I don't know; at that time we did not want the half of all the best: we only wanted a piece.

37,504. But you said that piece was the best?—Well, the nearest farm, I believe, is the best part of the township of Girigidail.

37,505. And you could not arrange among yourselves to take the farm entirely as it stood?—No; we could not pay for the stock.

37,506. Now, supposing that you got assistance elsewhere, could you take the farm amongst you and pay a reasonable interest for the advance?—It would not be a very big croft for each of us, between eleven, provided they all took an equal portion.

Tobermory.

Archibald Gray.

37,507. That is not an answer to my question. Would you be in a position, eleven of you, to take the entire farm, provided you got assistance to pay for the stock?—Yes.

37,508. And could you pay a fair rent?—Yes.

37,509. Now, supposing you got assistance, would you be able to repay the loan with a reasonable rate of interest, say, 3 per cent. or so?—Well, I think we would.

37,510. But you have made up no specific calculation to found upon?—No.

37,511. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—There is a matter I wish to point out, and it is that, seeing the farm is valued at £90 per annum, it was not competent to apply for it; they were precluded by one of the clauses of the Crofters Act from applying.

37,512. *Mr Maccallum.*—At the time you were thinking of your application was it in the valuation roll at £90?—I cannot say.

37,513. But I suppose the rent has been lowered in the valuation roll recently; is not that the case?—I cannot say.

37,514. *Mr Munro.*—But the rental did not preclude the landlord and you coming to an arrangement if both of you were willing?

37,515. *Mr Gordon.*—It is quite easily understood that, if it is a mutual agreement, the Crofters Act has nothing to do with it; your application was quite outside the Act?—Yes.

37,516. *Mr Robertson.*—The rent at the time was £110, and there was nothing in the rent to preclude an application for enlargement when the applications were before the Crofters Commission. It was reduced to £90 two years ago.—(*To Witness.*) Do you know whether your colleagues in the township had sufficient capital to take the sheep stock on Girigidail?—No, they have not.

37,517. They could not take it without assistance?—No; but if they got the place without the stock every one would stock his own, I believe, and pay the rent too.

37,518. You would require to get a stock somewhere?—Yes, certainly.

37,519. *Mr Gordon.*—Would you be prepared to give market value for the present stock?—I would, if the rest are.

37,520. So far as you are concerned, you would be willing to pay your share of the stock at the legitimate market value?—Yes.

37,521. But you are not prepared to take them over at valuation?—No.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Dervaig, Mull (61)—*examined.*

John Campbell.

37,522. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

37,523. What occupation do you follow?—Anything I can get to do.

37,524. Would you describe yourself as a labourer?—I am an army pensioner.

37,525. Have you any statement to make?—I propose to give a list of clearances from several estates in this parish, commencing with the estate of Mishnish, on which Tobermory is partly situated.

37,526. Are these within your recollection?—Yes.

37,527. How many crofters were in Mishnish?—Twenty for three townships.

37,528. Give us the names of the townships from which the evictions were made?—The first is Nead-an-fhirein, the next Reraig, and the next Ardmor. There were three from Nead-an-fhirein, nine from Reraig, and eight from Ardmor. That completes the estate of Mishnish, so far as clearances are concerned.

37,529. What is the next estate?—Sorn. Here there were four townships; Pein-Albanach, where four were cleared; Leiphinn, six; Sorn, nineteen; Bail'-iochdrach, fifteen; and Bail'-uachdrach—I cannot give the number who were evicted from here, but the ruins still exist, and older people than myself could perhaps

give the number. These are all in the estate of Sorn, now called Glengorm.

37,530. What is the next estate?—The next estate is Quinish. This is a somewhat complicated estate; it was at one time intact in one piece, but now it is in two, with a different proprietor in each. I shall give you the oldest clearances from Quinish, which happened when it was in the possession of Maclean of Coll.

37,531. Can you give me the townships there?—Mingary. The houses on this part were not together; every croft had a house.

37,532. They were not townships but distinct individual crofts?—The twenty-four were called Mingary. While it was in the possession of Maclean of Coll they were cleared away from Ach-na-drise.

37,533. How many were cleared there?—Five under Maclean of Coll.

37,534. Were there more cleared after he sold it?—Yes; the estate changed hands then, and became the property of James Forsyth, and other clearances took place under him.

37,535. How many were cleared then?—In Ath-antuim three, in Kilmore three, in Coireachan one, in Druim-na-crois four. Further up, on the same estate, while it was under Maclean of Coll, was the township of Teanga, where eight families were cleared. From Ledmore, another township on the same estate, there were six cleared by the same proprietor. That winds up that estate.

37,536. There is a place beside Ledmore, called Lettermore, is that the same property?—That has been always a small farm.

37,537. Is it on a different estate?—It is on the estate of Aros: it was on the same estate then.

37,538. Lettermore is nearer this than Ledmore. Ledmore is part of the estate of Aros, but Lettermore is a different property?—Yes, now, but not then. The clearances on Ledmore and Teanga took place when these were in the possession of Maclean of Coll.

37,539. I do not quite follow you, after all; because Lettermore may be on a different estate now, but you say it was part of the Aros estate, and Ledmore was not?—Ledmore was a part of the Aros estate then, and so was Teanga.—(*Mr Alexander Allan of Aros.*—Perhaps I might be allowed to throw some light upon the matter. Twenty-five years ago the estate of Aros contained Lettermore and Ledmore, and also Teanga. Then Teanga was retained by Capt. Campbell, who owned the estate, when he sold it to my father; and I afterwards sold Ledmore, along with Aros Mains, to Mr Laing).

37,540. The clearances took place under Maclean of Coll?—Yes. Next I go to the estate of the Marquis of Northampton. From the township of Kilmory there were cleared six families; from Fracadale six; from Eansaidh other six; from Langamul we cannot say how many; it was an old clearance. That winds up the portion of the Northampton estate that I am speaking about. Next comes the estate of Aird-dubh, presently called East and West Aird-dubh, but at the time I speak of, the place was intact.

37,540*a*. Who is the proprietor now?—The proprietor, at the time of the clearances, was Dr Maclean: the present proprietors are Miss Forrest, who owns West Aird-dubh, and Capt. John Watson, who owns East Aird-dubh.

37,541. How many people were cleared out of Aird-dubh?—Six, during Dr Maclean's reign.

37,542. Do you know at what dates they were cleared out?—Upwards of fifty years ago, but not sixty, for I remember seeing some of them there myself. I think the present proprietors have been there about fifty years, and the clearances happened before they got the properties.

37,543. What is the next place you have got to mention?—The next estate is Morinish.

37,544. Who is the proprietor of that estate?—John Munro-Mackenzie.

37,545. Were there townships on that place?—Yes; from the township of Cailleach there were eight removals; from Aoirin eleven, and from Aonaidh-bheatha four.

37,546. What is the next estate?—Treisnish, where there were three townships: Haun, with four removals, Glaic-chucory three, and Cragaig four.

37,547. What is the next estate?—The island of Gometra, where there were seventeen people cleared. Then the island of Ulva, with seventy-five cleared. These are all the clearances.

37,548. Now, it is not material to this inquiry who was the proprietor at that time, but we might like to hear about what dates these clearances were carried out, provided you can speak of them from personal knowledge. Take first Mishnish estate; when were the clearances there effected?—One of my colleagues here was on the estate at the time, and, he says it was close upon fifty years ago.

37,549. Next, those on the Sorn estate?—I think about the year 1854. The people were there in the year 1853, when I visited this country, and when I came back in 1856 they were gone.

37,550. On the Quinish estate?—The twenty-four that I spoke of happened during last century.

37,551. Ach-na-drise estate, can you give us the date of the clearances there?—About sixty-five or sixty-seven years ago.

37,552. And Teanga?—About seventy years ago: and Ledmore about the same time: the two places were cleared for the same purpose.

37,553. Then Lord Northampton's estate?—About the same time.

37,554. Fracadale?—About the same time.

37,555. Eansaidh?—About the same time.

37,556. Aird-dubh?—I am not positive, but I think fifty-four years ago, or thereabouts. My recollection carries me back to the time when I was six years of age, and I remember seeing the people there.

37,557. Next, the Morinish estate?—About eighty years ago.

37,558. The Treisnish estate?—About thirty years ago, I think.

37,559. Do you know anything about the islands of Gometra and Ulva?—I know about Gometra; it was about thirty years ago.

37,560. And Ulva?—Between the years 1846 and 1851.

37,561. Now, can you give us any assurance that your figures are tolerably correct,—that is to say, the number of crofters? Would not a number of those you have given be cottars?—I did my best to ascertain the facts as accurately as possible. All the numbers I have given held land; I have the names of most of them, which I got from people living over in my place.

37,562. Is there anybody living who, to your knowledge, was a crofter in Ulva?—Yes, the man who gave me that number.

37,563. What is his name?—Alexander Macdonald. We have information that there were about the number I have mentioned.

37,564. Possibly, but we happen to know a little about Ulva, and I think if there were seventy-five tenants they must have been very small crofters?—I am not saying they were not: I simply say that they occupied land, besides the cottars. The whole of the seventy-five held land, over and above the cottars. The proprietor himself admitted, in 1851, that the original population was about 500; if we divide that by five to find the number of farms, we find that there is a margin left for cottars, over and above the seventy-five holders of land.

37,565. I quite believe there may have been that number of people on the land, but I scarcely think there could be that number of crofters, using the word in its present meaning?—I am giving the number as accurately as I can, believing it to be true.

37,566. I see from the Report of the Napier Commission that, in 1841, the island of Ulva is said to have had a population of 859?—I quite believe that.

37,567. 'Or somewhere more than 200 above the 'present population in the whole *quoad sacra* parish of 'Salen,' and it gives the number of families as follows:—

Tobermory. John Campbell.

Ormaig, seven families; Cragaig, nine; Kilvicewen, six; Eolusary, four; Glacnagullan, four; Ballighartan, four; Beannas, four; Cuilinis, five; Abas, five; Sorata, seven; Achanatuatha, four; Tairi-nan-Ardruidh, three; Upper Ardeallam, two; Lower Ardeallam, five; Blarnan-Corr, two; Salen Ruadh, two;—total, 73 (Vol. III., p. 2254), so that your information as regards the townships appears to be quite correct?—I have taken every pains to get at the truth of everything I am bringing before you.

37,568. Do you know the land that you have mentioned in these different townships?—Every bit of it, with the exception of Ulva,—I know that by seeing it, but I have never been through it.

37,569. You think that all or most of the places you have mentioned could be re-peopled with crofters?—Nothing in the world easier. I omitted the estate of Penmore, where there were fifteen cleared by the father of the present proprietor; or, if you like to put it in another way, there were thirty crofters on the estate, and Mr Macnab put away fifteen of them. There are only five to-day, out of the thirty, holding crofts: he cleared away fifteen.

37,570. When was that?—Between 1856 and 1860: about twenty-eight years ago, I am told.

37,571. As to the size of these crofts, it would appear that, with the exception of Widow Maclean's, the crofts are all small places still?—Yes, she has a fair-sized croft.

37,572. But not larger than some of the delegates have suggested that farms should be made: so that you see, in clearing out these fifteen or twenty-five crofters, the place has only been left in a condition which most of the crofters say is the proper condition, viz., a moderate-sized croft still?—None of those who are left got any addition through the clearances; the land is in the hands of the farmer and proprietor.

37,573. The consolidation did not go to the benefit of the crofters?—Not at all, it was all taken away. Where they used to put their horses, he swept into his own possession, and he has it still.

37,574. Have you anything further to suggest to us for our consideration?—I will be very glad to answer any questions. Any suggestions I might have might be considered wild, but I am very willing to answer any questions put to me on the subject before us. But, if I might be allowed to say a word as to your question whether the land would be suitable for crofting purposes if again taken up, I would express the opinion that it is very suitable in every respect, with this difference, that I would certainly not put on so many people. There were formerly about 300 families; I would not be inclined to put so many now; I would make the holdings larger. Some of those that I have mentioned there were very comfortable, *e.g.*, in Druim-na-croise, there were four, paying £14 of rent, with ten cows and followers, and a horse, and about thirty sheep. I mention that simply as a case in point.

37,575. It would have been impossible for all these people to be maintained on the island of Ulva for the produce of the island?—I do not say the whole number that was on at that time.

37,576. They must have been engaged in what was at that time a common and lucrative business,—the making of kelp?—I do not maintain that the island would now support the same number of people; nevertheless, I hold it is capable of sustaining a good number of crofters.

37,577. No doubt of that, it is a very nice island, but it could not maintain anything like a population of that kind from the resources of the island itself?—No, I do not hold that; but it is about the worst of all the lands that I have mentioned; starting away from Tobermory here around the base of this parish till once we come to the island of Gometra is about as fine land as you could get anywhere in the Highlands.

37,578. *Mr Maccallum.*—How are the townships which you mentioned on the estate of Mishnish occupied now?—I believe it is in the hands of a farmer of the name of Graham, who lives over here in Eraid.

37,579. One farmer occupies all these old places?—One farmer, I believe; but I may be mistaken. Tobermory. John Campbell.

37,580. Is there much cultivation by the farmer?—I cannot say; it is mostly stock rearing and agriculture.

37,581. Is there any cultivation at all on any of these townships you have named?—I could not say.

37,582. How are the townships of Sorn occupied?—All in the hands of the proprietor.

37,583. Are they cultivated?—Partly.

37,584. On the estate of Quinish,—is it partly cultivated also?—It is in the hands of the proprietor, that portion of it from which the twenty-four were cleared. It is used by himself.

37,585. Then, on the estate of the Marquis of Northampton, you mentioned four townships, I think; how are they held now?—Kilmory is in the hands of a farmer; it is not cultivated, but is entirely under cattle and sheep. Eansaidh is occupied by a small farmer: Fracadale,—did I give Fracadale as on the Marquis of Northampton's estate? If so, it was a mistake, because it is on Mackenzie's estate.

37,586. I think you gave us it as on Mackenzie's estate. Then how as to Langamul?—That is a portion of the Northampton estate; it is in the hands of one small farmer; no crofters.

37,587. Next take the Morinish estate; how are the townships you mentioned there now occupied?—All in the hands of the proprietor; the whole of it under sheep and cattle. Of course there is always a little cultivation where cattle are kept now, but nothing to speak of in proportion to the land that could be cultivated.

37,588. Is it long since the land fell into the proprietor's hands altogether on the Morinish estate?—About eighty years.

37,589. Never let to a tenant?—Not a bit of it has been given away since then; it has been kept locked up hard and fast.

37,590. Do you think that these townships on the Morinish estate are well suited for small holdings?—There is not better in the whole of the Highlands. Those who lived there were very comfortable, and had a very fair stock.

37,591. Are there any crofters at all on the estate of Morinish?—Not one.

37,592. Then Treisnish,—how are the townships you spoke of occupied now?—They are in the hands of the proprietor; there are no crofters there now.

37,593. How is Ulva held?—The proprietor, the parson, the publican, and the smith, along with, I think, one other person, have the whole island among them.

37,594. There is no farmer there at all?—No farmer. The old church is there yet, and the manse is there, but the people have to go across to church from this island.

37,595. So that a great portion of the land of this parish is in the hands of the proprietors?—Entirely; there are only five crofters in the parish,—I am speaking of the land outside of Tobermory,—who are under the Act. There are about seven or eight, I daresay, on the Marquis of Northampton's estate, but, with the exception of these, that is all the crofters in this parish.

37,596. Then, do the proprietors offer the farms to let?—There are some farmers in some of these places. But I can give you a case in point, on the Penmore estate. A farmer took the land from which the crofters have been cleared; he went to the wall. Another man took it, but, after two or three years, he also went to the wall. Now a third man has it, and I don't know whether he will go to the wall before his lease is out.

37,597. The end will be that the proprietor will take it into his own hands when he fails to get a tenant. I suppose the natural consequence would be that the proprietor would at last fail to get a tenant?—I suppose so.

37,598. But, if the land were offered in small holdings, is it your opinion that it could be easily let?—Just try it and see.

37,599. You think there would be quite a rush for it?—There is a land hunger all over this country, as far as I have travelled, far and near. We do not require to go far back to see what has taken place

within the last eight or ten years. I am sure the very place we are sitting here, there is not a poorer place in creation than Tobermory; for, when the people were swept away from their land and houses, they had to take refuge in barns and behind dykes; and all kinds of outhouses were brought into requisition to shelter the people driven away from these places I have spoken of.

37,600. And you do not find that the proprietors do anything to meet the wants of the people?—Nothing whatever. But it had escaped my memory to speak about Dervaig, the place I belong to. I think there are six crofters in Dervaig now, but there were twenty-four in my young days. My father had a croft and grazing along with it. Now, in the year 1857, they were induced to enter into a lease with Mr Forsyth, as they thought, for the whole 'ric-ma-tic'; but it turned out, when they got the leases into their hands, that they had only got leases of their houses, and he swept away the whole grazing from them, and left them with the crofts at an increased rent. Now, every one of them had two cows and a horse, and was paying £3, 10s. or £4 on an average for the croft, the house, the garden, and the grazing: he took away the grazing from them and increased their rent. That is a case that illustrates the state of matters.

37,601. Have the people made any attempt to get allotments or small holdings under the Acts?—Not in this quarter, as far as I am aware. They have been watching the progress of things farther south, and they find every County Council putting its foot down on that entirely. There is no earthly prospect of getting it under the present state of things.

37,602. Are you aware that, at a special meeting appointed for considering that question, all the proprietors on the Council voted against putting the Act into force in the County of Argyll?—I quite believe that.

37,603. Were you aware of it? Was that brought under your notice?—Oh yes, we watch those things.

37,604. *Mr Munro.*—We are indebted to you for a very useful and helpful statement. Now, turning back to the island of Ulva, have you ever heard it stated what the condition of the crofters was before the evictions from the island?—I have heard it stated, and I have known it personally. I remember them being there, and I had some friends there myself. The people were not all alike; they had not the same quantity of land, nor the same stock, the whole of them. Some of them had, I understand, as low as one cow, and up to three, at the time I am speaking of.

37,605. Were they fairly prosperous, or were any of them in destitute circumstances?—Not before the failure of the potatoes, that I am aware of.

37,606. Was it about the time of the potato failure that they were evicted from Ulva?—After that.

37,607. Shortly after, I suppose?—The proprietor himself writes in 1851, and he states that the original population had been 500, but now it was 150. He was slipping them away just as fast as he could get them across the ferry. These are sterling facts; I do not want to exaggerate or to magnify things, and, if I do so, it is done unintentionally.

37,608. Have any of the present proprietors evicted any crofters?—I do not think so, with the exception of John Munro Mackenzie, who evicted a man who had a small croft on his estate last year.

37,609. So that none of the present proprietors are responsible for any of the evictions you have spoken of?—He was tenant of ground on which this croft was, and evicted the crofter; his father was proprietor; that is the only one that I remember.

37,610. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—As illustrating the quality of men that existed in those days when the people had the land, and the quality of the men to-day who are landless, are the men of to-day more public-spirited than the men who were there in your younger days?—My dear sir, if they were not, we would not be in possession of the Crofters Act to-day.

37,611. Are the men who live to-day without land, braver and more patriotic and public-spirited than the men who were on the land in your younger days,—which were the better class of men?—I hold that those who lived before me must have been perfect slaves, otherwise they would never have allowed themselves to be crushed to death as they have been all over the country. I think the present generation are waking up to a sense of duty to themselves and their country; therefore I consider the present generation far superior to them in that respect.

37,612. But take this view of it. Did the men who lived then feel that they had a greater interest at stake in the Empire than the people of to-day feel?—I think so.

37,613 Have you any proof of that?—I will give you my reason,—I don't know whether you will call it proof or not.

37,614. You are an old soldier?—Yes.

37,615. Is the martial spirit in the Highlands of Scotland what it used to be in your young days?—In my young days the army was very popular. From the very spot that I come from, Dervaig, there were four of us fighting at the battle of Alma,—two in the Transport Service and two in the navy—eight in all—from this one small spot in Mull. To-day there is not one recruited from that part, and I will give any person a brown bawbee if he will go and hook any of these boys to go to the army to-day.

37,616. Were you engaged in the Indian Mutiny?—Yes.

37,617. Were there men from Dervaig there along with you?—Yes; there were two along with me at the taking of Lucknow, the same boys who were with me at Alma.

37,618. Were there at that time any from your parish serving in the British navy?—Yes, two, as I have said.

37,619. And in the Transport Service?—There were four; during the time of the Crimean war there were four from that spot—two in the navy and two in the Transport Service.

37,620. Could you count four men from the whole of Mull to-day?—I don't know of any but one, who belongs to this place here. There may be others, but I don't know of them.

37,621. How do you account for the loss of interest in the army and navy throughout the Highlands?—For instance, here I am myself, just a case in point. I went away as a young fellow to the army; there were older ones from the district away before me, whose example I imitated, thinking it the finest thing in the world to belong to the army. I left my father in Dervaig on his croft with two cows and a horse; I came back from the Crimean war to see him, and left him in possession of it still. A few years afterwards my father had neither croft, nor cow, nor anything else.

37,622. Do you remember when the estate of Sorn was cleared?—I do.

37,623. Who cleared it?—Mr James Forsyth.

37,624. Of Quinish?—Of Sorn; he was not proprietor of Quinish at that time.

37,625. He was the proprietor of Quinish and of Sorn?—He ultimately became the proprietor of Quinish; I don't know but he was proprietor of both at the time; I am not certain.

37,626. That is the father of the present proprietor of Quinish?—Yes.

37,627. How long after he got clear of the people was it when he sold the estate of Sorn?—I cannot say; it could not be very long; I am told about seven years.

37,628. Was it a prevailing habit at that time for men to buy Highland estates, clear the people away, and then sell the estates,—speculate in them?—They were credited with that, and, certainly, in his case he cleared the estate of Sorn, and when he got his hands on Quinish estate he cleared it also of all those he could clear.

37,629. Did the tenants who were cleared from Sorn get any compensation for the buildings?—Compensation!

37,630. Yes?—Don't be speaking about it, Mr

Tobermory. John Campbell.

Macrae; who ever heard of a Highland laird giving compensation to tenants who were evicted? If you did, I never heard of it in my life.

37,631. Did he take over their stock at valuation?—At his own valuation, I believe. I believe there is a man present who was evicted from there, and who can speak about the facts better than I can. I was told he simply took the stock at his own valuation. There are people who were at Dervaig who can tell; when he took the grazing from them he took some of the cattle on the same footing.

37,632. Who was it that established the township of Dervaig?—Maclean of Coll, in the year 1799, or thereabouts.

37,633. What privileges did he give to those who came to Dervaig?—There was nothing written that ever I saw; but I heard the people saying that the village consisted of twenty-six houses, thirteen on each side of the road, in blocks two and two together, with an entrance between every block, and a garden behind.

37,634. All according to a plan?—Yes. As I heard it, the inducement he held out, after he formed the idea of making this village, was that any man might build a house there, at his own cost, according to that plan, would be absolute owner of the same and of the garden for all time coming, by paying 13s. 4d., and, when he did build the house, the laird would give him a croft and grazing for which he was to pay rent, keeping two cows and a horse.

37,635. Every one of them then, who built a house according to the plan, had the house and garden his own absolute property?—And peat moss along with it.

37,636. On payment of an annual charge of 13s. 4d.?—Yes.

37,637. And, as soon as the house was finished, every one of these was entitled to a croft?—Yes.

37,638. What stock?—Two cows and a horse.

37,639. And sheep?—No; no sheep.

37,640. Had they plenty hill grazing for the two cows and horse?—Sufficient to keep them in good order all the year round.

37,641. What was the rent charged for the croft and the grazing?—Some of the crofts were a little larger than others, and some a little better, but with a difference of a few shillings; £4 would be the very highest, and some of them under £3. That includes the grazing.

37,642. Did any of these tenants get assistance from the estate for building the houses?—I never heard of it; but I know that when any of them left the place and went to the Colonies, as some of them did, to America and Australia, they sold their houses.

37,643. They had a right to sell the houses?—Yes.

37,644. And those to whom they sold the houses came into possession of the same privileges?—Yes; unless it was a man of very bad character, the estate would not object to his getting the croft.

37,645. You had practically free sale?—Free sale to any person you liked. Many houses changed hands on that footing.

37,646. Who took the grazings from you?—Mr Forsyth.

37,647. I want to ask you one question with regard to the crofts. Did the original crofters get the crofts prepared, or did they get them in a state of nature?—In a state of nature: they had to fence them themselves and do everything.

37,648. So that they built the houses without any help, and they reclaimed the crofts from a state of nature?—Yes, and fenced round every croft.

37,649. They did all the improvements?—The whole thing: it was on the face of a hill.

37,650. In what condition are these people to-day with relation to those houses?—They are in this condition to-day: some of them have stuck to the crofts,—some have two crofts and some three, paying, on an average, for the croft and house about £5, but they have no grazing whatever.

37,651. Can they sell the houses to-day?—No, they cannot.

37,652. Whose houses will they be, a year from to-day?—It has been asserted,—I cannot vouch for the truth of it—but some of the tenants, who were paying rent last Martinmas, asserted that in conversation with the proprietor he had stated that the houses in the village would be his at the expiration of the lease next March. The lease entered into in 1857 expires in March 1895.

Tobermory. John Campbell.

37,653. So that they lost the grazing several years ago, and now they are to lose the houses also next year?—There is one of them here who can tell you about it.—(*Mr Gordon.*—Just tell us what you know yourself).

37,654. Are you not aware, as a matter of fact, that these people have been bound by Mr Forsyth to hand the houses over to him in good habitable condition, and to make him the absolute owner next year?—I am aware that that is one of the conditions of the lease.

37,655. How many of these twenty-four people have crofts in Dervaig to-day?—I think about nine.

37,656. What has been done with the other crofts? Have some of the houses fallen into a state of decay?—Some of them went out of existence altogether; just now there is one down, and one ready for the road,—the man is in the poorhouse, and his house will be demolished some of these days.

37,657. Several of the houses are not inhabited?—People would not put a finger to them. Some old people here have relations away in the south who would put their houses in order if they were assured that they would be allowed to keep them.

37,658. When a croft falls out, what does the present laird, Mr Forsyth, do with it?—I can only give you what is alleged to be an answer of his own to some who applied to him for some of these crofts. Some were grumbling about paying too much rent: 'Well,' he says, 'I have six or seven applicants ready to take it 'to-morrow if you like to throw it up.'

37,659. Is there land-grabbing all round,—are there some there who have several crofts?—Yes, some have three, others four, and some two.

37,660. Is it the poor ones who get the vacant croft, or the rich ones?—Just those that are able to pay.

37,661. Who is the man there who holds the most?—The village merchant.

37,662. How many has he?—He has four. There is a man who came to the village,—he came off Mr Forsyth's estate,—who has three, and a retired custom-house officer has two.

37,663. Those who are well-to-do get, and those who are poor get nothing. Do you account for the dilapidated condition of that township by the fact that the original bargain has been broken,—that the people have been cheated?—Well, as I said, there is not a person who will come to help them to put things in order or improve their houses, knowing that they have no hold on them, because the terms of that lease are distinct; they must clear out at the expiration of the lease under a stiff penalty. That does not admit of argument; it is a legal lease.

37,664. You spoke about rack renting; what is the size of these crofts?—You may say of arable land (I am not speaking of rocks and such like, but of *arable* land), an average of 2 to 2½ acres.

37,665. And what is the rent charged for these?—Just now the average rent for the croft alone, apart from the house, is some £4, or thereabout.

37,666. Are some of them rented at between £4 and £5?—I believe there are some at £5.

37,667. For 2 acres?—Yes, of arable land, the remainder being land that neither man nor beast could benefit by.

37,668. When the hill grazing was taken from your township, was the stock taken over by the laird?—No, with the exception of what suited himself.

37,669. What became of the stock?—I was not there when it took place, but there is a person here who can tell you; one of my colleagues here was a party to the action, and he can speak of the matter better than I.

37,670. Do you believe that, if the people got reasonable access to the land and a fair opportunity of taking

up a fair-sized holding at a fair rent, strictly fair, they would, in a year or two or three, put up the necessary buildings, and bring themselves into a much better condition than they are in to-day?—Do you ask that of such people as we have in Dervaig and in Tobermory here, on the verge of poverty,—do you ask whether if these people got land given to them to-morrow they could do that in a year or two?

37,671. Could they do it without any help?—I don't know how they could: they are on the verge of starvation, both here and there. In the village there are seventeen families in a state bordering on absolute poverty; I myself have not earned a sixpence since the 17th of April.

37,672. Would you in that case call upon the Government to come to the assistance of such men, and advance the necessary money?—Surely we have a right to ask it, seeing that our cousin Patrick across the water has been helped to improve his condition. Surely we are as needful and as much entitled to Government assistance as Paddy anywhere. We do not grudge it to him by any means. The late Government came forward cheerfully and placed sufficient at Paddy's feet to enable him to better his condition; and why should we not look for similar assistance?

37,673. You believe that this is what the Highland people generally look to for an improvement of their condition, and that they refuse to look to emigration until the land at home is made available?—Such of them as have no means of their own, and I believe it is the smaller number after all. Maybe there is a case where a person might establish himself on the land, but it is few and far between. And as for emigration, I think the less we say about that the better. We know sufficient about emigration: people are more enlightened now-a-days.

37,674. You know that the Highland people are full of the idea of getting back on to the land?—Yes, that is their determination.

37,675. And full of hope?—Yes: whether I see the day or not, my successors may.

37,676. And do you believe that if, by the assistance of Government, the Highland people got back to the land, by means of a fair distribution of it at a fair rent, the old war-spirit of the Highlander would come back again?—I think so.

37,677. He would go and fight for the Empire?—I think so.

37,678. *Mr Gordon.*—Can you tell us anything about the terms on which these houses at Dervaig were built? I understand they were built upon what is called building leases?—I can only tell you what I hear.

37,679. Is there any writing?—No writing that ever I heard of.

37,680. They erected their houses upon certain conditions, and one of the conditions was apparently that they would have a lease for thirty-eight years?—No, sir.

37,681. They built the houses in 1857, and the leases expire in 1895?—They don't admit that it was 1857: their impression, carried down all along, is that the houses were to be theirs as long as they paid that rent for them, for all time coming.

37,682. They built the houses without any guarantee except a verbal promise?—That is so.—(*Mr Macrae.*—The lease was a later business,—many years later).

37,683. What date was the lease?—There is no writing whatever in connection with the building of the village.

37,684. You mentioned, I think, that there was a lease granted, which they at first supposed covered the croft, but afterwards found out only covered the buildings?—That is the present lease, entered into in 1857.

37,685. The lease was that they were to hold a certain subject (whatever it was) for thirty-eight years apparently?—That was their impression,—that they were entering into that lease for the whole land.

37,686. As Mr Forsyth is a member of this Commission, it is well that we should have this matter thoroughly cleared up?—It was not the present proprietor that had any hand in that.

37,687. But he is in possession of the property which his father held when this bargain was made?—The people will tell you that their impression was, when they entered into that lease, that it covered the grazing, crofts, and all; and they only made the discovery that it only covered the houses, later.

37,688. So that you see that this lease, which you thought only covered the house, was a lease for the house, and no man enters into a lease for a subject which he considers his own?—Well, I will explain to you how they fell into the trap.

37,689. But there is no trap in it?—Perhaps I should not have used the word, and I will withdraw it if it is out of place.

37,690. Did you ever, in your experience, know a man to buy or lease a thing that he considered his own?—They did not think they were entering into a lease at all. They were told that he was going to give them new titles to their houses.

37,691. I have no wish to press anything upon you. I simply wish to make it clear to the Court and those who are present that these men entered into a bargain for this property, which was the house, but which you say they thought (and I am quite willing to take it from you) was more than the house; that they afterwards found it only covered the buildings; and that they entered into an agreement to hold these buildings for a certain sum of money for thirty-eight years. Has the proprietor fulfilled that bargain?—The proprietor has fulfilled it to the letter as far as the lease is concerned. I am only speaking of the people; their impression is that the leases were regarded as titles. Titles are in Gaelic called *Coirichean*, and a lease is called *Aonta*.

LACHLAN MACLACHLAN, Dervaig, Mull (about 60). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

37,692. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter in Dervaig?—Yes.

37,693. Did you build a house in Dervaig?—No.

37,694. Did you buy a house in Dervaig?—Yes.

37,695. How long is it since you bought it?—Forty years.

37,696. Was that before the leases were granted?—Yes.

37,697. Was there a lease of your house granted to you?—Not to me but to my father.

37,698. Have you got that lease?—Yes.

37,699. Have you got it with you?—No.

37,700. Can you put a copy of that lease in?—No, I am afraid it went to pieces.

37,701. Do you know what was the subject in that lease?—Thirty-eight years.

37,702. What did the lease cover?—Nothing but the houses.

37,703. Did your father think the lease covered more than the house?—No, I cannot say; I was only young at the time.

37,704. Was it in your day that the grazings were taken off?—Yes.

37,705. In what year did that happen?—I cannot tell.

37,706. What stock did you keep on the grazings,—was it sheep or cattle?—Two cows and a horse.

37,707. On the hill grazings?—Yes.

37,708. And what stock have you now?—Only two cows now.

37,709. Are there any fishermen in the village there?—Yes.

37,710. Do you fish?—No.

37,711. How are the people in the village generally employed?—Labouring here and there, where they can get work.

37,712. Is work to be had in the neighbourhood of the village?—Not much just now.

37,713. *Mr Munro.*—Does the proprietor claim the house from you on the expiry of the thirty-eight years' lease?—Yes.

Tobermory.

Lachlan Maclachlan.

37,714. *Mr Maccallum.*—You say that you bought the house?—Yes.

37,715. From whom did you buy it?—From a man in Dervaig who went to Australia.

37,716. Not from the proprietor?—No.

37,717. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did your father, when he bought the house, believe that the house would be absolutely his property on paying a ground rent of 13s. 4d. per annum?—Yes.

37,718. Was that the understanding on which the township was founded, that the houses built by the people would be their own property, absolutely and for ever, and that they could sell them on paying the 13s. 4d. of ground rent?—Yes, I think they were of that opinion.

37,719. Was your father of that opinion when he bought the house,—that it would be for ever his own?—Yes, I think so.

37,720. Was it immediately after you signed those leases that the hill grazing was taken from you?—Shortly after we got it.

37,721. What rent do you pay for the land that keeps two cows?—£4. I have three crofts, and can only keep two cows. I pay £12 in all. The present laird, Mr Forsyth, took down our rent by £2, and, for the last twelvemonth, another £1, so now I only pay £9 instead of £12. I keep two cows and no followers.

Malcolm Gillies.

Malcolm Gillies, Dervaig, Mull (63).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

37,722. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

37,723. Have you a house in the village?—I have a house, but I pay a rent for it.

37,724. Is the house your own?—No, the house is not my own; it is Mr Macphail's.

37,725. You are a labourer occupying a rented house in Dervaig?—I am just a labourer paying rent.

37,726. How long have you been in Dervaig?—About thirty-one years.

37,727. Do you know anything about this bargain between the householders at Dervaig and the proprietor?—No, I know nothing about it; I was down at Cailleach.

37,728. *Mr Maccallum.*—You heard the evidence given by Mr Campbell with regard to land suitable for small holdings; are you able to speak of any land additional to what he spoke of?—Yes, it is quite correct.

37,729. Can you refer to any other place besides?—No, I cannot; I have taken no notice of it, as I have no croft myself.

37,730. What would you like to say to the Commission?—The only thing I would like to lay before the Commission is that I saw the people leaving the place called Cailleach.

37,731. That is on the Morinish estate?—Yes.

37,732. Did you say that you yourself were in the township?—Yes, I was there myself.

37,733. One of the tenants?—My father was one of the tenants.

37,734. What sort of holdings did they have there; what size?—There were eight tenants in Cailleach at that time; some of them had eight cows, others six, and five, and so on, and a horse.

37,735. Were they in comfortable circumstances?—Yes, very comfortable.

37,736. Do you know what was the reason of their removal out of that place?—When this man, called Talisker, got it, he brought a farmer there and sent away the crofters.

37,737. The township of Cailleach was let as a sheep farm?—Yes; it is understood that when he put them away it was then let to a farmer as a sheep grazing.

37,738. Were the old tenants in arrear of rent, do you know?—No, not one; not a penny on any of them.

Tobermory.

Donald Maclean.

Donald Maclean, Dervaig, Mull (80).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

37,739. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a householder?—I have no croft, but I pay rent for my house and garden.

37,740. You are just a labourer?—Just a labouring man.

37,741. Can you tell us anything about these leases? Did you ever see any leases for the houses?—Yes, I saw them, but I don't remember anything about them. I had plenty of land at that time, but they took it from me.

37,742. Had you any land there?—No.

37,743. How long have you been in Dervaig?—Twelve years.

37,744. Where were you before that time?—In Druim-na-croise and several other places.

37,745. Were you a crofter there?—I had more than a croft: I was a small farmer.

37,746. *Mr Maccallum.*—Were you a farmer in Druim-na-croise?—Yes.

37,747. What rent did you pay?—£14.

37,748. Were there others in that place along with you, or had you the whole of Druim-na-croise?—There were four of us in that township.

37,749. When did you leave Druim-na-croise?—Twenty years ago.

37,750. Did the others leave at the same time?—Yes, they were all rouped out.

37,751. You were put out against your will, were you?—Yes, against our will; that is what left us deaf and blind.

37,752. What was the occasion of your removal from the place?—No reason whatever; he just threw us all out without any reason.

37,753. Were you in arrears of rent?—No, never a penny.

37,754. What was done with the land then? How was it occupied after that?—Mr Forsyth took it into his own hands; there are farmers in it now.

37,755. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you hear from the old men of Dervaig the conditions on which they built their houses there originally?—They know all about it, who were in a very good way, but are now in a very poor state.

37,756. Who was laird when they built the houses?—Maclean of Coll; he was a good laird.

37,757. What conditions did he give when they built the houses?—I don't know anything about that; I was out of Dervaig in those days. They know themselves better than I do, those that are here.

37,758. Do you remember when the leases were signed?—Yes, I remember it; but these leases did not stand,—the old leases, I mean.

37,759. When the people built the houses, did the laird of Coll lead them to understand that the houses would be theirs for ever, so long as they paid a ground rent of 13s. 4d. for them?—Yes, it was on that understanding that they would have these houses as long as they paid the ground rent.

37,760. *Mr Gordon.*—You said you were out of Dervaig and knew nothing about the leases. How do you reconcile these two answers?—(*No answer.*)

37,761. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Did you hear it said by the men themselves who built the houses, that the laird of Coll made it a condition that they would be the owners of the houses for ever, so long as they paid 13s. 4d. of ground rent for them?—Yes, he said that the houses would be theirs for ever, so long as they paid the feu-duty.

37,762. Are you aware that the laird of Quinish got them to sign a lease for thirty-eight years, in which they bind and oblige themselves to flit and remove from the said house at the expiry of this lease, and to leave the same void and redd, to the effect that the said James Forsyth and his foresaids, or others in his name, may enter thereto immediately, and peaceably possess the same in all time thereafter, and that without any previous warning or process of removal, and that that lease is to end next year?—I don't remember; I was but young.

Tobermory.

Donald Maclean.

37,763. I am afraid you are confusing two things,—the condition made by the laird of Coll, on which they built the houses, and the documentary conditions on which they entered with Mr Forsyth. Do you remember when the tenants signed these papers called leases to Mr Forsyth?—I remember that, and I might remember it; it is two times nineteen years.

37,764. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you perfectly clear upon this, that the men who built the houses themselves told you that the condition the laird of Coll made with them was that the houses would remain their own for ever, as long as they paid the ground rent of 13s. 4d.?—No, we were of that opinion, and when the lease expired we would get a renewal.

Duncan Mackillop.

DUNCAN MACKILLOP, Penmore (67).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

37,765. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at Penmore?—No, I have no croft.

37,766. Are you a cottar?—Yes, I am a cottar now, but I had a croft at one time.

37,767. Do you want to get a croft now?—Yes.

37,768. Is there any land near Penmore that would suit you?—Yes, there is plenty of land at Penmore to suit me, where I was born and brought up.

37,769. Mr Campbell gave us an account of a number of places which he thought suitable; did you hear what he said?—No, I did not take any notice of what he said.

37,770. Can you tell us of any land which you consider suitable for new holdings?—No, I do not know of any. I know that where I am there is plenty of land available.

37,771. Near Penmore?—Yes.

37,772. Who is the proprietor of Penmore?—Dr Macnab.

37,773. What size of a holding?—A small croft.

37,774. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you remember more crofters being in Penmore than there are just now?—No.

37,775. We were told that from the estate of Penmore fifteen families were sent away; do you agree with that statement?—Yes.

37,776. Were these crofters?—Yes, all crofters. There are only five crofters now.

37,777. When had you a croft yourself on Penmore?—It is about twenty-eight years since I was put away.

37,778. What was done with the land?—It is let to a tenant now.

37,779. What was the reason of your removal?—I can give no reason but the laird's own will.

37,780. How many were put away at the same time as you?—Fifteen along with me.

37,781. Were these in arrear of rent?—Not a penny.

37,782. And you think the land they held formerly is suitable for small holdings?—Yes, quite as suitable as ever it was.

37,783. Did the five crofters who remain get any benefit from your removal?—Yes, some of them have three crofts; he was planting wood on some of them, and that left the crofts smaller.

37,784. What size of croft had the fifteen?—Some of them smaller and some of them larger.

37,785. What was the largest size?—Some of them would carry four cows, some three, and others two.

37,786. Were they as large as the crofts that are there just now?—The same size; not smaller than they are now.

37,787. Do you desire to speak about any other estate except Penmore?—No, that is where I was born and brought up, and I would like to be there again.

37,788. Have you anything further to add to what you have now said?—No.

John Macphail

JOHN MACPHAIL, Shepherd, Achronich (53)—*examined.*

37,789. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter or a cottar?—No, I am a shepherd.

37,790. To whom?—To Capt. Macgregor, Oskamul.

Tobermory.

John Macphail.

37,791. Have you any statement to read to us?—No, only the number that were sent out of the place.

37,792. Did you hear the statement that Mr Campbell made?—Yes.

37,793. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

37,794. Do you know of any other place from which evictions were made?—No, except Kilchronan estate and Torloisk estate.

37,795. Give us first the estate of Kilchronan.—There were evicted from the township of Kilchronan seven families; from Keallan six, from Cornmill two, from Killiemore seven, from Ach-a'-chuirn three, from Achronich four, from Oskamul six, and from Corcamul eight. Now on the Torloish estate of the Marquis of Northampton; from the township of Laggan eight, from Kilbrennan seven, from Balgowan twenty, from Fanmore twelve, from Cill-Naoinean seven, from Toistary five, from Burg six, and from Ruadal six.

37,796. Are you aware when the people were removed from these townships?—Some forty years, and some fifty years ago.

37,797. Do you think that the ground to which you have referred is suitable for small holdings?—There is no mistake about that; it is.

37,798. You are acquainted with it yourself?—Oh, yes.

37,799. Is it all suitable for sheep, or good stock land?—Good for stock and good for crop.

37,800. And do you think it might be advisable to re-people it again?—Yes.

37,801. *Mr Maccallum.*—Are these townships on the Kilchronan estate now on a large farm?—Yes, it is the home farm of the proprietor.

37,802. Are all the townships on the home farm?—No, the farm of Kilchronan includes the township of Kilchronan; Keallan is let to a farmer, Mr Stuart; Killiemore to a farmer, Mr Macrae; Oskimul and Corcamul to Capt. Macgregor, also Achronich and Acharn; Laggan upon Torloisk estate is let to Walter Elliot, and Kilbrennan to one Macmillan; Cill-Naoinean is in the hands of the Marquis of Northampton; Burg is in the hands of a farmer.

37,803. Are these lands cultivated now?—Partly.

37,804. But, for the most part, they are let out of cultivation, are they?—Yes, under brackens and heather.

37,805. Do you find that arable land when left out of cultivation in this district deteriorates very much? Does it readily go under fog?—Yes.

37,806. The grass is not nearly so good after being a long time left out?—It is good for nothing; it is not good even for the rabbit.

37,807. So that the arable land here does not stand well in grass?—No. At one time the island of Mull was keeping five or six meal mills going, with about 300 bolls going through each of them every year, and now there is none at all. The big farmers have to take home their hay and corn to their stock, and the poor man has to send all that he earns to the Yankee in return for his meal and flour.

37,808. There is no mill at all in the island?—Not just now, except one at the upper end of Mull and one at the Ross; there are only two in existence.

37,809. Are these two in working order?—Yes.

37,810. Do the large farmers send any oats to grind to these mills?—No, none at all.

37,811. Who send the oats that are ground there?—Some of the crofters about Mr Guthrie's place.

George Willison.

GEORGE WILLISON, Farmer, Luing (45)—*examined.*

37,812. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a farmer?—Yes.

37,813. I think you have a statement to submit to us?—I have prepared a statement which I desire to read, but before reading it I have to explain what district it applies to. It does not apply to this district at all, but to Oban and to the south and east of Oban, where I have experience.

Tobermory.

George Willison.

37,814. It applies to the county of Argyll?—Yes, but not to this district at all.—'I farm largely on my 'own account, and as managing trustee for my late 'brothers in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire, Perthshire, and 'Argyllshire, I farm in all, six farms. I have fre- 'quently been engaged in valuing properties and stock 'arbitrations, and in giving evidence as a practical 'farmer and valuator. I was educated under Dr 'Lindsay at Dollar Institution. I had classes in 'natural history, agricultural chemistry, algebra, 'Euclid, and land-surveying, thirty years ago. In 'submitting my opinion on this occasion, the farm that 'I would specially refer to here is the late Marquis of 'Breadalbane's model farm on the island of Luing, 'which we have farmed for the last thirty-one years: 'extent about 1800 acres. I understand the Marquis 'took this farm into his own hands to endeavour to 'promote high-class farming, and to show his tenantry 'an example. At this time it was farmed in, I think, 'twenty-six separate holdings. Whenever a farm 'became vacant on other parts of his extensive property, 'he gave it to a farmer from here, and took up his 'land. The Marquis spent large sums of money in 'building a large farm steading, and reclaiming the 'lands. I have frequently heard his tenantry say that 'they had a good time of it then, as there was plenty 'to do, and good pay. At the Marquis' death, in 1862, 'we took the farm. The steading was just finished, 'but there were no fences, and we have since spent on 'improvements as follows:—£1000 on 5-feet stone 'dykes; £800 on lime, 25 years ago; £300 liming the 'arable land about three years ago; besides other minor 'improvements. I have consumed on this farm alone, 'annually, not less than 100 tons of bought-in feeding 'stuffs, cake, &c., for the last twenty years. My neighbour- 'ing small farmers thought I was going to ruin myself; 'they have told me so since. My experience is that 'farmers, who farm well, do not get half credit, as the 'public say "that's a grand farm," but who has made 'it so, I would ask? When we made money in farm- 'ing we just laid it out on our farms again; I have 'heard my late father frequently say that he never 'made a shilling on any farm he ever took in the first 'half of his nineteen years' lease. I am astonished how 'ignorant some farmers are. I was valuing a property 'with the late Mr Drennan, Ayr, a few years ago, when 'we were shown some oats in the barn. I said I did 'not think the land could have grown such oats, "ah 'but," says the farmer, "I gie'd it a guid dose o' manure." 'Of what, I asked? "O' Nitre," he said. Luing farm 'I got from my late father twenty-four years ago, when 'the stock was valued to me at £10,500; it would be 'worth as much now. My system of management is as 'follows:—I breed West Highland cattle, some I cross 'with a short-horn bull. I keep a breeding stock of 'Cheviot and Leicester sheep; I work four pairs of horses 'to provide straw for the cattle in winter, and I feed 'principally sheep on the turnips I grow. I use all 'the most recent improved agricultural implements 'and machinery, and I consider that, unless you have 'capital to get these, and to breed the very best stock, 'and to manure highly, and to some extent, the 'ultimate result is failure, more so now than ever, 'with our importations. As to my experience of 'crofts and crofters, I have simply to state that 'they cannot live by crofting alone, and without 'other employment, they are bound to depend greatly 'on the charity of their neighbours. At Dalmally, 'where I farmed the large farm of Soccoch, I know 'that whenever a bad season came the crofters there 'got handsome donations from the late Lord Dudley, 'and Sir John Bennett Lawes, to buy them seed, &c., 'both of whom had deer forests in the district. An 'old neighbour farmer of mine at Luing, and one of 'the best of old Highlanders, Mr Maclean of Lecka- 'more, has told me frequently that my workmen are 'far better off in their present position than the small 'farmers were on Luing long ago. I have now a 'difficulty in getting good female workers, and, of 'course, have to pay in proportion. I may state here 'that, as there are several slate works on the island, I 'have to compete with them in the labour way. I 'was informed this summer that my workers were in a 'better position as to remuneration, than the quarriers. 'My foreman, John Gibson, who has been at Luing 'since we went, told me that he did not believe that 'there would be three applications for a croft or hold- 'ing between Luing and Oban, as the women cannot 'milk now, and all wanted to get into towns or be 'housemaids. I supply my workpeople with oatmeal 'and coal at cost price, to save the middleman; and 'my foreman informs me that there is less than one- 'third of the oatmeal consumed now than was twenty 'years ago. They all go in for loaf-bread, flour, ham, 'and tea. Although there are plenty of fish to be 'caught, there is not one half of the people go out to 'fish that did twenty years ago. This shows that there 'is not much destitution. I consider that the greatest 'curse to any locality is agitation, where there is no 'cause for it, and I blame the agitators and not the 'people; they are misled, and I cannot understand 'how any upright man would desire to do so. Agita- 'tion drives capital and ability out of a locality, and 'leaves it poor indeed. What I object to is this,— 'that strangers do not know local circumstances, such 'as climate, distance from markets, and ability to 'realise the subject under those and other circum- 'stances. As a Parochial Board District Councillor, 'with an experience of twenty-five years in public 'business in Luing district, I would object to risk the 'security likely to be given; and, as a valuator and 'having gone into the matter,—if taken by compulsion '—I think anyone would be a fool to have land on 'the terms of the Crofter or Holdings Act, as there are 'plenty of proprietors willing to sell at 30 per cent. 'less, at least, than present farming value. I know 'for all the land that will be taken it would be a very 'good sale for the proprietors, and a fine going out for 'the large tenants in the way of being paid with good 'security for unexhausted improvements, manures, &c. 'In fact this Croft or Allotments question is looked 'upon at least by nine-tenths of the population in this 'district as worthless, and fails to serve the object 'intended; and I would not have given evidence in 'this case were it not to finally settle the misleading 'representations that have been scattered abroad 'through the local press, and otherwise, by agitators. 'In conclusion, as to the Deer Forests, I think we 'should all be very thankful that we get sportsmen to 'spend such sums of money amongst us. In that 'respect we are the envy of many a nation. I know 'of any amount of land in the North and West High- 'lands with wool at the present price, and mutton and 'beef much dearer than at present, now under deer, 'which, if farmed, would not leave a copper for rent.'

37,815. Your very clear statement deals with the part of the country to the south of here, I suppose?—Yes.

37,816. And you have given us a very clear account, certainly, of the condition in which we found the island of Luing when we visited it. But you say that in putting it into that condition Lord Breadalbane had to turn out twenty-six small holders from the land?—Well, the rent I paid was £1160, which is just about as much as would be paid by twenty-six tenants, at an average of under £50.

37,817. Your rent, according to the valuation roll, is £565, for Kilchattan?—Yes, but other portions are entered separately in the valuation roll: £700 is my present rent.

37,818. Dividing £700 by twenty-six we get an average rental of about £27. The question I want to ask you is this: with all the beneficial effects of your holding the farm, are you still of opinion that the country has derived more benefit from your occupation of the island of Luing than it would have done from the twenty-six separate holders?—I am of that opinion, and my neighbours have told me so. They have told me that my workers are far better off than the occupiers of those separate holdings.

37,819. A rental of £27 would represent very much the class of holdings which this Commission aims at,

viz., a self-supporting holding. If you reduce the holding below the level of a self-supporting holding, it follows that the man must either find work somewhere else, or he cannot be well off,—the croft itself won't keep him; but if the croft is large enough to keep him he is just as able to be well off, as regards food and raiment, as the best working man can be who is earning his bread. Now, I will ask the question again, and I expect you will answer it. Do you think the country is benefited by your occupation to a greater extent than it would be if there were twenty-six self-supporting holdings in the island?—I think so.

37,820. The cry has been raised in the country that people are all flocking to the large towns. Now, where did the twenty-six farmers go when Lord Breadalbane cleared the island to make room, for what I may call a 'fancy' farm?—In my statement I make that clear. If a tenant died in any other part of his extensive property, which reaches, as you are aware, from sea to sea, from Taymouth to my place, which is the southermost portion of his estates, he would give the farm thus vacated to one of the Luing people.

37,821. As a matter of fact, do you know that these people were all placed in other holdings after they left Luing?—So I have been told; and that is what I have ascertained, to the best of my knowledge,—that there was never one expelled or turned out.

37,822. Now, there is a pretty large population in connection with the slate quarries and the other industries in the island of Luing, such as fishing, though I understand the fishing is not prosecuted to any great extent; but there is certainly a considerable population in the island at present, whether at the quarries near Kilchattan or at the small fishing village on the west side. Is there such a thing within the reach of these people as a milk cow?—They all get milk. There are about thirty milk cows on the island, and the people get milk when they want it. I keep cows to supply my workers.

37,823. How many milk cows have you got?—I keep seven or eight for my place.

37,824. I suppose there will be a total population on the island, irrespective of your place, of something like 200,—I mean on that part of the island near the quarries?—Yes, but my workers get milk, and everybody gets milk.

37,825. I am afraid you are evading the question a little. I say the population in the neighbourhood of your farm may be estimated moderately at 200; now do you say these 200 people are supplied with milk? They are not your workers.—They are supplied by me, they are supplied by the smith, and they are supplied by two crofters, the miller and the schoolmaster; also by the other farmers on the island.

37,826. But your land comes in between the people I speak of and the other farmers; they are more than a mile from the nearest other house?—But they take the milk to them; in other words, there is as much milk as they like to buy at 6d. a gallon.

37,827. That is a moderate price.—That is the price I charge, and that is the condition on which I keep cows. I make the price, and the other farmers or small holders have to take the same price.

37,828. May I ask you this other question,—does the farm of Luing pay you?—It has paid me.

37,829. Is there any reason why it should not pay the twenty-six men if they had it?—Yes; the reason it would not pay them is that they cannot afford to buy implements such as I do; and they cannot afford to concentrate their labour.

37,830. I assume that they would be men with a reasonable amount of capital in proportion to the size of the holdings they occupied; and I ask you again, is there any reason why a man with a sufficiency of capital, occupying a place fairly rented at £27, should not be as able to make money as you are with your thousands?—I speak from the experience I have had of small farmers. I may say that I am trustee at present for a family whose estate is being wound up, and who have lost money by small farming to such an extent that I don't know whether the estate will come out clear or not. It is a fact that they were worth £1000 in stock twenty-five years ago, and had £500 in bank, yet, at the present time, I don't know whether they will be able to pay or not. That is one example. One of these said to me 'Mr Willison, when you came to the 'island just a wee boy (of course I was a Saxon and a 'stranger) do you know what we were all saying 'about you?' 'No,' says I, 'I don't.'—'Well,' says he, 'when you came to Luing, a wee boy, we said "He '"will no be long here, this one, for he will soon ruin '"himself at the rate he is pouring the feeding stuffs out on the quay."' Now, that is an instance of a family who have failed where I have succeeded.

37,831. You have a considerable extent of ground there under grass, and, therefore, at certain seasons of the year, it stands to reason you will have to supplement it by produce from other countries. Now, if twenty-six people were spread over the farm, they would be growing feeding stuffs for their own use, whether profitably or not?—They cannot grow them as cheaply as I can purchase them. No further back than last week I sent out to my place some good Russian barley, feeding barley, which I bought at £3, 12s. 6d. a ton. Adding the freight, 7s. 6d. a ton, it cost me £4 a ton delivered at Luing. Now can it be grown at that price?

37,832. Is there any reason why a man paying £27 of rent should not be able to purchase Russian barley if he wants it?—Well, I don't know; they have not done it yet, at all events.

37,833. But they might do so now, benefiting by the education they have got from you on the island?—I don't know where they are to be got.

37,834. If a man's whole time is fully taken up in profitable occupation I do not see why he should not be in as good a position for making money on a small holding as a man on a big holding, who must employ men to work for him. You were talking just now about banks and money, but, as a matter of fact, I have been told by a bank-manager in the country I come from, that the men who were the largest depositors in the northern bank were farmers paying less than £60 a year.—Well, that does not hold good in Argyllshire; the climate must have something to do with it.

37,835. You have a very fine climate down at Luing?—There is a very great difference. It is not a very good climate, though I have improved the farm a bit by means of the feeding stuffs that I consumed on it, and the lime I have applied.

37,836. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—We are very glad to see that you have come to assist us in this inquiry, Mr Willison. You have come a long way to give us your assistance, and you have given us a statement with regard to the farm which you hold in Luing. You say that there were twenty-six separate holdings consolidated into that one farm?—This is my information.

37,837. Can you tell us anything of the circumstances of the people who had these holdings? Were they comfortable, or were they in poverty, or do you know anything of the condition in which they were when they held the land which you now occupy?—In a general way, they were not well off at all. According to the information I obtained long ago from an old friend, Maclean of Leckamore, with whom I was associated very much, there were certain seasons when they had a good barley crop, which they sold for distilling purposes, and the Easdale quarries were very prosperous at the time, so that there was then a considerable circulation of money in the island: but in bad seasons they were very ill off.

37,838. Do you grow barley now?—No, I can buy it cheaper.

37,839. These former tenants, I suppose, cultivated to a greater extent than you do now?—Oh yes, they cultivated more land.

37,840. So that your scientific mode of cultivation is to leave it under grass pretty much?—I cultivate only what I consider the suitable proportion for the proper management of the place, and what is most suitable in respect of the place itself, and the distance; that is for the rearing of stock.

37,841. But is it not the case that the land is get-

Tobermory. George Willison.

ting under fog and rushes by being left out of cultivation?—The land of a secondary class that was improved did deteriorate. Such land as the Marquis of Breadalbane did improve, where it was a peat bog, is going back to a state of nature, but the good land is improving.

37,842. It is allowed to deteriorate?—No, it is not. I say only the proportion of it that was inferior to commence.

37,843. Is not your statement that it goes back to a state of nature?—The proportion of the land: but the best land has increased in value, and will keep three times the stock. I appeal to you, Mr Chairman, as a practical farmer, whether land that is of such quality or has been so improved does not increase in value through lying out of cultivation, and being used for feeding cattle. It can be improved by feeding without tillage.

37,844. No person, I suppose, would deny that land can be improved. Is it your opinion that you have improved the land to a very considerable extent?—Decidedly.

37,845. Do you know what rent was paid by the twenty-six holders of the farm that you have now?—No.

37,846. Have you any means of comparing the rent that they paid with the rent you pay? Is your rent higher or lower than the rent paid by the twenty-six?—I think it would be very much what I paid for nineteen years, but, of course, the farm produce of all sorts without our importations.

37,847. If you would just keep to the question I should be obliged. Do you know whether the rent has gone up or come down—is it now higher or lower, than the rent paid by the twenty-six?—It came down twelve years ago.

37,848. And you say it is now lower, although the farm has got so valuable?—It is now lower.

37,849. And you hold that no one can live by crofting?—Not on crofting alone.

37,850. Do you believe that no one could live on a £30 holding?—By crofting alone. I did not state that at all as a general statement: I said such was my experience; £30 was not mentioned.

37,851. Thirty pounds is the limit of the crofter holding, so that when you say no one can live by crofting, you must mean that no one can live on a £30 croft. But these people in Luing lived on their small holdings, did they not, and paid rent?—Yes.

37,852. A higher rent than you pay?—I gave my experience, and I will give an explanation of what I mean. I mentioned my experience of the Dalmally crofters, but I say I know nothing whatever about those crofters. The only experience that came under my notice was at Dalmally, and that is what I have spoken about. I will not have words put into my mouth which I did not use, or I shall have to crave the protection of the Chair.

37,853. There is no need of craving any protection from me at all: I only put your own words to you, and only take your answers, therefore I do not see that there is any need for protection?—You spoke of the £30 limit.

37,854. Do you not know that £30 is the crofter limit?—I suppose it is.

37,855. You knew that, did not you?—I have had no experience of the working of a £30 croft.

37,856. But you make a general statement that no man can live by a croft?—I said 'my experience of crofting.'—(*Mr Gordon.*—You meant smaller crofts?—Yes, the Dalmally crofts. We were there for twenty years.)

37,857. You make this general statement, that no one can live by crofting, so far as you know?—I did not make a general statement.

37,858. That is the statement in your paper here?—I say 'my experience of crofts and crofting.'

37,859. 'As to my experience of crofts and crofters, 'I have simply to state that they cannot live by croft-'ing alone'?—That is my experience.

37,860. 'They are bound to depend greatly on the 'charity of their neighbours.' Now, do the crofters of Dalmally depend greatly on the charity of their neighbours?—I say so; that was my experience. They do not if they get a good season; but the crofters of Dalmally do not depend on crofting alone.

37,861. I am rather astonished to hear that, because I know Dalmally myself, and I never dreamt of such a thing as that they lived upon the charity of their neighbours; but I take what you say for what it is worth.—Lord Dudley and Sir John Bennett Lawes gave them seed and potatoes when it came a bad season: what do you call that? Was that not charity?

37,862. Well, of course, when a bad season comes, they might need help.—But that is not help?

37,863. The statement in your paper is that they depend *greatly* on charity, whereas you now speak of seasons of great destitution, and say that they get help then.—'When bad seasons come,' I say.

37,864. Are you not aware that when bad seasons come, large farmers also get reductions of rent from the proprietors? Do you call that also 'charity'?—No, I don't.

37,865. What is the distinction?—The distinction is this: in the one case there is an abatement of rent given out of consideration directly from the *proprietor:* but, in the cases I instanced, Lord Dudley and Sir John Bennett Lawes were not the proprietors at all, but the game tenants simply. There was no connection there, and no reason for giving help; it was for no services rendered.

37,866. Is a reduction of rent given for services rendered?—It is.

37,867. What services do they give for a reduction of rent?—The tenant has endeavoured to gather the rent.

37,868. So do the crofters?—Not for Sir John Bennett Lawes and Lord Dudley: there is the distinction.

37,869. You speak about agitation, and say you consider 'the greatest curse to any locality is agitation 'where there is no cause for it.' What do you mean by that?—That is plain English, I think.

37,870. What do you refer to?—I would say, trying to mislead people.

37,871. What misleading do you point at?—It is well enough known what agitation is.

37,872. What agitation do you point at?—Any agitation where there is no cause for it.

37,873. And do you think anything can occur without a cause?—Many people try it, at all events.

37,874. I think there must be a cause for anything: is not that so?—No, I don't think so.

37,875. It is generally held that there can be no effect without a cause: however, you may be a greater philosopher than any that has yet appeared. One of the results of this great agitation, you say, is that it 'drives capital and ability out of a locality.' It has not driven you out yet: you consider yourself able and a man of capital, and you still remain in the place: is that not so?—(*No answer.*)

37,876. Whom has it driven out?—Lots.

37,877. You remain, with all your ability and capital?—Lots have been driven out that could not put up with it.

37,878. Who have been driven out?—I could give you plenty, but you don't know them at all.

37,879. That is the very reason why I ask the question?—There is any amount of farmers who were in the north, who would not be bothered with the agitation and that, and who left the north, and have taken land where they can cultivate it and where they are glad to be seen. They are men that you know nothing about.

37,880. Will you give us information yourself?—I don't require to give you information; I make that statement.

37,881. You came here voluntarily to give us information, and I should like to know what weight to attach to this statement of yours as to the driving away of capital from the Highlands?—That is the statement that I make.

37,882. You just leave it there, on your word simply?—Yes.

37,883. You also say that what you object to is that strangers do not know local circumstances; what is the meaning we are to attach to that?—I explain it, as you will see if you read on.

37,884. 'Strangers do not know local circumstances, 'such as climate, distances from markets, and ability to 'realise the subject under those and other circum-'stances'?—Yes.

37,885. Does that mean that the people who are applying for land are strangers and do not know the climate?—Applying for land? I did not speak of those. I say strangers who come in and talk about it,—not practical men. Even strange farmers, those from a distance, would know no more about a farm in a locality. I hold that if you remove a farmer, even the most practical farmer, a hundred miles from his farm, he knows nothing about it.

37,886. Yes, but the people who are applying for land, and who say they think it would be a good thing for them to get land, and that they could profitably occupy it,—they are not strangers?—I do not apply it to them.

37,887. You did not refer to those who are now asking for land?—I refer to strangers that come in and give an opinion, such as the travelling public.

37,888. I don't know what we have to do with these at all. We have to deal with those who are applying for land: these are not strangers?—I would answer the question by giving an instance. What do you know about farming in Skye?

37,889. Mr Willison, I am not here to be catechised: I would be quite willing to take any information from you, but, in the meantime, I do not want to submit to any catechism from you. You make another extraordinary statement here: 'I think 'anyone would be a fool to have land on the terms of 'the Crofter or Holdings Act': why so?—Because I understand that if the land is to be acquired it must be by arbitration, and at market value.

37,890. Would not that be a very fair thing?—I know for a fact that there is a third or, at least, a fourth of Scotland for sale, if it could be bought; and we find the reason in agitation. That is what agitation is: that is how it drives capital out.

37,891. Do you know the terms of the Crofters Act? Do you know under what terms they hold land under the Crofters Act?—I don't know further than this,—my information is that, if taken by compulsion, it is a matter of arbitration.

37,892. They don't take land by compulsion under the Crofters Act, except for extension of holdings. Don't you think that the terms of the Crofters Act are very favourable terms?—Taking land for the Crofters Act,—that is what I say.

37,893. Don't you think the terms of the Crofters Act are very fair to the tenant?—I refer to the extension of holdings; that is what I understand.

37,894. You refer to the extension of holdings under the Crofters Act?—Yes.

37,895. Do you think then that the terms upon which they get such land are unfair to the crofters?—I say I think they would be fools if they would take it.

37,896. If they would take it from the Commission?—If they would take it by extension of holdings, if they have to pay according to arbitration,—if the land has to be acquired by arbitration.

37,897. Don't you know the terms of the Crofters Act are fixity of tenure and fair rent? Why should a man be a fool to accept the land under these conditions?—I don't refer to present crofts at all, but to the extension of crofts. That is my experience.

37,898. I suppose this is your idea; you speak of extending the terms of the Crofters Act to other people, and I ask you are not these terms very favourable—more favourable than the terms upon which farmers now hold their land,—namely, fixity of tenure, compensation for improvements, and fair rent?—I refer to extension.

37,899. What is there that is foolish about these terms?—I think it is very foolish; I would not take an extension, which is by arbitration I understand.

37,900. I suppose you came here to give your assistance, Mr Willison, and to show us what land there is that could be suitably utilised for small holdings; have you pointed out any land at all that would be suitable for small holdings?—I have offered land.

37,901. But you came here some distance to give us your assistance, presumably; and the assistance we want is this: to show us land that would be profitably occupied by small holders. Have you shown us or pointed to any such land?—Lord Breadalbane has offered land down in our district. I have not inspected land for that purpose.

37,902. My business is to insist upon having an answer to my question, or I will stop the examination altogether. Have you in this statement pointed out any lands that could be profitably occupied by small holders?—I have not pointed out, because——

37,903. So that you have not come here to give us this assistance at all?—I came here to give you the experience of my place and my locality connected with Breadalbane, and I think it is embraced in that paper. I say that Lord Breadalbane——

37,904. Never mind that; I want an answer please?—Allow me, I will answer in my own way, and not have any words put in my mouth.

37,905. I refuse to accept any insinuation of that kind,—that I put words into your mouth.—(*Mr Gordon.*—Mr Willison wrote a letter as to the conditions upon which he was to give evidence.)

37,906. I take it that in this statement you have not pointed out to us any land that could be profitably occupied by small holders; is that not so?—(*No answer.*)

37,907. That is a very simple question. I ask you if you have pointed out, in this statement, any land that could be profitably occupied?—If you read the paper you will see the assistance I give.

37,908. So there is no assistance to us in finding out land that could be profitably occupied by small holders?—I am not paid for inspection.

37,909. You state here the reason why you come,—it is 'to finally settle the misleading representations 'that have been scattered abroad'?—Yes.

37,910. 'Through the local press, and otherwise, by 'agitators': that is a very big order?—I daresay it is, but it is what is meant.

37,911. Now what 'misleading representations' do you think you have finally settled here to-day?—I hope to.

37,912. What are they?—The reason that I come is that I hope to do so, and I would not have come if it were not for that.

37,913. But you have come here 'to finally settle 'the misleading representations that have been 'scattered abroad, through the local press, and other-'wise, by agitators'; what are those misleading statements that you have come to finally settle?—That land was wanted in my district. I offered it, and when I was in the district I asked the men, and asked on my own place if they wanted land, and they said no, they did not want land. Some of them stated that their garden was too big for them already. It was all scattered abroad through the local press that down in our way land was wanted.

37,914. You have come here to finally settle that no land is wanted in your district?—Decidedly: I have come here to make that statement before the Commission.

37,915. Were you authorised to make that statement by any body of people in Luing?—I offered land, and Lord Breadalbane——

37,916. Please answer my question directly. It is a very simple question. Were you authorised by any body of people in Luing to make that statement?—Authorised? I never asked them.

37,917. You have never asked them; that is precisely what I wanted to know?—I did ask them at one time.

37,918. I am only taking your own words. Did

Tobermory.

George Willison.

you hold any meeting of the people for the purpose of receiving authority to come here?—Certainly not; I am not a delegate at all.

37,919. Then what are the misleading representations that you are finally settling to-day?—That land is wanted in our locality; that is all; and to state that Lord Breadalbane has offered any amount of land on his estates in Dalmally, and up in the Dalmally district (which is another district), in Luing and in Seil; and I myself offered land in Luing for the purpose you refer to. I offered enough to keep cows, but they would not have it.

37,920. You offered land and they would not take it?—Yes.

37,921. What were the conditions on which you offered it?—At a fair rent. The offer was not entertained.

37,922. Have you any document to show the offer you made?—I made it verbally.

37,923. Was it when you were standing for the County Council?—No, it was nothing of the kind.

37,924. You stood for the County Council, I suppose?—I did.

37,925. And did not get in?—No. I don't see what that has to do with it.

37,926. But the statement was made at that time, I suppose?—It was nothing of the kind. That is putting words into my mouth.

37,927. You hold a great part of the island of Luing; and you take it upon yourself to come here to finally settle that the people do not want land; is that the purpose for which you have come?—To give my experience; and that is my experience.

37,928. How can that have been your experience?—Because I myself offered it, and they refused it.

37,929. You have plenty of land yourself?—Of course I have.

37,930. And you think no other person desires land but you; is that so?—I beg your pardon.

37,931. Is not that the force of what you are saying?—It is nothing of the kind.

37,932. Are there people then wanting land there?—There are not.

37,933. That is the same thing as I said?—They are not wanting land, because they got the opportunity.

37,934. I should have liked to have the document.—What document?

37,935. The offer that was made to them by you of land.—It was made verbally, as I have already told you. I do not see why there should be a document attached to every matter that is taken up, not necessarily.

37,936. In what way did you make it known to them?—Verbally.

37,937. How did it come about that you made the offer at all, if they were not wanting land? How did it occur to you to offer it?—It was agitators that were scattering abroad, and trying to make out that the people wanted land: I think, indeed I have no doubt, it came from yourself, a good bit of it too, if I am not mistaken.

37,938. What came from myself?—Statements I was told were delivered in Gaelic by you on the island of Luing. You made a statement; there was a report made by Sir D. H. Macfarlane, and it is almost the only letter that I replied to. He said at Toberonochy that there were hundreds of people and hundreds of children there, who could not get a drop of milk, through the land being held by one extensive tenant, and that it was a shame. Well, I made out a statement and read the reply, and I made out that, as I said to the Chairman, there were no less than thirty dairy cows kept solely for the purpose of supplying the people with milk; so that you see, Mr Maccallum, the large tenants are not so inconsiderate of the wants of the people.

37,939. So you say.—We are not so inconsiderate, we have hearts and heads as good as anybody.

37,940. When a thing is not said, why, you need not deny it, Mr Willison. I don't think any person would say that you are without a head. However, that is not the point. You say I am responsible for some things that have been said. Let me assure you that I have no responsibility at all in regard to anything that may have been written about your farm or about yourself, and you may rest assured that any such suspicion is altogether groundless.—It was stated to me and corroborated by several who were at the meeting.

37,941. Then you conclude 'we should all be very 'thankful that we get sportsmen to spend such sums of 'money amongst us. In that respect we are the envy 'of many a nation.' Do you think that we are the envy of other nations because the land is devoted to sport?—I think we are the envy of nations in respect of the waste land that I referred to. I know plenty of land in the west and north islands that, with wool at the price, and with mutton and beef and grain at the price, is utterly unsuited for growing crops; it would be ruinous. I say that, taking those things into account, we should be very thankful that we get sporting tenants,—I don't care where they come from,—who promote the circulation of money. My opinion is that I would receive them with open arms. If the subject thus used is not suitable for profitable realisation in any other way, I consider they are great benefactors towards us.

37,942. As to the farm that you occupy, you say that a great deal has been spent upon the steading. Can you give us any idea of the sum of money so spent?—Not exactly; I have heard it roughly estimated.

37,943. I suppose you can give us it roundly?—About £7000.

37,944. What is the rent of the whole farm, including the steading?—£700; but the steading is now forty-three years old; and it has to be kept in view that for nineteen years I paid a rent of £1160.

37,945. Did you ever hear of such a sum as that being spent on crofter holdings?—No.

37,946. *Mr Munro.*—Could you tell us, in a few words, what special object you had in view in coming here to-day?—I have stated it there,—to give you my opinion and my experience of crofting, and to show you that I thought it surely required both capital and education and perseverance to make a successful farmer.

37,947. You are aware, no doubt, that the object of this Commission is to ascertain what land there is available for profitable cultivation by crofters or other small tenants?—I am.

37,948. Then have you to-day furnished us with any evidence that would help us in that direction?—I have furnished you with evidence there that I do not think the system is applicable at all, in my experience. So far as supplementing my statement, I think that the holdings would either require to be sufficiently large to occupy the whole time of the family, and their whole work; but I doubt if the parties have the capital to stock the enlarged holdings. Our produce has fallen fearfully low; that accounts for the destitution that has overtaken not only crofters but farmers, and all owing to our importations. It is the low values.

37,949. I presume you are prepared to admit that the produce of a croft is not less in value proportionally than the produce of a big farm, and therefore the big farms and the small farms are in precisely the same position?—If they are farmed under the same conditions. If I had a farm that it required £100 to stock, I would like to have at least £50 of spare cash, after paying my rent, to be able to improve, to be able to farm the land well. I may give you the case of a young friend of mine in Berwickshire, where I went in order to value a farm. He thought it was in first-rate order; he thought it was all right, but he was not practical. I found it vegetably poor, poor in manure, though a fine farm. He said 'well, what do you think of the farm.' I said, 'well, if 'you had £2000 to put out on it to bring it into fair 'order, and spend that amount, in four or five years you will have a nice sort of farm; but you will never have 'anything at all unless you expend the money at first,—'you will never get a return, and you will never have 'the farm in good condition.' My father's rule was that

when we had made money we spent it on the farm; we never took it out of the farm. That is what we call well-doing, frugal; and you will be well off so long as you cultivate that.

37,950. Now I don't wish to put any restraint upon you, but might I suggest that you could without disadvantage answer the questions a little more briefly. I do not make this suggestion in any offensive spirit. Your evidence here to-day, so far as I have been able to interpret it, goes in the direction of showing that the small farm system ought not to be encouraged. Am I right in so thinking?—No, I did not say the small farm system; I said my experience of crofters.

37,951. You have told us that crofters cannot live in crofts?—That is my experience.

37,952. Are you not aware that, at this moment, there are thousands of crofters in Scotland?—I am aware, but I have had no experience of successful crofters.

37,953. How do they live?—They manage to exist, I daresay.

37,954. Well, take your own definition of it as a bare existence. Does it not follow that, if they can manage to exist on the present miserably-sized crofts, they might be comfortable if they got an addition of land?—If they got a sufficient size, and if they were able to stock it.

37,955. What would you consider a sufficient size?—It depends on the land.

37,956. Take an average croft in Argyllshire?—I would say they could not live on less than a £50 holding.

37,957. How do they manage to live on these crofts on less than £30 rent?—I don't know.

37,958. Have you any idea of the precise number of crofters in the counties embraced by the Crofters Act?—No, I have no idea, but I have taken a turn round all over the north.

37,959. Would you be surprised to hear that there are no less than 25,000 crofters in the district embraced by the Crofters Act alone?—Nothing would surprise me.

37,960. Now, do you mean seriously to tell us that these 25,000 crofters, or a large proportion of them, do not manage to earn a fair livelihood?—Not on crofting alone.

37,961. What do they earn it upon?—I suppose some of them fish, and others follow other occupations, such as carting; and there are tradesmen and merchants.

37,962. But big farmers occasionally do something to supplement their income, do they not?—Certainly.

37,963. You have told us yourself that you are a valuator as well as a farmer?—Yes.

37,964. I think you said that you farm yourself, or for others, no fewer than six different farms?—I do.

37,965. Would you like to add to that number?—No; I can give you the reason if it is of any interest.

37,966. There is not the slightest occasion to give the reason?—It was death that made me farm that number.

37,967. Have you ever made any calculation as to the number of families displaced in order to make way for your six farms?—There is no other farm on which I ever heard of any displacement.

37,968. Were the others always large farms?—Always large farms. I have one in the south of Ayrshire, and another in Lanarkshire, two in Perthshire, Acharn, Killin, and Kingcorth, as well as one near Crieff, and I never heard of a crofter being in any one of them: it was never known. That is why I referred to Luing in particular.

37,969. Have you never heard it stated that any of these farms were actually improved or taken in by crofters, who were subsequently removed from these farms?—Never.

37,970. But, on the farm of Luing which you now occupy, you yourself, I think, admitted that there were at one time 26 tenants?—I stated,—did not admit.

37,971. A statement is surely equal to an admission: you gave us the information, at all events?—I made a statement.

37,972. What was the condition of these twenty-six families before they were removed from Luing?—I don't know beyond what I have given in the statement. An old friend of mine said that my work-people were better off than they were then.

37,973. But that is a matter of opinion?—Oh well, that is a fact.

37,974. What time were they removed from Luing?—It would be somewhere before 1852, as that is the date of the steading. But they were not removed in a body.

37,975. Were they removed to make room for you?—I was not in existence then. It was Lord Breadalbane's model farm, and I thought you would have known what a model farm was. We only took it on the death of the Marquis.

37,976. We have come here to-day to get information from gentlemen of your superior intelligence, and, of course, you need not be surprised if we occasionally manifest some little ignorance on this very important question. You have told us that you yourself received a very superior education?—I said so.

37,977. And that, no doubt, forms a very valuable asset to any man. Now, was one of your objects in mentioning about this superior education you had received, to impress us of the proper weight to be given to your evidence here to-day?—Decidedly; that follows in all evidence that we give. I mentioned that as a pre-oration to my experience.

37,978. You consider that we should attach very considerable weight to your evidence on account of your experience?—On other occasions I get five guineas a day but, on this occasion, I am sorry to say there is nothing of the kind.

37,979. You rather seemed to deprecate the idea of crofters supplementing their income by any other occupation?—Certainly not.

37,980. But you said that they could not live unless they had that?—Yes.

37,981. And I suppose it is something of the same nature that takes you to earning five guineas a day at valuator's work?—Certainly.

37,982. So that the big farmers, as well as the crofters, have occasionally to resort to supplementary sources of income?—I answered that question already.

37,983. You mentioned, I think, that there was considerable difficulty in getting workers for farms as compared with twenty years ago?—Yes.

37,984. To what do you attribute that difficulty?—To the influx to towns: the young people seem to prefer being clerks and housemaids.

37,985. What caused the efflux of the rural population from the country to the towns?—They preferred being housemaids and clerks to being dairymaids and farmworkers. They have lost all their frugal habits; that is our experience.

37,986. Is it not a fact that it was entirely owing to the evictions which have taken place in the country that there is a scarcity of farm labour at this moment?—That is not my experience at all.

37,987. Crofters have come here to-day and have told us that their great object was to obtain access to the land, and that if they got that wish gratified on fair terms they would be in a position of comfort. You have heard that statement made here to-day?—Yes.

37,988. I think you will freely allow that these men are pretty fair judges of their own interest?—Decidedly.

37,988*a*. Then how do you reconcile that with the statement you have made that a crofter cannot exist on his croft?—By crofting alone. I could do with a little money too if I was hard up: that is what I mean.

37,989. Now, in talking of the depreciation of farm produce at the present time, as compared with what it was a good many years ago, you gave us an instance of the low price at which Russian barley could be bought, and the deduction you made from that was that the people of this country could not afford to grow barley?—The deduction I made there was that if you can buy an article under the cost of production, he is a fool who goes and grows it.

37,990. You told us that the cost of the Russian barley to you is £3, 12s. 6d.?—Yes.

37,991. Are you not aware that at this moment the price of good Scotch barley is nearly double that?—I daresay it may be.

37,992. Therefore your comparison is valueless?—Not at all.

37,993. Is that not so?—It was with reference to the Chairman's remarks about growing feeding stuffs for stock-raising. I am not a barley grower at all; I am not a barley farmer in this district, and the district as to which I gave evidence is decidedly a superior stock-raising district, if you know your business, but it is not a district for barley, such, for example, as the Lothians.

37,994. But you know perfectly well that barley is not raised in Scotland for feeding purposes?—I have bought this last year home-grown barley for feeding purposes, and many a year.

37,995. Then might I ask you what you paid for the home barley for feeding purposes?—Well, it was perhaps a little more, but I am certainly not aware that your information as to home barley being worth £8 a ton just now is correct.

37,996. I did not say that; I said nearly double.—Well, it costs me £4 a ton.

37,997. It is worth now, as I happen to know, about £7 a ton, good sound Scotch barley, so that your comparison between the foreign barley and home-grown barley does not stand good.—But I have bought Scotch barley many a time at £4 and £4, 10s.

37,998. You have spoken rather severely of a class of men called agitators. Now, could you come to a close definition of that word 'agitator'; what do you mean by an agitator?—I was asked that question already by Mr Maccallum.

37,999. I did not pick up your answer then?—I said people that go and stir up strife, these are agitators; who mislead, and do not strictly stick to the truth.

38,000. Is it not occasionally a good thing to have strife, if the object is good?—The truth: I say 'if there 'is no cause;' that is my statement.

38,001. Now, we have seen that in this country immense areas of land have been cleared of the population, and the people have been sent away to foreign lands without a single thought or care as to their future well-being or prosperity. Do you consider that agitation was not justifiable under such circumstances?—I am not aware of that.

38,002. You are not aware that this country has been cleared to make room for large sheep farms and deer-forests?—No; I have heard it stated, but I am not aware of it.

38,003. You are a gentleman of superior education; surely you ought to know that; it is information that is open to anybody?—I don't think I am a gentleman of superior education; I got the opportunities of a good education, but I never said so. I have told you the opportunities I got of an education; and I aspire to be a gentleman.

38,004. We do not always profit by our opportunities?—I only stated the opportunities I had had.

38,005. Now, referring again to this question of agitation; you are perfectly sensible of the fact that there is a strong desire on the part of the crofters to be reinstated in the land. Now, what remedy do you propose under the circumstances?—I don't think it is a general desire: I think all the best doing crofters care nothing about it. They are quite well off already, and they do not want to be interfered with at all.

38,006. Then the men who came here to-day and expressed a strong desire for land——I could get a few out of any community.

38,007. Stop till I put my question. You think that the men who came here to-day and expressed a strong desire to get access to the land were not in earnest?—I inferred that there were a great many who were not going to work the land when they got it.

38,008. What makes you come to that conclusion?—Because I think thay have been told in a great many cases that they are going to get the land for nothing.

38,009. Who told them that?—I have heard it over and over again.

38,010. Have you ever heard it upon good authority? —Yes, upon very good authority. That is a sample of what I call agitation.

38,011. What good would the land do them?—If they got it for nothing, you know, they could sell it again.

38,012. Have you ever yet heard of a tenant in Scotland selling that which did not belong to him? How could a tenant sell a farm?—If the statement is that they are going to get the land for nothing, as I have heard stated over and over, and been told it by the men themselves.

38,013. Have you ever heard a foolish statement of that sort from any responsible authority?—I have: responsible and very decent men too.

38,014. I suppose I might ask, could you give the names of any of your authorities?—Yes, lots of them; my own men.

38,015. Nobody outside your own employment?—Oh yes, plenty.

38,016. Who?—You would not be any better off supposing you heard the name.

38,017. No, that is quite likely: but still we want to hear who they are?—Oh, they are responsible parties, very respectable men.—(*Mr Gordon.*—You decline to give their names?—Yes,—that is enough.)

38,018. You seem to deprecate the idea of crofters being helped with seed, &c., in times of distress?—I do not deprecate it at all; that is putting words in my mouth. I say they would be far better if they were in a position not to require such assistance.

38,019. No doubt, and so would farmers be better off if they were in a position not to require reduction of their rents?—But I do not see the analogy at all. I answered that question, which is simply a repetition of Mr Maccallum's.

38,020. What was your object in mentioning the fact that crofters sometimes got donations of seed, &c.?—To give you gentlemen my experience of the crofting that had come under my notice.

38,021. But you must have had some object in giving us that statement?—That was the object.

38,022. Then, Mr Willison, you have no remedy to suggest as to what is best to be done with those crofters who are now asking for more land?—If they can get sufficient means, I would give them sufficiently large holdings. I say that small holdings will not pay, and it is not worth while trying to make them pay. The crofters' stirks, for instance, I have seen sold at ruinous prices; I cannot understand how they could be reared at all. I have assisted to buy them at Falkirk tryst, actually when they were a year and a half old, at a couple of pounds each, scarcely the price of a wedder. How could cattle brought up in that way pay? Supposing they had the land for nothing, they could not make that pay.

38,023. You have mentioned some advantages which the country derives from the planting of deer forests; now, could you enumerate some of these advantages?—I answered that: I said the system created a large circulation of capital, and it realised a subject that was not worth a copper for anything else.

38,024. That is a perfectly fair answer to my question?—That is what I said before, and what I say in my statement.

38,025. Would you consider it an advantage that these deer forests should be indefinitely extended in the Highlands of Scotland?—I do not think they should be indefinitely extended. The difference is this: where you have sound land for the realisation of stock, and where it can be done to a profit, they should not be extended; but there is land that we have a large experience of, which was worth a rent at one time, but which is now in a state we call sickly; there is a heavy mortality among the sheep, and it even effects cattle when they are young, such as trembling. That land is, I hold, of the nature I refer to.

38,026. Is it not the case that in order to form these deer forests a considerable number of farmers, big and little, have been evicted?—I do not know: that has not come under my experience.

Tobermory. George Willison.

38,027. Have you never heard it stated that sheep farmers, for example, were removed to make way for deer forests?—No.

38,028. You never heard that stated?—I may have heard it stated, but I did not know an instance.

38,029. How was the land occupied before it was converted into deer forests?—It would be occupied by people.

38,030. What were the people doing upon the land?—They were living.

38,031. Living on what?—They were existing.

38,032. What were they existing upon?—They were like an old man in the south, to whom a fellow came and said 'Hey, Davie, how are you living?' 'Do you ca' it *living?*' he says, 'I ca' it *breathing.*' There are many ways of living; and I should fancy these people would be in misery when a bad season came: in fact, I have it on the best authority that that is the case.

38,033. Have you ever heard of the evictions that have taken place in Strathglass and Strathconon to make room for the deer forests there?—I have heard of them.

38,034. You told us before that you never heard of them?—I beg your pardon; I said I had heard of them, but had no experience of them. You are again putting words into my mouth.

38,035. You have heard it said that these deer forests were once occupied by farmers, and that they were turned out in order to make room for the deer?—I have, but I have no experience of it.

38,036. You will admit then that these farmers did some good in producing food for the country, in the way of rearing of sheep for instance?—The fault that we have to find is that there is far too much food; we cannot get a good price for the food we rear. The market is glutted with everything: it is full of produce. So much of the mutton consumed in this country is imported from abroad that sheep here sell at ruinous prices.

38,037. Do you think it a positive disadvantage to the country that there are sheep farmers who produce food at this moment for the people of this country?—No, I do not think so.

38,038. Does it not add materially to the wealth of the country?—The production of anything?

38,039. The production of mutton or wool?—The production of anything, but not to a great extent: it is not a big affair, our Scotch wool, compared with our importation.

38,040. We must not despise these little things?—I wish the price was about 50 per cent. above what it is, so that crofters could live, and we could live, and there would be no agricultural destitution. That is the cause of the distress.

38,041. But you admit that the production of mutton and wool does add something to the wealth of the country?—Oh yes, the production of anything.

38,042. Can you point out anything in connection with a deer forest that adds to the wealth of a country?—The circulation of money; it causes trade, and thus adds to the material wealth of the country.

38,043. Do you mean seriously to say that the circulation of money adds to the wealth of a country?—Well, it helps it at any rate; if you alter the location of money, it makes one district richer, and another poorer.

38,044. But does it add anything to the wealth of the country?—(No answer.)

38,045. *Mr Gordon.*—We all know, those who are engaged in agriculture, of the great fall within the last few years in the price of the staple commodities of beef, mutton, corn, flour, &c. Do you admit that?—Yes.

38,046. While that is so, is it not a fact that another species of produce (with which, as far as I understand, you are not connected), viz., dairy farming, is improving? The price of dairy produce has rather risen during the last five years?—I am a dairy farmer.

38,047. Well, do you know that for a fact,—that the price of butter and cheese has risen materially within the last five years?—I am a cheese-maker but not a butter-maker; and our cheese is very low in price.

Tobermory. George Willison.

38,048. But you have seen it lower?—Only once or twice.

38,049. For a good many years it was not selling above 50s.?—It was at ruinous prices; but we don't sell our Dunlops very much above that.

38,050. Is it not worth 56s. to 60s. now?—No; from 52s. to 56s.

38,051. Our information the other day was to the effect that it was at 58s.?—Perhaps your informants had been a little vain of their stuff.

38,052. Perhaps they make better cheese than you do?—There is no doubt of that; you are quite right there.

38,053. My question is, while beef and mutton and flour or wheat have fallen in the market, has there not been a material increase in the value of dairy produce?—Of butter, but not of cheese.

38,054. We have seen cheese lower?—Only once, for two years. I have seen them at 38s., which is the lowest I have ever known, and that was only for two years, at a crisis.

38,055. You have seen it at 46s. to 50s.?—No, they rose up to their present value. But butter, of course, has increased very much in price.

38,056. Is the ground you farm in Luing not capable of being converted into a dairy farm?—No.

38,057. Why not?—Because it won't make cheese.

38,058. I don't care, so long as it makes butter. My idea is that it would make an excellent dairy farm?—No, it won't make cheese, at all events.

38,059. And if you could put back the people to that farm, the twenty-six families who would occupy the land as small dairy-farmers, and find profitable occupation for the family as they grow up, would not that be an improved condition?—They don't milk now, and it was never a dairy farm.

38,060. But, Mr Willison, we perhaps could not learn to milk now, we are getting too old; but the young folks could learn?—They are not in the country.

38,061. But we could bring them into the country?—Yes, you could.

38,062. If you could bring them in, do you think that would be an improvement?—Yes.

38,063. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—There is one matter you have referred to, upon which I agree with you, and that is the difficulty of getting farm workers, and especially female workers. Now, don't you think there would be one advantage in having small holdings, inasmuch as girls would be reared and trained to farm work? Would not small holdings be a good training school for girls to become dairy-maids?—That is what I said in my statement,—that they won't learn, they prefer to go to towns. They don't want to be dairy-maids.

38,064. But does not that arise from their parents not having cows to be milked?—Not at all.

38,065. Do you say that the crofters' daughters do not milk their cows?—At Luing. I have no experience of crofters in general; it is that district I am giving my evidence about.

38,066. I wish to put it to you, don't you think these crofts would be a good training for farm-servants and for dairy-maids?—I have given you my experience, that they don't want to be dairy-maids.

38,067. With regard to the terms of the Crofters Act, which you think are of such a nature that a man would be a fool to take land under them, don't you know from your experience of crofters that these terms have led to there being very greatly improved dwellings put up?—I am not aware.

38,068. You are not aware of improved dwellings being put up?—No.

38,069. Were you ever in Tiree?—No.

38,070. Were you ever in Skye?—No.

38,071. So your experience of crofters has been pretty limited?—Yes.

38,072. Then there is just another thing that I would wish you to consider, and I think possibly you may see your way to withdraw it; and that is with

Tobermory. George Willison.

regard to the charge which you made against the people who came before this Commission, saying that they would like to get land. You insinuated that the reason they came was that they thought they would get land for nothing, and that they intended then to sell it?—No: I said they had been told so. I said before I read my statement that I did not refer to those people a bit. I gave you my experience: I said they had been told that in my district.

38,073. Just wait. Did you not speak of their selling the land after they got it?—I did: they were told that.

38,074. Should you not now clear the crofters of any such insinuation? You are at perfect liberty to do so or not. Would you really not withdraw such an unfounded insinuation on the Highlanders?—Unfounded insinuation? I gave you my experience of what I have been told.

38,075. You think it is not unfounded?—It is not unfounded. They have been told they were going to get the land for nothing.

38,075*a*. I am very sorry that any man should have such a notion.—You may be sorry or not; I did not say anything of the kind. I did not say that they *would* sell it, but that they *could* sell it. You said I said they *would* sell it.

38,076. But the reason you say so is to account for their coming forward to ask land?—You would think so, if you were getting a thing for nothing.

38,077. The purpose would be to sell it?—I said *could* sell it.

38,078. Then you have great grievances against the agitators, and you did not enumerate very many of them. Can you enumerate any of these?—No.

38,079. It did not go the length of denying your knowledge of Euclid, I suppose?—I fail to see the relevancy of the remark.

38,080. You came here to finally settle misrepresentations that had been scattered abroad, and your knowledge of Euclid is one of the things that you emphasize, as if the agitators had been denying it?—I am not aware of it; I do not see the relevancy of your remarks.

38,081. And they did not deny that you had six farms?—You and I have met on business often, but I don't see the force of this at all. I will cease to be examined,—I, at least, can do that, Mr Chairman: I can refuse to answer any question that is utterly irrelevant.

38,082. Of course you have that in your option; but I will put this to you as a man holding or managing these farms. Do you think now, that one man, however clever he may be, and whatever his knowledge may be, can manage six farms as effectively as six clever men would manage one each?—Certainly not.

38,083. You have not the same personal supervision?—I have foremen.

38,084. You have to trust to servants to a great extent?—Yes.

38,085. Don't you think that farming would be more successfully carried on if the farmer himself were resident, and personally superintended?—I got the farms by death, and I am bound to see the leases out. I have nephews coming up, for whom I am at present managing the farms, and I have wrought five days a week in the railway carriage. It is not work that I court at all; but until the leases are out I cannot give them up. I manage them to the best of my ability, and I do not think there is any call for your statement that I mismanage any of them.

38,086. Mr Willison, allow me to say that I made no such statement.—(*Mr Gordon.*—Mr Maccallum did not make any such statement; he merely put a very plain question.)

38,087. You have admitted all that I intended to get out of you by the question.

38,088. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—The farm you hold in Luing, I understand, was taken up by twenty-six tenants?—I was informed that it was at one time occupied by twenty-six tenants.

38,089. Paying a gross rental of over £700?—Oh yes, they would be paying at that time more than that, but prices have declined very much.

38,090. I am not dealing with the prices just now.—But you are naming a figure, you know.

38,091. Now, do you hold that the present arrangement, whereby you hold the whole of that land in your hands, is better from the public and the national point of view than if the same were occupied by the twenty-six tenants?—I do.

38,092. You say the landlord spent £7000 upon the buildings?—So I understand.

38,093. After these tenants had left?—Yes; I have said all about that; it was the Marquis of Breadalbane's model farm.

38,094. The buildings were erected for the present arrangement?—For the model farm.

38,095. Do you consider 5 per cent. an exorbitant return to the landlord for the capital expended upon buildings?—I have nothing to do with the landlord at all. I stick strictly to my own business, and I took the farm, and still continue it, in the legitimate way of arriving at values,—public competition.

38,096. You are a practical farmer, and I am putting the question to you,—within your knowledge and experience, which must be very extensive,—do you find 5 per cent. a fair average charge as interest upon buildings?—As a landlord, I would think 4 per cent. a fair return.

38,097. Did you find in your experience 5 per cent. the usual rate charged by the landlord?—In my experience we generally get the laird to do it for nothing. We arrange for buildings sufficient for the farm; and, after that, if during the currency of our lease we want anything else, we have to do it ourselves. But different districts have different customs.

38,098. Does the landlord, in making this expenditure, not reckon upon a return for capital expended?—He might reckon without getting it.

38,099. Would you yourself consider 5 per cent. a fair interest to charge in making calculations?—It may be a question of recompensing the landlord. I valued a farm lately, where there was an entire new steading required, and I reported to the proprietor what was necessary. The farm was very much out of order, and I advised the tenant either to bid £100 for it and take it as it was, building a new steading or a new house, or try and come to terms, giving £120 and put it just barely habitable, but not putting it into a thorough state of repair. That is £20 on a nineteen years' lease; so you can count what that is, in capital and interest.

38,100. What would you consider a fair average rate of interest, within the last twenty or thirty years, to charge upon capital expended by the landlord upon implements?—We don't do anything of that sort.

38,101. Well, I will accept five then.—You may accept anything you like.

38,102. And I find by a calculation, giving 5 per cent. upon the £7000, the landlord would be entitled to £350 of interest. You have admitted already that the twenty-six tenants paid over £700 of rent before the expenditure of £7000 was made at all?—The farm could not let without accommodation, and the fact of the buildings having cost £7000 has nothing to do with it. You would require twenty-six houses, twenty-six steadings.

38,103. But they were there before?—They are not there.

38,104. They were there when the tenants were there?—I never saw them. That is what would be required now. The old buildings would be allowed to go down when the steading was built. It was necessary in order to realise the subject that that should be expended. You may say that it is an extravagant building; but I cannot follow your reasoning at all.

38,105. You say you did not see the buildings the twenty-six tenants had. Do you mean the Commission to understand that the twenty-six tenants had no houses?—No, but they would be done: everything is done, you know, in time; we get done ourselves; we are wearing very slowly though.

38,106. You admit that when the twenty-six tenants

were there they had houses and steadings?—I never saw them; I suppose so. I have the same power of supposing as any other body.

38,107. Do you find a difficulty in supposing that they had houses and steadings?—No.

38,108. Do you believe that they had?—Oh, I suppose so.

38,109. That is a great admission, and I am thankful for it. Well then, the benefit to the landlord for the conversion of that area into one large holding, and giving it to you, and spending £7000 upon it is, that he takes from you £350 for the land for which he was getting over £700 from the twenty-six?—That is not the case.

38,110. That is so, I think?—This is not the case.

38,111. Oh, but I have studied Algebra and Euclid: I, too, have a little Euclid?—Dear me, that is only interest: you will get that in a small penny book. There is no education required for that.

38,112. This is the point I am putting. There were twenty-six tenants there before you got this. Well, the twenty-six were removed: they paid the landlord over £700 of rent, and, after their removal, the landlord spent £7000 on buildings for——They were not removed at once.

38,113. For a new arrangement by which the whole of this land, previously occupied by the twenty-six tenants, would be occupied by one?—(*Mr Gordon.* The first man to occupy it was the landlord himself; that must be kept in view.)

38,114. It does not matter: Mr Willison is the man there now; and, taking on my own responsibility 5 per cent. as a fair charge by the landlord upon capital expended upon buildings, I find that the landlord is entitled to £350 in lieu of the expenditure of £7000. Now Mr Willison's gross rent is £700, of which £350, as I say, represents the interest.—(*Mr Gordon.* Yes, but you are forgetting one very important fact: the rent that he paid for nineteen years, after 1852, was £1160; and keeping that rent in view, an expenditure of £7000 on buildings may have been high, but not extravagant. Your strongest case would be that possibly the twenty-six tenants never cost £26 to the landlord, and that they might have been there yet without costing the landlord much. But the sum of £7000 expended on a farm, which brought in a rental of £1160, is not an extravagant outlay to provide all necessary buildings; and a farm without buildings is not a complete farm. Unfortunately, it seems that this big rent, which the witness paid for nineteen years, cannot now be got, and the farm is rented at £700: but keep in view that these houses were built in 1852, and that consequently they are now forty-two years of age: while the life of a house upon a farm is generally supposed to be somewhere between fifty-six and seventy years.)

38,115. Can Mr Willison name any parties outside the boundaries of his own farm who said to him that they expected land for nothing, which they could sell after getting it for nothing? I challenge him to do so.—I never said that. On cross-examination that matter was brought up by Rev. Mr Maccallum, so that is entirely a repetition. I answered that question already, and refuse to answer it again.

38,116. Did Mr Willison not say that parties said to him that land was promised them for nothing which they could sell?—I did not say which they could sell: I said that I have been told that they were *promised* land for nothing.

38,117. Can you name one individual outside the boundaries of your own farm who said that to you?—I could.

38,118. Well, will you do it?—No.

38,119. Can you name a single individual inside the boundaries of your own farm who said that to you?—I don't know if I could: yes, I think I could.

38,120. Would you be good enough to name the individual?—No.

38,121. Can you name any individual who said to the people that they would get land for nothing which they could sell afterwards?—I could.

38,122. Who?—But I won't.

38,123. Do you refer to agitators?—I don't know what that animal is, you know.

38,124. You used the word very extensively to-day in that document?—And I explained it.

38,125. Do you seriously say now before the Royal Commission that you do not know what kind of an animal an agitator is?—I may pass that as a joke.

38,126. Do you know why the Royal Commission is here?—Oh, yes.

38,127. Did you read the remit to the Royal Commission?—No, I did not.

38,128. Do you know it?—I think so.

38,129. Will you say it?—No.

38,130. Will you give the substance of it?—No.

38,131. Can you give the substance of it?—I think I could.

38,132. Did you ever read it?—No, except in the newspapers. I did not read it as a special document.

38,133. But you read it in the newspapers?—Yes.

38,134. Do you know any deer forest in the five Highland Counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness and Argyll,—do you know one single deer forest where there is old arable land?—I know of almost no deer forest except the Blackmount; I don't think I have been in any deer forest at all except passing through them by rail, seeing them at a distance.

38,135. So that your experience of a deer forest as such is confined to passing through deer forests by rail?—Except in the case of the Blackmount.

38,136. Did you travel the Blackmount?—No, I did not travel it, but I know the Blackmount.

38,137. Do you know the ground pretty well?—No, I don't.

38,138. So that, practically, with the exception of the Blackmount, you know nothing of deer forests in the Highlands?—I know it: I have seen the land.

38,139. Name one deer forest you know?—No, I will not.

38,140. You cannot give the name of one?—No, I will not.

38,141. Do you know any large sheep farms in Caithness?—I know them by name only; and I have seen the stock off them.

38,142. You did not see the farms?—No.

38,143. In Sutherland-shire, then?—No.

38,144. In Ross-shire?—No.

38,145. In Inverness-shire?—Yes.

38,146. In Skye?—No, but I know the stock.

38,147. You have not traversed any of the large grazing farms in Inverness?—No.

38,148. Is there any large grazing farm in Inverness that you know personally?—No.

38,149. Is there any large grazing farm in the county of Argyll that you know personally?—Yes.

38,150. Name it.—There is a farm that we hold on a nineteen years' lease,—Succoth, between Tyndrum and Dalmally.

38,151. Is that the only one that you know personally and practically?—Oh no; I know a number in Argyllshire.

38,152. Do you know any in Mull?—Yes, I have been in Mull.

38,153. Do you know any large grazing farm in Mull from personal knowledge?—I have not inspected the whole of it, but I know some. There is a farm of Scuir: I have seen the sheep there, but I have never entered on a personal examination of the farm.

38,154. You know the stock of the farms?—Yes.

38,155. But you don't know the farms themselves?—No.

38,156. So that, practically speaking, although you know the terms of the remit, but won't condescend to give the substance of it, still you have no personal knowledge of the area embraced by the remit?—Oh, I have an idea: I have seen it by the map, you know: I have seen a diagram showing the whole of the deer forests in Scotland. We can get that in any of these guides.

38,157. And your personal knowledge of the area

Tobermory.

George Willison.

embraced within the terms of the remit to the Royal Commission is confined to a map knowledge,—a knowledge from maps and diagrams?—Yes, as to area.

[Adjourned.]

FORTY-FOURTH SITTING.

Acharacle, Ardnamurchan.

ACHARACLE, ARDNAMURCHAN, MAY 22, 1894.

Present:—

George Gordon, Esq. (*acting as Chairman*).
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary*.

Colin Nisbet.

Colin Nisbet, Crofter, Ardtoe (58).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,158. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you appear here as an individual, or were you appointed at any public meeting to appear before us?—I was appointed by the people of the district.

38,159. Was it at a public meeting?—Yes. The following is a resolution passed:—'We, the crofters and 'cottars of this end of Ardnamurchan, held a meeting 'lately at Acharacle to appoint delegates to appear and 'answer questions regarding the big farms and land 'under deer or game in this district which could be 'divided into small holdings, whenever you will have a 'sitting in the district.'

38,160. Do you know any land that is suitable for crofters in your neighbourhood or in this district?—Yes, I know lands where there were crofters formerly.

38,161. And where you think crofters could be replaced?—I think they would be better in these lands than in the lands they now occupy.

38,162. Could you tell us where these lands are? Could you name the former townships?—Gortan-eorna.

38,163. Were there people there formerly?—There were fourteen or fifteen crofters altogether.

38,164. Any other place?—Gortan-fearna, where there were five or six crofters. There are two places on Gortan-eorna, one called Drynan, and the other Innisdubh and Bailard. These places are included in Gortan-eorna, and were occupied by the fourteen or fifteen tenants mentioned.

38,165. Is there any other place you wish to speak of?—Laga and Tarbat on the south side.

38,166. How many crofters were in these places?—There were six—I may say eight—crofters in Laga in my time, and three in Tarbat. There may have been the houses of cottars, or one or two more like that along with them, but these were the crofters.

38,167. Any other place?—I am not aware that there is any other place in this district.

38,168. When were the crofters removed from Gortan-eorna and Gortan-fearna?—I cannot say how long ago.

38,169. Do you remember them being there?—Yes; I was often in and out of their houses.

38,170. What size of crofts had they?—They were not big crofts: the people were crowded into that place at the time the sheep farms were being formed. They were sent from the other end of the country and crowded in there.

38,171. But they had a few acres each?—Each of them had a cow, or two cows, but no sheep.

38,172. *Mr Maccallum.*—Then Gortan-eorna was not an old township at all, was it?—Yes, it was an old township, but there were not so many in it until they were crowded in from these other places.

Acharacle, Ardnamurchan.

Colin Nisbet.

38,173. Can you mention any farm from which they were removed?—Some of them came from Swordale: one Maclachlan, and one Lachlan Macdonald were taken from one of the Swordales to Gortan-eorna.

38,174. Swordale was a better place than that to which they were put, I suppose?—Yes, without any doubt. There are others who were baffled, and sent back and fore. There were crofters in Gortan in my grandfather's time.

38,175. Is there any crofter there now?—There are two.

38,176. Are they sub-tenants?—Yes.

38,177. They have not the benefit of the Crofters Act then?—No.

38,178. What sort of croft have these got?—One of them has a croft somewhat like the other crofts in the district; but the other croft is a small one of the value of £1, and it has no cow at all. I believe the man could have a cow if he were able to buy one.

38,179. How are these crofters employed? Are they employed on the farm?—No, the tacksman does not give them any employment except on rare occasions. They work back and forward wherever they can get work to do.

38,180. Do they engage in fishing?—Yes, in some places, and sometimes in this place itself.

38,181. Is there a good fishing place near them?—Yes, as good as there is in Scotland, or in England or Ireland.

38,182. What fishing is there?—White fish and herring; ling, cod, haddock, turbot, and all that kind, and plenty of salmon, but the salmon belongs to the gentry: the poor crofters are not allowed to finger them.

38,183. Do you know what led to the crofters being removed from Gortan-eorna?—When the landlord himself had Gortan, he brought tenants from other places and crowded it; but when a tacksman came to take Gortan from the landlord, the tacksman said you must clear out.

38,184. Did the proprietor provide other crofts for those that were cleared to make way for the farmer?—He might give a little moss, or a little bit on the edge of the rocks; that is to say, if the crofter received any favour at the hands of the laird; but if not, betake to your heels as quick as you can. That was all in my young days, from thirty to fifty years ago.

38,185. And that was the highest favour they looked for; to get a bit of moss, was it?—Yes; some of them would not be able to take more.

38,186. And was there rent put on that?—Oh yes; there never was any to my knowledge in this country who was not charged rent. The landlord had to get his own rent, and there was one Allan Cameron who lifted the cattle in that district.

38,187. The crofters' cattle?—Yes; the tenants who were in the three Swordales and in a part of Kilmory. Allan Cameron was the ground-officer, and as he was so serviceable to the landlord in doing his business, he got a piece of the estate rent free. He was the only tenant in that part of the country who sat rent free, so far as I know.

38,188. What was done with the cattle that were lifted?—The cattle were sold, and then the landlord got his own from every one. At this time Robertson of Kinlochmoidart was factor to Sir James Riddell, and had the control of the place.

38,189. What places do you refer to on which the cattle were lifted in that way?—The three Swordales and a part of Kilmory.

38,190. Were the cattle put to market by the proprietor himself in that way?—Undoubtedly.

38,191. Can you tell us about what time that happened?—About forty years ago. There are some who know the exact year.

38,192. Where were the cattle sold?—I am not sure whether they were sold at the market here, or whether they were rouped; but they were disposed of in one way or the other.

Acharacle, Ardnamurchan. — Colin Nisbet.

38,193. And the people were put out of the land at that time?—Yes, and they are not back to the place yet; the place is unoccupied by them.

38,194. Where are these people now?—Some in the grave, some in other countries, and some at the edge of the shore, at the other end of the country. Others are on the poor roll.

38,195. Then, when they got a little bit of land as a croft, were houses built for any of them?—No, but they were building houses for themselves as well as they could.

38,196. Is the township of Ardtoe congested?—Yes, there are five of us there; it is divided in three divisions. There is one who has an individual holding at the one end; two joint tenants in the middle, and five of us at the other end.

38,197. I think you said you are a crofter yourself in Ardtoe?—Yes.

38,198. At what rent?—My rent was fixed by the Commissioners at £4, 8s.

38,199. What was it formerly?—£6, 10s.

38,200. What stock do you have?—I have not many at present—a cow and two heifers, and a few sheep.

38,201. How many sheep are you entitled to keep?—I am not sure of the exact number. I think it is from fifteen to twenty: sometimes we have fifteen, and at other times twenty, according as they get on.

38,202. Then do you consider the croft at Ardtoe to be a suitable size?—No.

38,203. What sort of croft would you regard as more suitable?—Ardtoe, if they got a road to it, would maintain two tenants intead of five.

38,204. Then are some of them desirous of leaving Ardtoe and getting larger crofts elsewhere?—There is one here, at all events, who would like to leave and get a croft elsewhere.

38,205. That is yourself, I suppose?—Yes. I think I have been long enough a mere horse.

38,206. You mean by that, that you have to cultivate a place without a plough? Is it spade work?—All my ploughing is done with a spade; and everything that I take to the house must be carried on my back.

38,207. Do you think if you got a larger croft in some of the farms we are speaking of, you would be able to stock it?—No, not at the beginning.

38,208. Were you expecting then to get assistance?—No, unless the kingdom or the justice of the world would give me help, from whom was I to get help?

38,209. But then, supposing you would not get assistance from Government, would you be able yourself to undertake a croft of that kind?—If I got a place at a low rent I think I would do. The rent would certainly require to be low at first, as the place is coarse and unbroken.

38,210. But if you got it at a fair rent, would you undertake to use it profitably for yourself?—Undoubtedly I would.

38,211. You think you would be able to pay a fair rent if the land were made available for such as you?—I think so.

38,212. Have you considered the matter seriously?—Yes: at present I have only a small piece of ground, and must go off elsewhere to earn what will maintain me: my present holding will not maintain me.

38,213. And you think it would be more profitable if you had as much land as would take up your whole time?—Just so.

38,214. But, I suppose, you must have considered also that you would have to provide houses?—That would not be easy.

38,215. But you could not take up the land otherwise, could you?—No poor man can build houses on a bare place without some help.

38,216. Did not you tell me that the crofters put up houses on the bits of moss and rocky ground that were given them?—Yes, they did that, but the little they had they expended in erecting these houses.

38,217. You think then that it would be advantageous for them to get money from Government at interest?—I think a man would get on more quickly with that.

38,218. You have not, I suppose, been looking to get it without paying it back?—No, I never expected that.

38,219. And do you think there would be any risk in advancing money to crofters for putting them back upon the land in that way?—If the crofter had enough extent of ground, how could the money be lost, seeing he would be stocking the ground with it?

38,220. Then, do you think the crofters could pay as high a rent as is now being paid by the farmers?—I think the crofters could pay a higher rent that some of the larger farmers now pay.

38,221. Are the farmers getting large reductions in this neighbourhood?—Yes, large reductions; is not the rent of Gortan-eorna itself very low?

38,222. Can you tell me what reduction has been made there?—I know that at one time the rent of Gortan-eorna was £400, between rent and taxes.

38,223. And what is the present rent?—I am told it is now £125 or £130, but that is hearsay, so far as I am concerned.—(*The Secretary.* I think there has been some re-arrangement of these farms. Gortan-fearna and Achateny were advertised. Achateny is down in the valuation roll at £500, and I think that also includes Faskadale. Gortan-eorna appears in the valuation roll as let to Donald Cameron, at a rent of £125.)

38,224. Did you say it was £400 at one time?—Yes, between rent and taxes.

38,225. Has any part been taken from the farm?—No.

38,226. Have the large farmers got a greater reduction in their rent than the crofters have got?—Yes. The crofter never got any reduction till now, and they are not reduced now so much as the big farmers are reduced. For a year or two, before the Crofters Commission came here, they got a reduction of a few shillings.

38,227. The proprietor has to give a larger reduction to his big tenants than the Crofters Commission has given to the crofters?—We think that the Commissioners have not reduced the rents of the small holdings to the level of the rents of the big holdings.

38,228. But you have not quite answered the question as to the reduction,—whether the large tenants have got a greater reduction than the crofters?—I cannot say what reductions they got, except as to Gortan-eorna. I know they all got reductions, but I don't know how much; and I know that the crofters on the estate have not received a proportional reduction.

38,229. *Mr Munro.*—Did it ever occur to you to ask the landlord if he was willing to give you more land?—No, there is no land in our immediate neighbourhood which we could get, unless we were to remove, some of us, from Ardtoe, and settle down elsewhere.

38,230. Do you think that if you got access to some of these farms, and got them broken up, you could cultivate them as crofts with profit and advantage to yourselves?—I think we would.

38,231. And pay a fair rent?—Undoubtedly.

38,232. If such a farm were broken up, would a sufficient number of crofters be found to take the entire farm, good and bad land together, and divide it into lots?—I think so; more tenants could be got than would be required to occupy one big farm.

38,233. I notice that you are a fisherman. Now, if you got a croft of sufficient size, would you be disposed to give up the fishing altogether, or would you combine fishing and crofting?—I would give up fishing altogether, if I got enough land.

38,234. You have yourself raised the difficulty regarding the building of a house, and the stocking of an enlarged holding. How would you get over the difficulty?—I could not do without some help; but if I got a little help I would, after a year or two, be able to repay a part of that.

38,235. How do relations stand between you and Mr Dalgleish as landlord; is he generally considerate of the interests of his smaller tenants, the crofters?—Our landlord does not take anything to do with us at present.

38,236. I suppose he leaves it all to his factor?—

Acharacle, Ardnamurchan. Colin Nisbet.

Those who have got under the Commission, he takes nothing to do with, except the taking of the rent; but those who hold from himself direct, he deals with as he thinks proper.

38,237. Are his dealings with these tenants generally of a kindly nature, or otherwise?—We do not take much notice; he does not take anything to do with us.

38,238. *Mr Gordon.*—Does the pasture of Ardtoe extend back as far as the Newton of Ardtoe?—No, not quite, not our share of it.

38,239. How far back to the eastward does it go?—The two joint tenants in the middle march with the Newton of Ardtoe. The march of Ardtoe goes in a straight line to Loch Moidart.

John Cameron.

JOHN CAMERON, Gortan-fearna (78).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,240. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a sub-tenant?—Yes, paying rent to Mr Coulthart.

38,241. Are you anxious to get a croft yourself?—Yes.

38,242. Are there more sub-tenants near Gortan-fearna?—Yes.

38,243. Is there any land near your house that you could get?—Yes, the tacksman has land there.

38,244. Is your house near the tacksman's house?—It is not far from it.

38,245. Is there any other land in your neighbourhood, except on the farm of Gortan-fearna, that you could get for a croft?—There is Gortan-eorna on this side of it.

38,246. Is there much arable land, or land that could be made arable, on the farm of Gortan-eorna?—There is not much land that could be ploughed; the soil is not very good.

38,247. Is there any other land that would be suitable for a crofting township?—There is Swordale.

38,248. Did you hear the evidence that Mr Nisbet gave?—No, I am a little hard of hearing.

38,249. Is there anything else you would like to tell us from your own knowledge?—They were changing the crofts and shifting the crofters back and fore. If they were settled for a year here, they would transfer them to some other place, and shift them this way and that.

38,250. Would they shift you that way after you had built a house?—Yes; I was at one time in a croft, and I was shifted from that and sent to another one, and then to another, and after that I came to the croft I am in now.

38,251. Have you some land at present?—I have that croft.

38,252. Can you keep a cow?—I have two cows on it.

38,253. Do you only pay £1 of rent?—£3. Before the Crofters Commission came I was paying £6.

38,254. You are in the County Valuation Roll as a tenant valued at £1; but that must be for your house only?—I don't know.

38,255. What size of a croft would you like?—If I got what would keep four to six cows, that would do.

38,256. Would you manage to stock a croft of that size yourself?—Yes.

38,257. I suppose you must get help at present from your family?—The people are so poor in the place where I live, that every penny the members of their families earn is sent to the parents to maintain them.

38,258. At present you depend upon your families for support?—Yes.

38,259. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—How many houses, besides the tenants, are on that farm?—Five, in addition to mine. They reside at Carsaid, and are sub-tenants.

38,260. Have they all got land?—Small crofts, but they are not good.

38,261. And is it their desire to get large holdings?—Undoubtedly.

38,262. Did they all get a reduction as well as you?—Yes.

38,263. You were reduced, I think, from £6 to £3?—Yes. Acharacle. Ardnamurchan.

38,264. You said you were several times removed from your croft: where was your first croft?—It was not far from the strath of Gortan, the tacksman's house. John Cameron.

38,265. Is that Gortan-fearna?—Yes.

38,266. How did you leave that one?—I was obliged to leave by the order of the tacksman; and I then went to a house about two miles further away.

38,267. Did the same tacksman give you that house?—No.

38,268. From whom then did you get it?—It was one Boyd, who was tacksman at that time; he removed me from one place and gave me the other.

38,269. Was the place you got as good as the one you left?—It was better, but it was not Boyd that gave it to me. When Boyd left the place I came back to where I am now.

38,270. Was the present house that you occupy built by yourself?—I built it myself.

38,271. Did you build any of the other houses in which you were?—I repaired them and improved them.

[ADJOURNED.]

FORTY-FIFTH SITTING.

Castlebay, Barra.

CASTLEBAY, BARRA, June 16, 1894.

Present:—

JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH, Esq. (Acting as *Chairman*).
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*.

Michael Macneil.

MICHAEL MACNEIL, Bruernish (55).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,272. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter at Bruernish?—I am nominally a crofter, but mine is not an old croft, it is only an imitation of a croft.

38,273. Then, do you live mainly by fishing?—Yes, since I was forty years of age.

38,274. Have you enough land to keep more than one cow?—It could not keep the one alone very well.

38,275. Do you represent the views of any of the other people? Have you been appointed as a delegate at any meeting?—Yes.

38,276. And what is the nature of the evidence you wish to lay before us?—That we need to get something to help us from the state in which we are; but the state is something better than to put us out of it altogether.

38,277. Does that point to more land for cultivation if it were to be had?—Decidedly.

38,278. Do you, and the people whom you represent, wish for holdings of considerable size, or merely for fishermen's crofts?—All whom I represent are for more land, simply because they cannot do without it.

38,279. Can you tell us where you think this land is, in the neighbourhood?—Where my father was born.

38,280. Where was that?—He was born in a township called Kilbar: he is ninety-five years of age.

38,281. How is the land occupied just now?—The Macgillivrays possess it.

38,282. Then, it is at present part of Eoligarry farm?—Yes.

38,283. *Mr Gordon.*—Is Eoligarry at the north of the island of Barra?—Yes.

38,284. Is there a wish generally to get crofts on which they could reside without fishing?—I am aware

that there are some who are done with the fishing for ever.

38,285. But why are they done with the fishing?—Because they would not go through the world as hired men any more, going to the east coast from where they were, and taking the best half of their living.

38,286. They go to the east coast as hired men, and they are tired of doing so?—Exactly.

38,287. Are there any crofts in this part of the country on which the men are living without fishing?—No: I don't know any such on the east side of this island where we live.

38,288. Is Eoligarry the only place where you think land can be got in this island?—It can be found in some two or three places.

38,289. You say that there are some fishermen here who would like to give up fishing and take to farming altogether?—Must they not give up of themselves when they cannot fish?

38,290. If they cannot fish, they cannot work?—They can work, but they cannot work as hired men any longer.

38,291. How much land or how much stock would a man require to keep himself and his family if he did not fish?—If I could get as much land as would keep three cows and a horse; I am not very well skilled in agricultural affairs, but I think I could live by that.

38,292. I am afraid such a living would not be a very fat one in this country: I doubt you would take to the fishing again of your own accord. But what rent do you suppose you would be willing to pay for the three cows and a horse?—I know nothing at all about that, but I know the rent which I was paying when I had no cow at all.

38,293. Are there any crofts about that size in the island?—It is known that there are.

38,294. And are the people who occupy crofts, that keep three cows and a horse, living solely by their crofts, or not?—I am not aware that there are such on the island: they must all go to sea.

38,295. Have you, yourself, ever done any agricultural work at all?—I worked a little for myself.

38,296. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is Bruernish an old township?—Yes.

38,297. What number of crofts have you there just now?—Twenty.

38,298. Are these sub-divided, or are there just twenty crofters in the place?—They are not divided, but there are certain additions made by themselves.

38,299. Did they apply to the Crofters Commission to have their rents fixed?—They were before the Commission for fixity of tenure, for fair rent, and for cancelling of arrears. But the Commissioners did not divide the place for them.

38,300. Has not each crofter a separate piece of arable land for himself?—They are divided among themselves; they were waiting for some estate official to come and divide it for them.

38,301. Does each crofter pay the same rent?—Yes, each pays the same rent. They were not paying the same rent when they got it first; but what I got was taken from me. I had twice as much as the others had, and half of mine was taken away, and then they were all placed on an equal footing.

38,302. Then, when that was taken from you, was not your new place pointed out to you?—No.

38,303. You don't know how much was taken from you, or how much you got?—They took the half of what I had, and they gave us an equal space of land, and put the same rent on each one.

38,304. What rent was paid by the crofters before the Commission visited them?—As we asked our land first, it was 2s. per setting on a barrel of potatoes, and there were twelve barrels. Some of them had only space enough for seven barrels of potatoes.

38,305. And what rent did the Commission fix for you?—25s.

38,306. Was your former rent £1, 4s.?—Yes.

38,307. Then, was your rent raised by the Commission?—But did not I lose the land?

38,308. If you lost the land and your rent was raised, that would make the case still worse for you?—I paid a year of it at the rate, but next year it was taken from me and given to the man who asked only for space to plant seven barrels of potatoes. He then had the same quantity of land that I had.

38,309. How was the land occupied before you got it?—It was on a tack.

38,310. Whose tack was it on?—It was occupied by a man of the name of Macrae.

38,311. What was the name of the farm?—Bruernish.

38,312. And is there a tack of Bruernish now?—Macrae's son has the half of it, and the other half is occupied by the twenty crofters.

38,313. Are there any families in Bruernish who have no land at all?—Yes, there are eight.

38,314. Do they get potato ground from the crofters?—No, simply because they have not got it themselves.

38,315. Do these cottars get potato ground at all?—Perhaps they may get a 'lazy-bed' or two.

38,316. From whom?—From several: there are many who would give it. From Macrae himself they are getting small bits: and from the sons of the Doctor from whom they used to get it. It was from them that we ever got it.

38,317. Are they charged for the potato ground?—Oh, surely, they are paying something for it.

38,318. Do you know the arrangement between them and those who give them the ground?—I am not aware, but they give them some days' labour at harvest-time, or some other work at another time.

38,319. Is it on the crofters' ground that these cottars have got their houses?—Yes; nowhere else.

38,320. Are there many cottars on the farm of Eoligarry itself?—There was only one, and she has been removed from there and put over upon us. We are the men who had the space [or the breadth.]

38,321. Have these cottars been there for a long time, or can you say when they were placed there?—They have been put there since we got a small bit of that new land. There were some there, men who came from the island of Hellisay, put away by the Macgillivrays, and placed on the wee bit that we had.

38,322. Did you say when they got the addition from Bruernish?—I think about seven years ago, but I am not quite sure. Mr Macdonald there knows when it was. [*Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon-Cathcart.*.—Eleven years ago.]

38,323. Do you know the number of cottars there are altogether in the island of Barra?—Indeed, I cannot tell you that.

38,324. Is there a large number?—It is likely that there are, since we have that number at Bruernish.

38,325. You are aware, I suppose, that there is a very large number of cottars who have no land of their own?—It is very likely that there is.

38,326. Are these cottars on the land of the tacksman, or on the crofters' land?—They are on the lands of the poor men. they are not on the land of any tacksman in the country, unless they are herds or shepherds on big farms.

38,327. Is the land that the tacksmen occupy suitable for cultivation by the crofters?—Yes; it was cultivated by crofters before.

38,328. And, in your opinion, is it quite as suitable as the land that is presently occupied by crofters?—It is better than the lands occupied by crofters; fourteen times better.

38,329. What are the large tacks which you refer to that are so much better than the land occupied by the crofters?—The land in which the best tenantry were settled; is it not tacksmen that have got it to-day?

38,330. What are the names of these tacks?—There were tenants in Cliat.

38,331. How long ago is that?—Sixty years since the men were well situated.

38,332. Can you tell us about their condition: were they in a comfortable condition then?—All that I heard about it was that they were kept well. There were no sheep in Barra at the time: the produce of the

Castlebay, Barra.

Michael Macneil.

soil kept the people, without going to Glasgow to buy a bannock; and it is very likely that that same bread should be in the land yet.

38,333. Do you know where they went to from Cliat?—To America.

38,334. Did they all go there, or did some of them settle in other parts of the parish?—They were shifted from it and placed on the worst places on the island. They were shifted from it at different times as they decayed out of it, and then they were gathered out of it altogether and sent to Canada.

38,335. Then, they were not sent direct to Canada from Cliat,—is that what you mean, but were sent to some worse places in the island first?—Yes, before they went to America.

38,336. And were they crowded in upon other crofter townships?—Yes, where I am to-day, in the township of Bruernish, it was full of them; 27 families were cleared away from that township in one day, and there was only one family that remained; these two stuck like limpets to a rock.

38,337. Do you know why they were removed from Cliat, or did they leave it of their own accord?—I am not aware about that, the time is so long ago.

38,338. You know Cliat, though?—Oh, yes; but I know when my father left Kilbar where he came to. He came to Arog, and when he was put away from Arog he went to Bruernish, and he is there yet.

38,339. You think Cliat is a place that could be cultivated by crofters with profit?—Yes, and Vaslan as well.

38,340. What tack is that on? Is it on Eoligarry?—Yes, it now belongs to Eoligarry, though it was formerly on another tack.

38,341. Were there crofters formerly in Vaslan?—Yes.

38,342. Are there any people there now?—There is a rabbit catcher there now.

38,343. Is there any land cultivated?—Not a bit of it for a long time.

38,344. And your opinion is, I take it, that it is very suitable for crofting?—Oh, yes.

38,345. Can you name any other place on Eoligarry Farm that would be suitable for crofters?—Yes; what the people had before.

38,346. You mentioned Cliat and Vaslan; can you mention any other place where there were formerly crofters?—Yes, I can; Cille, where my grandfather was.

38,347. Is it long since that place was cleared?—Yes.

38,348. Do you know the number of tenants who were in it?—There were forty in it.

38,349. How long ago is that?—My father was born there. He is ninety-five years of age, and he was twenty years old before he was shifted from there and put to the island of Hellisay.

38,350. They were removed from Cille to Hellisay?—Yes.

38,351. And how long did they remain in Hellisay?—Six or seven years, when they were removed to Orag.

38,352. Where is Orag?—To the north-west of North Bay.

38,353. Is that on Eoligarry Farm?—Yes.

38,354. Was that a good place for crofters?—Yes, it was very well: they praised it well.

38,355. And from that they were removed to, where?—To Bruernish.

38,356. Can you tell me the reason of his removal from Orag?—To give them more room.

38,357. That is to the farm of Eoligarry?—There was no farmer at Eoligarry then at all; it was only tenantry; with the exception of Barra House there were none there but young Roderick, as he was locally called,—the late General Macneill.

38,358. Your father's croft was added to a large holding, was it?—Yes.

38,359. Can you mention any other place on this large farm of Eoligarry that was formerly tenanted by crofters?—The island of Hellisay and the island of Fuday. There were five tenants on the island of Fuday.

38,360. And how many on Hellisay?—Twelve at the most, but generally eight.

38,361. And all these old places are now included in the tack of Eoligarry?—Yes.

38,362. You told us that there is a great number of cottars who have no land at all placed upon the crofters' holdings. Did these apply to get land from Eoligarry?—I did not hear that they were asking for land, but if they were they were not encouraged or received. They used to gather and talk, like others, but they did not get anything.

38,363. But they have a strong desire, I suppose, as they have a great need, to get land?—Oh, yes, the cottars are very desirous of getting land if they can get it; and we may say ourselves that we are cottars.

38,364. The principal occupation of the cottars and crofters, I take it, is fishing?—Yes, I have been working at all sorts of it for the last forty years.

38,365. If they got land at Eoligarry, would it interfere with their fishing?—No, it would not: it would rather encourage them. The man who was at Eoligarry, in my father's time, was able to go to Glasgow with his own fish, and there are none to-day who can do that.

38,366. Then, it is your decided opinion that they would make better fishermen if they had small crofts?—If I had as much as what I had on the Eoligarry Farm, though it is little, I would see myself well enough.

38,367. I suppose the fishermen have a great deal of spare time, which they could occupy in cultivating the land?—They can use land very well, because they know they won't make a mistake in doing so.

38,368. But there is a great deal of other time that could not be taken up with the fishing?—They could work their lands in the winter time with the seaware which they use as manure, and in one week they could cultivate a lot. They will take the spring season to work at the sort of land which they have got, and after all it could not maintain them for a quarter of a year.

38,368*a*. With what will they bring it out?—With a spade.

38,369. Are the cottars able to get milk for their families?—No, poor men; where can they get it? There is no dairy where they can go to buy a halfpenny worth of milk.

38,370. So that even if they had the money, it would not be possible to get milk?—No, because it is not to be found who has it, unless I give my neighbour a mouthful of what I milk from my own cow, and when that is divided into nine portions my share would be very little.

38,371. What are the benefits which you derive from the neighbourhood of the large tack?—He is only taking off my property day and night with a stock of fillies.

38,372. So that, in your opinion, the crofters get no benefit at all from the large farmers in Barra?—No, I do not see any benefit to the poor man in being in the neighbourhood of the big farm: if he got it just now it would be away again.

38,373. What do you mean by that?—If he got a little assistance from them to-day, to-morrow he would not get it, and he is as needful of it as ever.

38,374. Do the large farmers give much work to the people?—We did not see that. They are only storing their money and putting it into bank. If they were even fishcurers or merchants we would get some benefit.

38,375. They don't cultivate much?—Very likely not, or else they would be selling us the produce, as they do in other parts, and we would be better off.

38,376. Is it your opinion that the crofters would suffer no loss at all by the doing away with the large farms?—No, it would benefit the poor creatures. The one or the other must go: the empty man cannot go, but the man who has got the money can go. My people were sent away before, and they died when they arrived in America.

38,377. The small tenants were sent away before for the benefit of the large farmer, and you think now the large farmer should be sent away for the benefit of the small tenants: is that so?—Oh, there is no need to send

them away at all: let them be content with a reasonable quantity of land the same as I had, and let them work for it; as long as a man pays for what he gets himself I don't want to take the world between my hands; I will take a bit of it.

38,378. But there are so many people in Barra, that you think no one should have a very large farm?—Decidedly. When the late Macneill of Barra had it, he never placed a big farmer on it; it was in his own occupation.

38,379. And when it was in his own occupation, had he crofters and cottars on it?—Yes, but there was a certain piece set apart purposely for the crofters, a place called Scurrival.

38,380. And do you think that if the land were properly divided amongst the crofters and cottars of Barra, there is sufficient to make them quite comfortable?—Yes: there is as much land in Barra as will serve every one of them.

38,381. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Did you say that your father was a crofter at Kilbar when you were born, fifty-five years ago?—No: how could I say that? I said he was twenty years of age before he left Kilbar.

38,382. Did you not say before that, that you were born at Kilbar?—No, I was not born there, but my father was.

38,383. Do you know what rent your father paid for the croft at Kilbar?—I don't know: I did not ask him. My father could tell.

38,384. There were no tenants in Kilbar sixty years ago?—I do not know.

38,385. You spoke of some grievance you had yourself at Bruernish. What was your chief grievance with reference to the land which you say was taken away from you at Bruernish when the last division of the lands took place?—Nothing, but that the land was taken from me, and that I was worthy of it myself if it had been left with me, but other men got it. Why did they not ask it before? But taken from me, after I had got it and paid it, and taken from me next year again.

38,386. Did you not think it would be fair when the rent was equalised that the land should also be equalised among the people?—Of course, it is only right that the rent should be the same when the same quantity of land was given to each man.

38,387. Do you think it would be fair to give you double the share, when you were paying only the same rent as your neighbours?—Was I not paying it formerly when first I got it? Did I not get it first and pay it?

38,388. Was the arrangement not this at first, that the fishermen paid 10s. 6d. for a house stance, 2s. per barrel of potatoes, and 12s. for their share of the commonty?—Decidedly.

38,389. You paid 10s. 6d. for your house stance, £1, 4s. for twelve barrels of potatoes, and 12s. for your share of the common lands?—Yes.

38,390. Which made £2, 6s. 6d.?—Yes.

38,391. And when the land was equalised and each one got a fair share, then the extra quantity that you had before was divided among your neighbours?—I was quite content with that, if it had been only divided and my own share given; but a bit here and there!

38,392. Was it not your own people that made the division?—They divided it for a year, and after the year was past it is that way yet. If I had it in one piece, I would have it with more pleasure than now.

38,393. But is it not the case that the people themselves, if there is a bit that they think is better than another, want a share of that good bit?—The one profits by that, and the other loses by it, but it is the case. When I am away at the east country fishing and nobody at home but a woman, my property is taken from me before I come home: but if it was in one piece—

38,394. Don't you know that the estate officials always wish that the land should be put in as large a piece as possible: that one piece should be made as large as possible, but that the crofters themselves say there is a good bit here and I must have a share of it; and then that is the reason they have so many bits?—It is not customary in the place, but those who hold the best bits are sticking to it still.

38,395. I wish you to think about that question again, because I know that it is the custom, and that we have very great difficulty in getting the consent of the crofters when any division takes place to put the portion belonging to them in one piece. They say there is a good bit here, and each one wants a share of that good bit.—I like to tell the truth. The people want to have the land divided among themselves, and they cast lots among themselves.

38,396. If that is the wish of the people, and seeing that they were allowed to divide Bruernish among themselves, why did not they divide it, giving each one one piece instead of two or three pieces?—They did not do it: they tried a year of it as it was, and it fell that way still.

38,397. They were allowed to do it the best way they thought proper themselves?—Yes, but the people themselves can never make it without somebody along with them.

38,398. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Have you named all the places where tenants were at one time on the farm of Eoligarry?—I did not mention Ard Mhor.

38,399. Do you state that there were tenants once in Ard Mhor?—Yes.

38,400. Have you any idea how many?—There was first one tenant, then two, and then five.

38,401. And now it is without anybody?—Yes.

38,402. Is there any other place?—Flodday.

38,403. Is that one of the islands?—Yes.

38,404. How many tenants were there?—Three.

38,405. Is there any other island that you have not mentioned where tenants were at one time?—The island of Finay.

38,406. How many were there?—Five; but there should be only three.

38,407. Any other island on the farm of Eoligarry?—Fiaray, one family.

38,408. Any there to-day?—No.

38,409. Any other island?—I am not aware.

38,410. Go back now to the mainland part of the farm. Is there any other old township that you have omitted on Eoligarry? Did you mention Kilbar?—Yes, I mentioned it, and Cliat and Cille.

38,411. How many tenants were in these three put together?—The greatest number that ever was there was forty.

38,412. Then did you mention Grean?—No.

38,413. Is it a good old township?—Yes.

38,414. How many tenants were there at one time?—I am not aware how many were there.

38,415. Did you mention Ard Veanish?—Yes, there were seven crofts there.

38,416. Do you remember when the township in which you live, Bruernish, had no crofter tenant at all?—Yes, as well as I remember to-day.

38,417. How many years is it since tenants were put into Bruernish?—It is thirty years since I went there.

38,418. Were you among the first who were put there?—Yes, I was among the first.

38,419. How many were put to that place at that time?—Nineteen families.

38,420. Were they cottars before, or were they crofters who were removed from some other place?—They were all cottars, every one of them.

38,421. How was your rent fixed?—It amounted to 32s. with all its taxes; site for house, site for peats; a piece about ten yards broad for the house, just about the space where I should spread a herring net; about 20 fathoms long.

38,422. Did you not get a piece of arable land, and an interest in hill grazing?—I have nothing in the world except that.

38,423. Tell us again all that you had for the 32s.?—A house site, a peat stance, and 20 yards long by 10,—it would make a small bit of a garden.

38,424. Is that all that you had?—Yes. It is there yet.

Castlebay, Barra.

Michael Macneil.

38,425. What is the name of the place in Bruernish?—Carnan Point and Creag Ruadh.

38,426. And there were nineteen of you put there at 32s.?—Yes.

38,427. Who was the factor at the time,—was it Mr Birnie?—Yes.

38,428. Then you got an addition ten or eleven years ago, did not you?—Yes.

38,429. But let us go back to the place given to the nineteen, thirty years ago. Give us the name of the tacksman on whose land you were put?—Farquhar Macrae was the tacksman of Bruernish.

38,430. What rent was Farquhar Macrae paying for Bruernish before you were put there?—To the best of my opinion, I do not like to say, as I do not exactly know, but to the best of my opinion it was not more than £30.

38,431. Do you believe that it was £30 or about £30?—Yes, it was not far off that.

38,432. How much was Farquhar Macrae's rent reduced when the nineteen tenants were put upon the farm?—I did not ask the man himself when he was living, but I heard it was £4 or £5 of a reduction.

38,433. So that £30, 8s. was put on the crofters for the land, and only £5 was valued for it in dealing with Macrae?—Yes.

38,434. Now eleven years ago you got about the half of what remained to Macrae?—Yes.

38,435. Were more tenants put on, or was it divided among those who were there already?—There were others that came in. Some of them came from the island of Hellisay, from Macgillivray's farm.

38,436. Altogether, how many was it divided among under the new management?—Twenty.

38,437. What rent was put on each of them?—As they got the land at first it was 2s. for the setting of a barrel of potatoes, and they had seven to fifteen barrels each.

38,438. But when the rents were equalised, there were twenty tenants at how much each on a lump rent?—38s. or 40s.

38,439. Was that for the half of what Macrae had for £30?—Yes.

38,440. Then is this the fact, that for about the half of the land that Macrae held for £30, and which proportionately should be charged £15, you twenty cottars were charged by the factor between £38 and £40?—Yes; 10s. for the site of the house, 10s. for the peat stances, and poor rates, &c., and doctor's salary.

38,441. You said already that when the last arrangement was made, each of the twenty was charged 38s. or 40s. for his share?—I said so: 11s. and 24s. was the first rent.

38,442. This is the sum and substance of the matter, is it not; Macrae had the whole farm for £30; the half of that is £15; you got the half among twenty, paying 35s. each; that is to say, what he had for £15 you are charged £35 for?—Each was not charged the same rent the first year.

38,443. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Were you not paying between you £37, 16s. for what you had? Is that the total rent paid by the twenty?—I don't know.

38,444. But you know that twenty of you were paying £1, 15s. or so each?—Yes.

38,445. You were paying between you £37, 16s., and that for an area representing half of the original farm of Bruernish?—Yes.

38,446. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Mr Macdonald asked you whether, after the holdings of all the crofters were made equal in size, it would not be fair that their rents should be equalised, and I think you agreed?—Yes.

38,447. You think it fair that the rent should be equalised when the subject is equalised?—Decidedly.

38,448. Would you go a little further than that now, and say that if all the land of Barra occupied by tacksmen were thrown in with the rest and the whole land equalised, the rent should also be equalised and that the big tacksmen should have a share like yourselves and pay the same rent?—Very likely: as I had to divide the little I had with my neighbour I should like him to do the same with me.

38,449. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You, no doubt, felt it a grievance that your holding was decreased?—Yes.

38,450. And you would rather pay a higher rent for what you had than have it reduced?—Yes.

38,451. Was there any reason why the other holdings should not have been increased out of some other land and not taken from yourself?—Yes, it could.

38,452. You think that in equalising them they could all be increased to the size that you had?—Yes.

38,453. *Mr Ranald Macdonald.*—Did you intend to convey to the Commissioners the impression that you paid 32s. for a small piece of ground, 20 yards by 10?—I paid 5s. for the piece of ground.

38,454. Was it not 10s. 6d. that you paid for that instead of 32s.? (*No answer.*)

38,455. How much did you pay for each,—the house site, the peat stance, and the garden?—10s. for the peat stance, 10s. for the house site, and 5s. for the small bit of land. The poor rates sometimes came to 3s. and the doctor's salary to 4s. or 5s.

38,456. To whom did you pay the 10s. for the peats?—I was paying it to the factor, Mr Birnie, to whom I paid 25s. altogether each time.

38,457. I have here a rental which shows that before 1883 you paid 10s. 6d. for the house site (which, of course, includes the peats), £1, 4s. *i.e.*, 2s. for each barrel of potatoes, and 12s. for the common land; in all £2, 6s. 6d.; is that correct?—Yes, that is quite correct.

38,458. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Did you build your houses yourself, or by whom were they built?—I built my own house. I had to keep my materials dry,—my herring-nets and sails and all sorts of lines; I could not have them well secured without a house to keep them dry.

38,459. Did you put up your own house?—Yes.

38,460. And that is the case of the rest of the crofters?—Yes.

Castlebay, Barra.

Michael Macneil.

MURDOCH MACKINNON, Crofter, Ault, Ersary (70)—*examined.*

Murdoch Mackinnon.

38,461. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft?—The fourth part of a croft.

38,462. What stock do you keep?—Only one cow and one small heifer in the meantime.

38,463. How did the croft of which you hold a fourth come to be sub-divided?—When Cliat was cleared and Grean, some of the people were put upon us and we just gave them the land without asking.

38,464. You wish to say that it was owing to crofters having been cleared off other places that the croft came to be divided so small?—Yes. Most of the ground is dying away, it has been turned so often.

38,465. Then, how do you get a living, as you have such a small holding?—There is no living can be made upon the croft; the money which I earned when I was young is keeping me alive till I am done. But it is nearly done now, and God knows what is to support me now.

38,466. Was there a public meeting at which you were appointed a delegate?—Yes.

38,467. What is the desire of the people of Ersary with reference to land?—The whole of them are in the same position as myself; some are even worse, because there are now twenty-two on the place, which at one time (before I remember) was divided among three farmers who had it at £5 each. In my father's days we had the first part of it for a long time, and we were very well off then: the whole croft kept four cows and four horses, and maybe forty sheep, but now we cannot keep any stock at all.

38,468. There are too many of you now?—Yes.

38,469. And do you think if you had sufficient land you could make a living by it?—Although I am an old man myself, if I had the land I could live well enough and pay the rent right enough.

38,470. Of course, you speak on behalf of your neighbours as well as yourself,—perhaps your neighbours could take up land if they had the chance?—Oh,

yes, the older men have mostly sons who could use the land for them.

38,471. You have heard the evidence that was given of considerable length by the last witness, Macneil, about Eoligarry?—Yes.

38,472. He stated that that is a large farm in the north of the island?—Yes, I was born there myself.

38,473. And that it is suitable for crofter occupation?—Oh, the best place in Scotland for crofters, because there is plenty seaware to be had in winter; it can be brought up in winter time when there is no other work that can be done. In spring they can work on the ground, and then they can go and fish wherever they like. There are plenty good harbours and fish handy on the west side and on the east.

38,474. Then your idea is that there should be fair-sized crofts for the people, and that they would make part of their living by fishing as well?—Oh, a great deal. In my young days there were people on the whole island, and they were very rich, because they never bought any meal at all. I, myself, can remember seeing thirty boats going to Glasgow and coming home with clear money; this was keeping the island rich with the fishing money. Now that is dying away by merchants. For the last forty years I have been paying about £20 for provisions for the family; that would easily pay the rent of a large holding.

38,475. Is there any other place besides Eoligarry about here that you think suitable for crofters?—All the places.

38,476. I mean in any other part of Barra?—There is Vatersay, down opposite here: it is a good place for crofters.

38,477. Do you say that the holdings should be sufficient for two or three cows, or do you think they should be larger still?—In the time of Macneil I was eleven years upon Cliat with my father before we were flitted to Ersary. At that time each crofter had four cows, two horses, and about twelve sheep; and this ground was plenty to keep the family for the whole year. They used to pay the rent by means of the kelp.

38,478. But there is no kelp now; how do you think they would do nowadays?—If there would be any good price for it, about £3 a ton; I was making the kelp myself several times.

38,479. Don't you think that the people nowadays need more in the way of supplies and groceries,—that they have learnt new tastes since those days and would not be so easily satisfied?—I don't know what became of them, they are so well taxed now with the tea: but I would think that if they had other things they could do with less luxuries. For my part I can do with very little, though we have no milk, nor butter, nor anything else.

38,480. You think if the people had milk and butter and the chance of growing some oats, they would be more inclined to go back to the simpler way of living that used to satisfy them?—I don't know how the younger ones would do.

38,481. It is the younger ones I want to know about?—I cannot say about them, but I think I could turn to the old living myself if I could get a chance of it. I would try it, at all events, for, in my opinion, black tea has nearly killed us.

38,482. And supposing such a chance was given in that kind of holding, would there be any difficulty on the part of the people in stocking or building?—I suppose most of them could not stock in the meantime without some help.

38,483. Have you formed any ideas in Barra here as to where that help was to come from?—Unless from Government: they give money for boats through the Fishery Board. I got a boat myself and I paid it up. I could show you a letter I got returning the deed of mortgage. If I got the money for the other business it would keep me up and I could pay the instalments in the same way. If I had the money in hand I could do well with it. This is the letter I got. [*Letter produced.*] But I lost a good deal by the boat. She was not properly built, and she was too small to work properly.

38,484. This letter shows that you have paid up the whole of the instalments on your boat?—Yes, and if I had an advance for stocking I am sure I would do well.

38,485. You think that as you were able to pay up all the instalments for your boat, so you would be able to pay up an advance from Government for stock?—If I got the first year of it free; the first year would be the worst.

38,486. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—What rent do you pay?—I pay just now after the Crofters Commission £1, 8s., which I think is rather much, but before the Commission came we paid £2, 4s. 6d.

38,487. And you still think the rent is rather high?—It is rather high. We have a bad croft: the half of it is rocks. Then the land is quite exhausted, and £3 would be plenty for the whole croft, in my opinion.

38,488. You do not get very much from the land?—Almost nothing: only ten pecks of meal from the land during the last ten years, and I am sowing oats and barley.

38,489. Do you think that is because the land does not get justice, is never left out in grass?—That is just the point: the ground has been turned over for the last sixty years, and it can give no grain crop.

38,490. And if you had a larger croft you would treat it in a different way?—Yes, we could leave out a piece of it, and give it manure, and it would yield better corn.

38,491. Have you any cottars in Ersary?—Yes, there are some.

38,492. Do you know how many?—Five, I think, but I am not exactly sure.

38,493. Do these pay any rent?—I don't think they pay anything at all, either to the crofters or to the proprietor.

38,494. What is their condition?—They are commonly working out at the Lowlands and some at the fishing here, and they get small bits of potato land and peats.

38,495. From whom do they get the potato ground?—Here and there.

38,496. But is it from crofters they get it?—From the crofters too.

38,497. Small as the crofters' land is, they had to give some of it to the cottars?—Oh, yes, the cottars upon our land get a bit of the croft.

38,498. Have any of the cottars got a cow?—Yes, some of them have a cow and a horse.

38,499. But they have no land of their own?—Not a bit.

38,500. And the crofters have to supply them with the use of the land?—Our croft is good for them all the year, except maybe these two months. When the crop is in the ground they must keep them up on the hill; but whenever the crop is gathered in, their beasts go through the place the same as the rest.

38,501. Now, do you think that some of the people in Ersary would be willing to remove to some of the land that you were talking of, say to the island of Vatersay?—Oh, yes, I hope they will be removed, because they cannot live where they are: they cannot get a livelihood for their families. I think they wish to remove.

38,502. But can you not speak more definitely than that? Say, with regard to yourself now, would you be willing to take a holding anywhere else on Eoligarry or on Vatersay?—Well, you see, I am rather old to work about the house; where I am, the house is up already, and it would be bad for me to put up a new house.

38,503. But you think that there are some who would be quite willing to remove?—I understand so: I hear that they will be very willing to remove anywhere they could get the chance of a croft; so they tell me.

38,504. And do you think they would be able to put up houses without help?—Well, I don't think so; that is the worst of it, they are keeping so poor, all that they earn at the fishing being spent on the support of their families. They require to lay out a great deal of money on nets and material, and this year most of them made nothing at all by the fishing. It has been a bad year for the fishing, owing to the coarse weather.

Castlebay, Barra.

Murdoch Mackinnon.

38,505. But still they did build the houses they occupy at present?—Oh, yes, they themselves built them.

38,506. And if they got larger and better crofts elsewhere, is it not likely that they would be equally able to put up houses themselves as in the old townships?—In a year or two they might be better able; but in the meantime it would be hard on them to put stock even on the ground, unless they get some assistance.

38,507. And the people who are in Ersary now, were they taken from their places and put in there?—Yes; some of them came from Grean.

38,508. That is in the farm of Eoligarry?—Yes, or the Manse. There were eighteen crofters upon Grean.

38,509. Do you know why they were removed from Grean?— To clear it out to a tack to Dr Nicolson.

38,510. The holdings at Ersary were very much diminished when these people were put in there?—Very: they were put to great poverty when this number of people gathered on the place.

38,511. And at one time I think you said there were three farmers in it?—Three farmers, and in the latter part of my father's time there were five.

38,512. Would it keep five farmers still, fairly comfortably?—It would be leaving little enough for five to do, because the ground is dying away; it has been turned over so often that it is going away with the rain: it has got quite thin.

38,513. Now, is it your opinion that the crofters occupy the more inferior lands in Barra?—I think so.

38,514. Do you think the land occupied by the crofters is poorer than the lands in the tacks?—To be sure, because the crofter is turning the land so often. The land where I am is four feet lower since I first remember.

38,515. It has deteriorated in that way by reason of the crowding of the people on it?—Yes.

38,516. But when the people were sent there, do you think that the land that is in Ersary was as good as Grean?—No, nor half.

38,517. So that they were sent to the inferior lands, and these inferior lands have got still worse through constant working; is that the case?—To be sure.

38,518. You mentioned the island of Vatersay, which you consider suitable for crofters?—Yes. I was far from it in my young days, but for all that I know it is suitable enough.

38,519. And in the meantime it is a tack?—It is a tack: and Sandray too was inhabited.

38,520. Is that the same tack as Vatersay?—Yes, the same tack.

38,521. When were the people removed from Vatersay?—A good while ago: it was the time of Macneill, but when he left the place they were removed about eight times. It was left under trustees for a time before Gordon took it.

38,522. Have you anything else to add to what has been already brought out? Have you any other farm you can speak to?—No farm but Vatersay and Eoligarry.

38,523. Has there been any attempt made by the estate to meet the wants of the people by giving new lands to the crofters? Have they made any endeavour to better the condition of the people by giving them land recently?—Well, I don't know that we got any till the Crofters Commission came and laid down the rent. The rent is still the same as it was before.

38,524. Has the estate not added land to any crofter townships or formed any new townships?—They got land up at the Glen: Mr Macdonald here gave them land at Leenish, and the half of Bruernish, and Garrygal.

38,525. Now, with regard to these Glen crofts, did the people get arable land as well as pasture?—Oh, yes, the arable was laid in the Garrygal, but there were crofters in it before that.

38,526. And were some of the crofters in Glen removed and placed on Garrygal?—I am not exactly sure, but there is a man from Glen here who could tell; he knows better about Glen than I do. I am a good bit down on the east side.

Castlebay, Barra.

Murdoch Mackinnon.

38,527. Was there any application made by the crofters of Ersary to the estate to get new crofts?—I don't think so: I never saw any of them, but we made application long ago to Cluny. It is a good long time ago. [*Mr Ranald Macdonald.*—I have no recollection of it.]

38,528. Is there any tack in your own immediate neighbourhood from which any addition could be taken?—Nothing else near us.

38,529. The only way in which you could be relieved would be to find a place to which some of you could be removed?—Most likely.

38,530. You think that there is a general desire for removal to other parts of the island suitable for crofts?—Yes.

38,531. *Mr Gordon.*—What has become of the boat you had, the *Daisy*?—I sold her.

38,532. Where is she now?—In Bernera, Harris.

38,533. Why did you sell her?—She was too small for the fishing here.

38,534. What was her length of keel?—Twenty-two feet.

38,535. How much did you pay for her?—I paid £22 for the bare share of her.

38,536. You had the half, had you?—I had her all; I paid £22 and interest for four years, also the insurance, making in all about £28 or £30 that I paid.

38,537. And what did you get for her when you sold her?—£10 only.

38,538. Had you made a profit on working her, if you lost £18 by the sale?—Well, I don't think I lost that, but I lost £8 at any rate.

38,539. Had you nets with her?—No, she was too small.

38,540. Then you would use her mostly for line fishing?—Yes.

38,541. Are there many boats of that class in Barra?—A great many, but none so small.

38,542. What is the keel of the biggest boats you use?—They are coming up now to 34 or 35 feet of keel.

38,543. How do these boats compare with the east coast boats?—There is a shoot here for the winter fishing, and some of them work the nets here in the meantime.

38,544. Is there any demand among the Barra men for assistance to buy such boats as these?—Not just now; they were getting help from Government, but it was stopped. They are now trying to get help from the fishcurers.

38,545. You, yourself, say that you are getting too old for fishing, and that you would like to get a croft?—If I don't get more land, although I am old I must turn to the fishing or something, or I cannot live.

38,546. You have a large population in Barra here,—I don't exactly know the number, but judging from the number present here to-day there is a pretty large population in the island?—I believe it is very large.

38,547. And you have the whole island already in the hands of crofters except the farms of Vatersay and Eoligarry?—Yes, and North Bay.

38,548. Well, suppose the whole of these farms were divided among you, that would only supply a very small number of the present inhabitants?—I believe it would be too little, unless by shifting some of them to other places.

38,549. Would it not be advisable to have two sizes of crofts,—a few of the larger size and a good many of the smaller size where younger men than you could still practise the fishing?—Oh, yes, and they could do with a smaller croft.

38,550. You would recommend a good many small crofts for fishermen on which they could keep one cow and have potato ground?—Yes, but they would not be very good without a horse.

38,551. But the horse is very heavy upon your grazing, is he not?—Yes, he costs a good deal in grass, but in some parts they cannot carry the ware upon their backs.

38,552. But one horse might do among half a dozen fishermen's crofts if you would agree about it?—In old times they commonly had two horses. Macneill kept

Castlebay, Barra.

Murdoch Mackinnon.

horses and cows, and if they lost a horse or a cow he would give them one to keep up the stock.

38,553. They are not so generous now?—No.

38,554. But in any division or in giving land to the people of Barra, would it not be advisable to make smaller crofts, or fishermen's lots?—Well, he would like to make them smaller and divide it among every one.

38,555. But though you got the whole island to yourselves, it would only supply a small number. The land that the crofter has already, although of considerable extent, is very little suited for spade husbandry and very little for ploughing?—Oh, very little where we are, but there is ploughing ground in Cliat and in Grean.

38,556. I suppose you experience no difficulty from the want of good harbours,—you have good natural harbours?—A good natural harbour.

38,557. You suffer no inconvenience from the want of harbours?—No, we can get a harbour here anywhere. Were it not for the harbour here, people could not live at all; but whenever they come to the east shore they find it difficult to get in.

38,558. Your principal complaint is in reference to the land which you now occupy, that it has become deteriorated from too frequent turning over?—Yes.

38,559. It has got much worse?—Yes, and down to nothing.

38,560. And you think if you had as much more as would enable you to leave a part of it under grass for a few years it would become good cropping ground again?—Yes.

38,561. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You say there is a large population in Barra, but I suppose that population is confined almost altogether to the land that is occupied by the crofters?—Oh, to be sure, they are all upon the crofters' land.

38,562. There are very few people on the land held in tacks?—Very few.

38,563. Just shepherds?—Yes, and those who belong to it.

38,564. And these farms constitute a large proportion of the island of Barra, do not they?—Yes.

38,565. More than a third, I should think, is under large tacks?—Eoligarry road goes straight into North Bay, and North Bay goes straight into the west.

38,566. And, in your opinion too, is not this land which has no population at all best fitted for having the population?—Oh, surely.

38,567. Now considering that the fishing round Barra is good, are you not of opinion that if the land were divided among the population of Barra they would have fairly comfortable crofts?—For a good while, till they multiplied.

38,568. But for the present population?—I would think they ought to stand for twenty years at any rate quite comfortably.

38,569. In the meantime the condition of the crofters and cottars is exceedingly poor?—Exceedingly poor.

38,570. On account of their being confined as they are?—Confined as they are.

38,571. I suppose they are not accustomed to any high living, even the young people in this island?—No, they are not accustomed to high living: the half of them would do with potatoes and fish.

38,572. I suppose if they got once more the old living they used to get in Barra, you would consider it much better than the living they get now?—To be sure: I wish I could see it again. The milk and butter was very plentiful in those days, but now there is hardly a house where you could get butter and milk. It is mostly foreign butter that is used,—Dutch butter.

38,573. And are they accustomed to use butcher meat?—Oh, very little.

38,574. But I suppose they used to have meat in the old times?—Oh, plenty in the old times. I remember seeing them kill pigs in Cliat; and every family would have an odd stirk.

38,575. You think then that having been accustomed to no great comforts, they would be very willing to go back to the old conditions?—Oh, yes.

38,576. And you think they are quite sincere in asking it, and would put it to the very best advantage?—I think so.

Castlebay, Barra.

Murdoch Mackinnon.

38,577. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Are there any harbours on the west coast of Barra?—There is a harbour at Cliat, which used to be a good place for skiffs to draw up. My sons are in to-day, working at lobster fishing.

38,578. Do you think fishermen could make a living at the port of Cliat, where they would have to draw up their boats?—They could do very little in winter, but at this time of year they could leave out and in. I have seen plenty cod fish come in there.

38,579. Do you think it would be a judicious thing for a fisherman to settle down at Cliat to prosecute the fishing there?—Without any land?

38,580. Supposing he had a little lot of land?—I am quite sure they would make more money at fishing there than now, because my son has to travel across to Ersary mostly every night from Cliat.

38,581. The lobsters are caught on the west coast?—Yes, and most of the ling also is worked on the west coast, but they have to come round with it.

38,582. I would like to get your opinion as a fisherman of considerable experience and as one who I know will state fairly and candidly what you believe to be correct,—whether it would be a judicious thing to plant down a colony of fishermen on the west coast at Cliat?—Well, in winter they could do nothing at Cliat: the sea is so bad, and I would think the harbour would need to be very well built before it could stand the winter sea at Cliat.

38,583. But you know that complaints have been made all round the west coast here, that in certain places they could not prosecute the fishing because they had no boat shelters or harbours, and that the Government had been giving assistance to build these. Then I may take it as your opinion that it would not be judicious to plant a colony of fishermen crofters at Cliat?—In winter they could do nothing at the fishing, it is too wild; but at this time of the year they could manage.

38,584. Then although the land at Ersary may not be quite equal to the soil at Cliat, it is better suited, is it not, for fishermen?—Oh, Ersary is the most unhandy place in Barra for fishing.

38,585. The whole of the east coast is more handy than the west?—There is nothing at Ersary except the harbour. The fish are not there.

38,586. How far are you from Castlebay?—About three and a half miles.

38,587. And how far from North Bay?—About the same.

38,588. Then you have two good harbours, one on the right and one on the left?—Yes.

38,589. So that you have not very much to complain of?—There is neither fish nor land in Ersary; there is a harbour, but that is all.

38,590. But the east coast of Barra is better suited for fishermen than the west coast; may I take that generally to be your opinion?—Yes, for harbours, because we have harbours along the east coast.

38,591. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Have you a family?—Only one son: the others have families of their own. They are soldiers of the Queen, to keep up her Kingdom.

38,592. Have you a married son?—Yes.

38,593. Where does he live?—In Bad.

38,594. Where does the second son live?—In Ersary.

38,595. Is that the place where you say there is neither fish nor land?—Yes.

38,596. Has your son any land there?—He has a small bit, the third part of a croft.

38,597. But there is no land there worth having?—No.

38,598. He makes his living by the fishing?—By the lobster fishing.

38,599. Does he fish himself?—Every day, and sends the lobsters to England.

38,600. What fishing does he turn to at other times of the year?—The ling fishing now and again.

Castlebay, Barra.

Murdoch Mackinnon.

38,601. Where does he fish: is it in Ersary or in Cliat?—He comes near Cliat: he rises every morning maybe at two o'clock and walks down to Norsary, and fishes off Cliat. He has thus to walk four or five miles twice a day.

38,602. Would he find it more convenient to live near the place where he follows the fishing?—If he were living at Cliat he might get six dozen where now he gets two.

38,603. So the factor put him in a place where he cannot make a living, and he has to travel five miles twice a day?—Yes, and he is in a bad vessel.

38,604. Whereas if he was allowed to have your way, to settle down in Cliat, he could make six times more at the fishing?—Yes.

38,605. And half the labour?—Half the labour, and get some help. There are only three of them to draw up an 18 feet keel boat, and in bad weather that is not very easy for three men.

38,606. You are aware that the opinion has been expressed that it would be much better for men who prosecute the fishing to have no land at all; you are aware that that is the opinion of some people?—In my opinion no person could live in Barra without land, because the winter is too wild and he could get nothing on the sea. I was a long time at the fishing myself, and all that I earned in summer would be spent in winter

38,607. If you now had your own way as a practical man, a native of this place, an old man of experience both on land and sea, would you re-divide the land, and settle down the fishing population on small holdings, where such holdings are suitable and available, upon which they could live partly from the produce of the holding and partly by the fishing?—To be sure, that is the way to live here. I will tell you one thing if you listen to me. I got land in the year 1853, when I married. Well, I was a young man then, and I earned a great deal of money since; I was very successful at the herring fishing. If I had had my father's croft then, I would have £200 in bank now, which I paid to merchants for meal. It is the want of the land that spoilt us; the others are the same as myself.

38,608. Sometimes you are told that the fishermen on the east coast have no land at all, and that they are much better without it. Did you ever hear the east coast fishermen themselves say so?—We heard them say that they wished they had some land, but that they did not get it. I have often been amongst the fishermen.

38,609. Are you aware that there are factors who say that the east coast fishermen had land at one time, but that they begged of the laird to take it from them as they did not wish it?—They cannot get it: but there is a very great difference between them and us. Whenever they go out on the east coast they get a shoal of haddocks, and there is a market for them near.

38,610. Are you aware that the cottars of Barra in large numbers petitioned the proprietor two years ago or thereabouts for land?—I am not exactly sure: but they are always calling for land.

38,611. Do you, as a delegate, know that the cottars have a strong desire for land?—There is a delegate here from them,—Duncan Campbell.

38,612. Have all the crofters in Barra half or less than half of the island?—I cannot say for certain, but the map will tell you. [*Mr Forsyth.*—They seem to have fully two-thirds of the acreage.]

38,613. Have you any idea how many acres there are in the island altogether?—I cannot say.

38,614. Would you be surprised to know that there are 10 acres for every one of the population?—We measured the croft we had last year by Wilson and Meikle. It is 19 acres we have divided among four of us,—that is 5 acres each, arable and grazing.

38,615. Was the farm of Vatersay occupied by tenants in your own memory?—In my memory it was marked at £30, and a good piece of it was a tack. Macneill's sister was living on it.

38,616. And there were thirty tenants on the rest?—Yes

38,617. Do you remember them well?—Fine that; I saw the houses. I remember the houses in Grean and Cliat and Vaslan and all round the North Bay.

Castlebay, Barra.

Murdoch Mackinnon

38,618. And how many in Vatersay did you see altogether?—Thirty in my own memory.

38,619. Now, were these crofters in more comfortable circumstances than the crofters of to-day?—Oh, they were very rich: the crofters have nothing now.

38,620. But although they had the land, did they make their living partly by the sea and partly by the land?—Surely.

38,621. They followed both?—Everybody got the fish and sent them to Glasgow when they were dried; and they got a good bounty at first.

38,622. In order to improve the condition of the island, would you divide it among the people and settle them down?—Yes, if I got the chance.

38,623. And you believe they would prosper much more?—Yes.

38,624. And make a better fishing?—Yes.

38,625. *Mr Ranald Macdonald.*—Do you know from your own knowledge that there were thirty tenants paying rent in Vatersay sixty years ago, in Macneill's time?—Yes, I know there were thirty.

38,626. I have no doubt there may have been thirty families or thereabouts, but were they in the position of crofters paying rent, or were they in the position of servants to Miss Macneill, or dependants?—I am not certain, because I was far from it in my young days: but there are others who could tell.

38,627. I hold in my hand one of Macneill's rentals about that time, and there were no crofters in Vatersay then?—We are not exactly sure whom they would be paying.

38,628. They may have been servants or dependants of Miss Macneill?—They were not servants at all: they were farmers taking their living out of the ground: but I am not certain to whom they paid rent.

JOHN MACNEIL, Crofter, Breivig (No. 2) (58). John Macneil.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,629. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you been asked to give evidence on behalf of other people?—Yes, I was appointed by a meeting.

38,630. Have you heard the evidence given by the previous witnesses?—Yes.

38,631. Can you think of anything you would like to add to what they said?—They did not know about the settlement of the tenants on our side of the island.

38,632. Are there many crofters on Breivig?—Twenty.

38,633. What size of holdings have they?—I believe they were cut or surveyed about 16 acres originally. There were 6½ crofts originally, and they are now divided among 20 crofters.

38,634. Does that include the pasture?—Rocks, and everything else.

38,635. Do they live principally by fishing?—I am taking half my livelihood out of the sea, and no other man need say he could take anything else out of it.

38,636. Do you mean by that that you could not live entirely by the fishing but require the land to help you?—Yes, everybody knows, and you, yourselves, gentlemen, know that no one could live on the fishing without the help of the land.

38,637. Then, do the people at Breivig desire larger holdings?—Those who have got nothing are very desirous,—even I myself and many others who have less or more are quite desirous and earnestly wishing to get more land.

38,638. Are there more crofters now in Breivig than there used to be?—There are twenty instead of five.

38,639. Then the crofts have been sub-divided?—There were only five crofts altogether formerly.

38,640. How did they come to be so many now?—I will tell that specially and clearly. When John Macgregor was ground officer and factor in the parish he forced the crofters on the west side to clear these

Castlebay, Barra.

John Macneil.

places already mentioned for the late Dr Nicolson, and sent them out to the east side.

38,641. And these people were crowded in upon you, were they?—Yes, they were crowded upon us; and some of them went to America owing to the potato failure.

38,642. Would any of you people at Breivig be inclined to move to a new holding in a different place?—Yes, I am fifty-eight years of age, and poor as I am I am quite willing to remove.

38,643. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I think you said that the size of a croft at Breivig is 16 acres?—Yes, but that is my guess of it.

38,644. Are they now of the same size as the original five?—It is just now that I mean. There are now 20 crofts instead of the original 6½ crofts.

38,645. Are there 16 acres in each of the 20 crofts that are at Breivig?—I think according to the surveyor's measurement they are about the same breadth; but they are not the same length. There are 16 acres among four crofters.

38,646. And what rent do you pay just now?—£1.

38,647. What was the former rent?—I was paying £1, 10s. when I took the land.

38,648. Were you before the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

38,649. And was the rent reduced?—Yes: my rent was reduced before then by Mr Macdonald here, who made it 5s. less, as he removed that stance or site of a house that was set apart for the use of fishermen.

38,650. There was part of your croft taken away for some buildings, is that so?—Yes.

38,651. And you got a reduction of 5s.?—I got a reduction of 5s. from Mr Macdonald.

38,652. Leaving your rent at 25s.?—Yes, and the Crofters Commission then brought it down to £1.

38,653. What stock do you have?—Two cows and two horses.

38,654. Are there any cottars in Breivig?—Yes.

38,655. How many?—It is more than likely there are some of them here, but I have not got the exact number.*

38,656. Where did the cottars who are there come from?—They were born in the place itself, and they got married in the place, and they are without land.

38,657. They could not get land anywhere else in the island, and so had to settle down at Breivig?—Decidedly: they had no alternative.

38,658. You stated, I think, that the crofters came originally from Grean and Cliat?—Some of them did.

38,659. Was it five crofts in Breivig originally?—Yes, Alexander Macdonald was the first, Roderick Macneil the second, Neil Macneil the third, Murdo Mackinnon the fourth, and Alexander Macneil the fifth.

38,660. And those who came from Cliat and Grean, did they build houses for themselves at Breivig?—They have built houses themselves,—some of them are still to the fore, and some are dead: others went to America.

38,661. Were they removed from these places against their will?—It is very likely they were, when the places were cleared: they could not pay the rent when the potato crop failed.

38,662. They were better off, were they, at Cliat and Grean than they could possibly be at Breivig?—There is no doubt, because they had some land there from which they could get meat.

38,663. And were they settled in Breivig against the will of the people of Breivig?—Undoubtedly: they were crowded into huts on the foreshore where they had no land.

38,664. Have they made application recently to the estate for getting land, the people of Breivig?—Yes, I myself did; whether the cottars did or not, we did. I was several times asking for more land.

38,665. And where did you expect to get it?—Where it was in Vaslan, Cille, Cliat, Kilbar, Fuday, Fiaray, Leenish, Hellisay, and different other places, and on each side of North Bay where there is a good anchorage.

* Macneil has since written stating that the number was nine.

38,666. And what answer did you get from the estate?—Since I applied for what I want in the way of land, I never got a reply since 1877.

38,667. Was there land out of lease that might have been sub-divided among crofters lately?—I am not aware, unless there was Vatersay or North Bay; whether the doctor's son's lease ran out or not I don't know.

38,668. Don't you know whether Vatersay was out of lease and whether there was an application for it by the crofters?—Within my own knowledge, I am not aware that they asked any more of it than potato land.

38,669. You are not aware of an application being sent to the estate for Vatersay?—I am not aware of that: it might have been the case.

38,670. Do you consider that Vatersay is a suitable place for settling crofters in?—Yes, if they would only make lots suitable to fishermen: the poor man's money is equally valuable with the rich man's.

38,671. Do you think the crofters would be able to pay as good a rent for it, if it were divided amongst them, as the tacksman pays?—I am only a decrepit old man without a son and but one daughter, and I pay the last farthing.

38,672. But speaking for the people in general, can you give an opinion as to the amount of rent they would pay if the whole of Vatersay were divided amongst them?—Decidedly.

38,673. And you think they would prosecute the fishing with even greater vigour than they do just now if they had more land?—They would not be indebted to the merchant so much at any rate.

38,674. But the working of the land would not take them from the fishing, would it?—If they got three acres they could work it well in the winter time.

38,675. And they would be more comfortable and better able to have a boat and fishing implements generally?—There would be always suitable harbours with a little land.

38,676. Are there suitable harbours with a little water around Vatersay for fishing?—Oh, yes, indeed.

38,677. And at Cliat, if there were people settled there, would they be able to prosecute the fishing?—They would be able to prosecute the lobster fishing with a boat that could be launched and hauled as required in the winter time as well as summer.

38,678. So that you think the crofters would be able to make a comfortable living if they had a suitable holding of land?—Undoubtedly, if they could get as much as they would like, they would take the best part of their living out of them.

38,679. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Can you say at what time there were only five crofters at Breivig?—Yes. Were there not trustees on the island of Barra, the trustees from whom Col. Gordon bought Barra?

38,680. Could you mention the year as nearly as possible?—I did not mark the year, I had no schooling, but I will give as good a guess as I can. I was five years of age on coming to Breivig, and I am now fifty-eight.

38,681. That would make it about fifty-three years ago?—These men were there when I came, and they were there afterwards. You, yourself, Mr Macdonald, remember one of these men, Alexander Macdonald, that went to Inverness.

38,682. I have in my hand the rental of the estate of Barra sixty years ago, or to speak quite accurately fifty-eight years ago, and I find from it that there were twenty-three crofters in Breivig at that time?—I will give the names of those whom I have seen there, and you can compare them with the list.

38,683. If you will be good enough to mention the names, I will mark them off on the list?—Alexander Macdonald (No. 1) marching with Skallary.

38,684. Yes, he is entered at a rent of £6.—Roderick Macneil next.

38,685. The tailor, entered at £6.—Neil Macneil his brother.

38,686. Yes, at £10.—Murdo Mackinnon.

38,687. Yes, also £10.—Alexander Macneil.

Castlebay, Barra.

John Macneil.

38,688. Yes, £10.—These are the men I have seen there.

38,689. Do you remember a man of the name of Donald Mackinnon there paying £5?—I do not indeed, unless he was on the south side of Breivig. He was a crofter in Breivig.

38,690. Can you remember a crofter of the name of Donald Macneill paying £5?—Donald Macdonald was not in Breivig but in Leenish.

38,691. But it is Donald Macneill not Donald Macdonald?—That is the township constable: he was in Leenish, but he died in Inverness. He was not in Breivig unless he was cultivating his father's land. Alexander Macneill was his father.

38,692. Alexander Macneill is entered as paying a rent of £10, and Donald Macneill £5. Do you remember a crofter of the name of Rory Macdougall who paid £5?—I don't know who he was.

38,693. Do you remember another one of the name of John Macneill (Gallion)?—Yes, that man was there; John Macneill (Gallion) and Roderick Macneill (Gallion). John Macneill (Gallion*) had no land there.

38,694. He paid £5 of rent?—He might have done so before that time, but not since the time I have stated.

38,695. He was there fifty-eight years ago?—That was my age going there.

38,696. Then, Rory Macneill (Ronald), £5, 10s.?—That man was there, undoubtedly.

38,697. Rory Macneill (Gallion), £5, 10s.?—He was there, but he went away to America.

38,698. John Maclean, £5, 5s.?—I did not see him there.

38,699. Peter Taggart, £6, 10s.?—He was there, but recently; he was in Criochan where the planting is.

38,700. Donald Macintyre, £6, 10s.?—He was in Criochan.

38,701. John Mackinnon, £6, 10s.?—Yes, there was a John Mackinnon on the south side, and his son is living there.

38,702. Stephen Mackinnon?—Yes, he went to America.

38,703. John Macneill (Mary Ann), £6, 10s.?—Yes.

38,704. Allan Macintyre, £6, 10s.?—He was on the south side.

38,705. Angus Macpherson, £6, 10s.?—He was on the south side too.

38,706. Widow Macmillan, £5, 10s.?—I believe she was called so.

38,707. And Donald Gillies, £5, 10s.?—That is a man that went to Lochmaddy poorhouse.

38,708. Donald Macneill (Roger), £5, 10s.?—There is a son of his here.

38,709. And Archibald Macvicar, £6?—He was there too, on the south side.†

38,710. Then, I think you stated that the crofters at Grean and Cliat could not pay the rent after the potato failure and that that was the reason they were sent to Breivig?—Undoubtedly, I did believe it and do still believe it; and I had a great right to believe it.

38,711. I think you also stated that you thought Vatersay would be a good place for crofters?—It is that, and I can prove it.

38,712. Are you aware that there is a great scarcity of water in Vatersay?—There is plenty of water in Vatersay; it is easier to make a good well in Vatersay than in Bernera.

38,713. How could you make a well there?—A man could make a well there by sinking it under the level of the sea.

38,714. Are you aware that the tenant of Vatersay, when he gave up Ben-Tangaval to the fishermen, made a condition that he should have liberty to send over his cattle to Ben-Tangaval in dry seasons?—They might have done so of their own accord, but there were other conditions. There were people formerly in Vatersay who had any amount of water.

Castlebay, Barra.

John Macneil.

38,715. Then, do you think it would be a suitable thing at this time, when it is very important that the children of every one, rich and poor, should be educated, that they should be sent away to an island where there is no school?—There is not a day in the whole year, except perhaps a few days in the winter, when they cannot cross the small sound of Vatersay. I see them doing it every day.

38,716. I think you stated that the only way in which the fishing could be prosecuted on the west side opposite Cliat would be by little boats which they would have to pull ashore in rough weather?—Undoubtedly, they would not be safe unless they were.

38,717. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the size of the crofts at Breivig, do you distinctly say that you remember a time when the land now occupied by the twenty crofters was held by five?—I was five years of age when it was so held.

38,718. So you have no doubt of it?—No.

38,719. And you have no doubt that people were taken from other parts and settled on that land held by these five crofters?—I have no difficulty in saying so.

38,720. The crofts, then, are now much smaller than they were in your early recollection?—Oh, yes, they are that.

38,721. Do you think the island of Vatersay would accommodate a large number of crofters?—It would hold a good few, because what there is of land is good.

38,722. How many crofters do you think it would hold in a fairly comfortable way?—I think about twenty very well.

38,723. Would it not be reasonable to suppose that if there were twenty crofters settled there, a school would be built to accommodate the children?—I don't know, but that would be less expensive.

38,724. Have you not heard of schools being built for fewer than twenty families?—I have not heard it at Mingulay at any rate, because there were more than twenty families there.

38,725. But it would be quite reasonable to expect that a school would be put up for such a population as that?—Very reasonable, to build a not very expensive school.

38,726. Was there ever a church in Vatersay?—I am not aware; I do not remember that there was, but there was a house for congregation.

38,727. Had the minister of Barra to preach in Vatersay?—No, I did not hear of it, unless he had the goodwill himself to do it.

38,728. Are you aware that in the Statistical Account it is said that he had to preach there once in every four weeks*?—I never heard that.

38,729. But you know that there was a place there for meeting for worship?—I did hear so, but I did not know the place.

38,730. And if there were twenty crofters there, you have no fear that their spiritual interests would be neglected?—No, if they would see it for themselves,—if they did not want to keep their children without any education.

Duncan Campbell, Glen (32).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Duncan Campbell.

38,731. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft?—I have not.

38,732. Do you live with some relation who has?—I have nothing of the kind.

* 'Gallion' is a local translation of the old Gaelic name Gillebnan, or rather Gille-Adhamhnain, 'servant of Adamnan.'

† Macneill, in correcting the proof, wrote: 'With reference to questions 38,679 to 38,709, I can verify that there were only five crofters and five crofts in Breivig at the time I spoke of.' He further adds that he saw the men as stated in Mr Macdonald's questions, but these were in Lenish, Garrygal, and Creachan. Ten men were sent from Grean and Chat to Breivig and Lenish, where they got shares of crofts.

* 'There are three places of worship, viz., Kilbar, Borve, and Watersay. The minister preaches two Sundays at Borve, which is only a mile and a half from his own house; the third Sunday at Kilbar, at the distance of three miles, and the fourth at Watersay, which, including a ferry of one mile, is at the distance of five miles.'—*Old Statistical Account*, Vol. xiii., page 339.

38,733. Then, are you a cottar?—Yes.

38,734. Do you appear on behalf of the people of Glen? Were you appointed at a meeting to represent them?—Yes.

38,735. Have you any special evidence to lay before us as to the desire of the people of Glen for land?—The oldest men can walk upon the old places that men had in former times.

38,736. Do you mean upon the places formerly held by large tenants?—Yes.

38,737. How many crofters are there in Glen?—I am not sure of the number on that new land that was cleared recently, but the old township of Glen consists of ten crofts.

38,738. But the township has been enlarged a little, has it?—Well, yes; they got more land at any rate.

38,739. Are you anxious to get a croft if you could?—Yes, that is what we are for, and every one whom I represent.

38,740. But you do not wish to give up the fishing, do you?—No, we cannot get as much land as that; but we would like to have both.

38,741. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—When did Glen get an addition?—I am not certain of the exact year, but it is not very long since.

38,742. And when that addition was made, were some removed from Glen and settled in Garrygal?—I did not know any of them; but the cottars who were there formerly got over yonder.

38,743. Some of the cottars were removed and got land on Garrygal?—Yes.

38,744. Are they getting on well there?—They are better off than where they were at any rate.

38,745. How was the land occupied previously, before they got the addition?—It was a tack before then.

38,746. What was the name of the tack?—The sons of Dr Macgillivray had it; or else the Doctor himself at the time.

38,747. Were houses built for them by the estate?—I don't know anything about the arrangements among themselves, for I was not going into these matters.

38,748. Then you do not appear, do you, for the cottars of Garrygal?—I am here on behalf of the landless cottars.

38,749. And you are one of them yourself?—The identical man.

38,750. You are at present a cottar in Glen?—Yes.

38,751. How many cottars are there?—Between sixteen and seventeen, at a guess.

38,752. Who have no land?—Nor a house.

38,753. What do you mean by that?—They have got sorts of tenants in crevices on the foreshore; and some are in each other's houses.

38,754. How is it that they have not built better houses?—Because they won't get sites for houses at all.

38,755. Do you say that the estate refuses to give them sites for houses at Castlebay here, for prosecuting the fishing?—They did so, and to myself in particular first of all. (*Produces letter.*)

38,756. This letter which you exhibit shows a refusal, does it, on the part of the estate?—Yes, they were refusing, but they did not pull down the house above my head.

38,757. And how are you situated now with regard to a house?—I was bold enough to erect a small bit of a house, over yonder on the foreshore.

38,758. That house that you built is made of wood?—Yes.

38,759. And according to this other letter which you put in my hand, you are requested to take it down by 1st September and remove the materials. That refers to September of last year?—Yes.

38,760. How is it when Castlebay is such an important place for fishing that sites should be refused to fishermen?—We have no knowledge of the reason for the refusal; but we know that there are many places such as Vatersay, North Bay, and others where fishermen can thrive better than they do at present.

38,761. There are better places even than Castlebay you think?—Far ahead of Castlebay in every way, particularly for bait.

38,762. But has not Castlebay been regarded by the estate as the most suitable place for a fishing population?—We did not know anything like that; we were under the impression that they were huddled so close together and would get nothing at all.

38,763. So that your experience is that they refused to give you even as much of land as you could build a house on?—Likely, as I have tried it: I went and asked for it wisely and legally.

38,764. Are you a native of Barra?—Yes.

38,765. Is your father alive?—Yes.

38,766. Is he a crofter?—Yes.

38,767. Where does he live?—In Glen.

38,768. Have you been prosecuting the fishing yourself?—I still follow the fishing.

38,769. Have you a share in a boat?—Yes.

38,770. So that you are undoubtedly a *bonâ fide* fisherman?—Yes.

38,771. How do you expectto carry on the fishing without a stance for your house?—I do my best to keep the sort of house I have, and to improve it.

38,772. Is your house built on your father's croft?—No, it is only on the top of rocks, about five yards from high-water mark. I have seen the tide passing it.

38,773. You want to present these letters to the Commission to show your case, I suppose?—That was my intention,—to keep them so as to present them to you whenever you came, to show how we were persecuted.

38,774. You leave these letters with us for the present in reference to your case?—If it would make any difference.

38,775. The letters will be taken care of and will be handed back to you.—Before we leave where we are I will make up my mind whether to leave my letters or not.

38,776. I think the best plan would be as you have submitted the letters, that we should keep them in the meantime, and you can get them whenever you wish?—I will leave them, but I would like to leave them in the possession of this man (*indicating Mr Donald Macrae*), because I am better acquainted with him.

38,777. Are there any others in the same position as yourself,—refused a stance for a house?—There are worse than I am, by far.

38,778. In what way?—Because they have no houses. Badly off as I am, I have got a sort of a house, on the top of a rock.

38,779. The others have not ventured to put up a house against the regulations of the estate, and so have to live in their parent's houses, have they?—Some of them, and others in friend's houses.

38,780. And you do not think that that is any great encouragement for prosecuting the fishing?—None at all: it will keep back everything, themselves and the fishing as well.

38,781. But you would be quite willing, I suppose to take a croft too, as well as a stance for a house?—I would be willing to take some bit, I and every other one who has no land.

38,782. And you think there is plenty of land on the island of Vatersay?—Plenty, both north and south, where they could get land to put a beast on.

38,783. Do you agree in the main with the evidence that was given by the former witnesses?—I am in my own opinion and that of those whom I represent.

38,784. But you know the former witnesses mentioned the places specifically that were considered suitable for crofters. Do you agree that these places are so suitable?—Yes, I have heard that.

38,785. And do you agree with them as to these lands being suitable for crofter settlements?—Well, yes: but I thought those who had no land were the first men who should get some.

38,786. But you agree with them as to the suitability of the lands,—I am not speaking of the people who should be put there?—Oh, yes.

38,787. And do you think that having a croft would help a man to prosecute the fishing?—I think it would

Castlebay, Barra.

Duncan Campbell.

be the only way. I am under the belief that they would be very well helped if they even got only the site of a house.

38,788. And would they be better with a croft as well as the site of a house?—It is well known that they would.

38,789. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you duly apply to the estate authorities for a house stance?—I did.

38,790. Whom did you ask?—The factor.

38,791. Did you ask him more than once to give you a site?—I did, several times.

38,792. What answer did you get?—As I had no lands he would not remain speaking to me, and would not give me a reply.

38,793. Did he distinctly refuse to give you a stance?—He did, in presence of witnesses.

38,794. Did you go to any higher authority than the factor for a stance?—Well, no; but when I was refused I sent to the Fishery Board for the Fishery Act.

38,795. Then after you put up this hut, did the factor tell you you must pull down that house?—Yes, he told me so on the quay when he met me on his way going down to South Uist; and brought down policemen as witnesses, as it were.

38,796. What time did he give you to pull down the house and shift?—He came where I was, and he said twenty-four hours the law would give me, and to leave the ground in the same state as I got it: and then a little after he came with the police constable and told me that I would get forty-eight hours.

38,797. Do you know other fishermen who live in huts as you do, and who are being ordered out?—Yes, I know them: they are down in Breivig, one or two of them, and some of them are present here to-day.

38,798. Do you know any in Garrygal?—I know another man in my own neighbourhood,—if he got the chance of a site for a house I am not aware of it.

38,799. What is his name?—Malcolm Johnston.

38,800. Did you join with other cottars in an application to the estate for land for holdings?—I and they went together to hold meetings, but after what we had done the poor people did not get anything.

38,801. Did you sign a petition to the estate asking for land?—I was in the centre of them wherever they were.

38,802. Were you a party to a petition sent to the estate for land, and signed by about forty cottars?—I was there, but I am not sure whether my name was there or not. My name ought to be there, though I don't know whether it was put down or not.

38,803. Did you ask your name to be put to a petition from cottars?—No, I did not ask it separately.

38,804. With regard to the fishing industry, what portion of the island is most suitable for securing bait for the lines?—I live on the south end: they talk about Vatersay, but there is no place in Vatersay where they can get such bait as they get every day of the year.

38,805. My question was, what part of the island is most suitable for supplying fishermen with bait for their lines?—Vatersay and Eoligarry are suitable to procure bait.

38,806. And because of that, do you consider Vatersay and Eoligarry very suitable for fishermen's holdings?—Very suitable.

38,807. And do these two places afford good and safe anchorage for fishermen's boats?—Yes.

38,808. Do you think that a fishing population would be much more comfortable there than where they are placed?—As big as they are coming here, besides the native boats; it is in these places that they always take shelter.

38,809. So that alike for the matter of bait and for the matter of shelter for large boats and small boats, these two places are, in your opinion, eminently suitable for fishermen's holdings?—That is my opinion.

38,810. And further, do you believe that if facilities were afforded to the cottars for taking up lands there, they would be able to put up houses and use the land to profit, and follow the fishing as well, so as to improve their condition?—Yes, indeed, that is the only hope for them.

38,811. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Are you aware that before the passing of the Crofters Act Lady Cathcart very carefully considered the circumstances of the cottars who are fishermen in Castlebay, and made arrangements to give them 45 allotments on this side of Ben-Tangaval and 40 allotments at Garrygal; and that she also offered to give them house stances at 10s. 6d. along here at Castlebay?—I never heard of any such being done for cottars, but I have heard that those who got that new land would require to go into it with their houses,—to erect new houses.

Castlebay, Barra.

Duncan Campbell.

38,812. And you are not aware that the offer was printed and made publicly known?—I am not aware, nor have I heard them speaking about it for cottars.

38,813. Were you in Barra in the year 1883?—I must have been in it before then.

38,814. And you did not hear this?—No, I never heard anything like it, nor saw it.

38,815. And your father was the constable at Glen?—Yes, but through persecution they put me out of his house and I have built this wooden erection. They put him out of his employment as constable.

38,816. Are you aware also that although 45 allotments were offered, only 35 accepted the offer?—There might be two or three even at this day who would not take them; but I understood there were only three or four which were left without being taken.

38,817. Then you do know that there were a few of them who got the offer but did not accept it?—I have heard this very year that there were lots to be had there, but it would not suit the Glen people to come down there to the west end of Ben-Tangaval to a place called Keolach or the 'penfold.'

38,818. Did you not know that the intention was that the fishermen should have their houses in Castlebay, just as they have on the east, coast where the fishing is successfully prosecuted,—the houses being situated close together so that they could go in early and come out late, and one member of the crew need not wait for the others?—Oh, I have seen that, but I have seen them here far away and near the shore: those who were far away used to be the first men to come, and those who were near the shore the last.

38,819. Don't you think it is a very great convenience that those who are members of a boat's crew should have their houses near each other?—That is very likely; but a boat may have a certain crew this year and a very different crew next year.

38,820. But if the 75 fishermen were all to have their houses in Castlebay, even if they changed about, they would still be conveniently near each other, would not they?—Yes. We could not manage to get even as much as the site of a house.

38,821. You go to the east coast, do you not?—I was ever going there till last year.

38,822. Then you must be aware from your own knowledge that in all the parts of the east coast where fishing is successfully carried on the fishermen live near each other?—Yes, that is right enough.

38,823. And I suppose you also know that although the offer I have referred to was made to the Barra fishermen, they insisted upon having their houses scattered here and there over the land,—to have their crofts separate and their houses scattered all over the place: that is what they considered the best arrangement?—I don't think it would be as suitable; but I think if they were spread further apart it would be more comfortable than to have them huddled together as they are.

38,824. You said before that it was more convenient for the fishing that they should be near each other?—Yes, crews of the same boats, but it would not suit the fishermen to be huddled so close together.

38,825. Don't you know that the only place which has succeeded as fishing ports are those where there are a number of fishermen collected together,—I won't say huddled together, but collected near each other?—I don't know: I have not travelled many places, but as I see them here.

38,826. But you know this, that if a large quantity of fish is landed at a particular spot, arrangements can

Castlebay, Barra. — Duncan Campbell.

be made for selling it at a higher price: you will get the benefit of competition, or you can make arrangements for sending it quickly to market; whereas if it is in little places scattered all over, it is impossible to make these arrangements with the same conditions?—Not at all; they would get the ferry any time.

38,827. But where there is a large quantity of fish landed at the same spot, you are aware that there are fish salesmen there, and that the fish are put up to auction, so that the fishermen get the very highest price?—I know distinctly this, that most of the fishermen are in Castlebay.

38,828. Don't you know that where there are only a few fishermen, they must just take whatever price the fishcurers offer them, as there is no competition?—They must take what is going if they don't get better, whatever it may be.

38,829. Then you admit that in very small centres the fishermen do not get the benefit of competition?—I do not say as much as that: I only say that a big place could be made out of a small place as well as Castlebay.

38,830. May I ask on whose croft you built the wooden house you live in?—At the time when I built the house I never asked whose land it was: and I believe I was a quarter of a year there before I knew whose land it was.

38,831. It is built at Garrygal?—Yes.

38,832. And you know that Garrygal is let to tenants whose rents have been fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

38,833. Don't you know that if any of these crofters allow a cottar like you to build a house on his croft he loses the right to the holding?—I have very little knowledge of what they might do or say, but I know they have done very little to me as yet.

38,834. Did you get permission from any of the crofters at Garrygal to build your house?—No, I was not so far back, because I knew they had no permission to give me.

38,835. Did you know that it was against the Crofters Act, against the law of the land?—I knew that very well, as well as they knew it themselves.

38,836. Then you went deliberately and transgressed what you believed to be the law of the land, and you put the crofter into the position that he might be deprived of his holding. Do you think that was the right thing to do?—I was only looking out for myself: I was not looking for any other person.

38,837. What would be the result in Barra if every cottar were to do exactly as you did?—The result would be that they would have houses, whereas to-day they have none.

38,838. You know that the sub-division of lands and the building of additional houses on crofts has been the cause of a great deal of injury to the crofters themselves?—Very possibly, but any day that I do any damage to the interests of the crofter I will pay him.

38,839. Are you not aware that the estate officials have been found fault with for allowing cottars to build houses on crofts belonging to others?—I knew that well: but where were they to go? Were they to go out into the sea?

38,840. Did you know that the Garrygal people complained to Mr Paterson, the factor, that you built this house there without any authority?—He did not tell me, nor did they themselves tell me anything about that, but I think they are good men yet.

38,841. Now consider the position: don't you know that Mr Paterson was bound to take notice of what you did?—Possibly.

38,842. Because if he allowed you to do that, after the crofters had complained to him, all the other cottars in Barra would very likely do the same thing?—Indeed, and they will do it, if they do not get anything else.

38,843. Do you think they will deliberately violate the law of the land, the Crofters Act?—They won't go against any law: they have the Civil Law of the Kingdom any day, that they can put up a wooden hut of that sort.

38,844. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I think you stated that you made application to the estate for a stance for the house?—I asked of no person but the factor. Castlebay Barra. — Duncan Campbell.

38,845. But you asked it of the factor?—I asked it of the factor several times, in presence of witnesses.

38,846. And you were refused a stance?—I put it up then: I did not care whether I got permission or not.

38,847. So that it was not a matter of choice, your putting up a house there: you had to do it if you had to get a house at all, because the estate refused it?—If I had had a choice it would not be there.

38,848. And have they sufficient land near, not under the Crofters Act, that they could give you for building a house?—I was not aware, but through some proofs that I got myself that there were some bits of land over this way which they could use and which were not in the possession of crofters.

38,849. *Mr Gordon.*—What is your objection to building a house over at Castlebay here, where you were offered a stance?—No objection at all, but would take it very soon.

38,850. Did you answer correctly when you said you knew there were three or four places not taken up in Castlebay here?—I suspect there were, according to what I heard from men who knew better about it than I did.

38,851. Did you ask for any of these stances?—I did not ask in that particular place, but where it would be most suitable for himself to give it to me.

38,852. But you knew that there were several stances ready waiting if you chose to ask for them?—The only thing I asked was the site for the tent. I was waiting long for it, and did not get a reply: I was rather too much in a hurry, and could not wait longer.

38,853. Well, suppose you were to ask now for a stance in Castlebay and give up the tent, would you do that?—To-morrow morning if I had the chance.

38,854. Before you can say that you have been refused a stance for a house, while you are in the knowledge that stances were offered, you ought to exhaust the question by asking one of the stances that were publicly offered?—I have done so: I have exhausted the question to the utmost of my ability.

MICHAEL CAMPBELL, Crofter, Garrygall (about 70). Michael Campbell.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,855. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft at Garrygal?—Yes.

38,856. What rent do you pay?—30s.

38,857. Then you have not very much land, have you?—No.

38,858. Have you in common with the other witnesses a desire for a larger holding?—There is no one but would ask more if the land can be got; I, myself, may not be so anxious about it: such land as I have will do my turn.

38,859. Then you do not desire any more?—No, what I have will do me. I am an old man now, and cannot work land. I have, however, a large and able family, and I would wish more land for them.

38,860. Perhaps you make your living mostly by fishing?—I don't live by fishing, but by the proceeds of fishing from my family.

38,861. Your family fish?—Yes.

38,862. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—When was this township of Garrygal formed?—I am not quite sure,—seven or eight years ago, perhaps. [*Mr Ranald Macdonald.*—Eleven years ago.]

38,863. Were the people taken from Glen and settled there?—Every one of them was taken off, except some who came from Mingulay.

38,864. How did they remove from that island?—The island is so stormy that they could not live there; and there are too many there already.

38,865. And the remainder came from Glen where they were cottars before they settled in Garrygal?—Yes, every one of them.

38,866. Have they been benefited by the crofts that

Castlebay, Barra.
Michael Campbell.

they got in Garrygal?—Indeed, was it not a very great profit for a man who had nothing to have a little? Small as it is, they will in the winter time get potatoes out of it; but if they were without it, looking at the sea in the winter time they would have no potatoes. There are three in my house at sea all this year, and they did not do as much as would buy their meat.

38,867. Then you think that all the crofter townships in Barra might be benefited in the same way by the removal of the cottars and such of the crofters as might go to other places?—That is so. No man can make a living without a bit of land, particularly in these places. It is a wild place and they cannot get to sea in rough weather.

38,868. Do you think there is sufficient land in Barra for the settlement of the cottars in comfortable crofts?—Plenty, plenty.

38,869. How many crofters were settled in Garrygal?—Forty, between Castlebay and Breivig, on the Garrygal, all paying the same rent, 30s.

38,870. How were the houses built on that new township?—By the men themselves.

38,871. Were they able to build these houses without any assistance?—They were not quite able to build them; they have built them bit by bit. They were far from being able to do it at first; they began with a hut, and they would be working at the new house and living at the hut while at work.

38,872. Did they manage to put them up without getting assistance from the estate?—Yes: I am not aware of their getting any assistance from the estate: they did not ask it. There is no doubt if they did ask it they would get it.

38,873. And I have no doubt they stocked it also in the same way?—It was six years before they could put even a little upon it; but some of them were getting one beast after another till such time as now they have now more stocking.

38,874. But the place is stocked now, is it? Is there a sheep stock on it now?—Each has two cows and a few sheep, and some have none.

38,875. Was 30s. the original rent?—£2, 10s. was the original rent: the Crofters Commission reduced it to what it is.

38,876. When you went there the rent was £2, 10s.?—Yes.

38,877. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Did you, yourself, get any assistance from the proprietor when you put up your house?—Yes.

38,878. What was it?—He gave me slate and couples to put on it, till such time as I paid it.

38,879. You paid part of it?—I don't know whether I paid it all or not: I never got the account.

38,880. I may state that it was not all repaid: but this is a deserving man, and he got that assistance and was not pressed for the money.

Duncan Campbell.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, Kentangaval (38).
(Examined partly in English and partly in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,881. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—I go under the name, but I am not a crofter.

38,882. You have a very little bit perhaps?—My name was put down to it two years ago, but I have not got the croft yet.

38,883. You call yourself a cottar, do you?—I call myself a cottar as yet.

38,884. You are expecting to get some more land?—I hope so.

38,885. Or do you come before us with a desire to get more land? Have you any promise of land already?—My name has been down for land two years, since May last, but I have not got that land yet.

38,886. You mean on the estate?—Yes.

38,887. Have you heard the evidence that has been given to-day at great length?—Yes.

38,888. Do you agree with it?—Yes, I agree with some of it very well.

Castlebay, Barra.
Duncan Campbell.

38,889. Have you anything to add to it?—I have to add that it would be a good thing for the fishermen of Barra to be scattered down to the north end of the island and not kept down in Castlebay as Mr Macdonald desires they should be.

38,890. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Did not you enter into a written agreement some time ago about one of the lots in Kentangaval?—Yes.

38,891. And you paid the year's rent for it?—The half year's rent.

38,892. I suppose you know that there were seven people applying for it at the time, and that you were selected out of them?—I know that there were.

Anthony Campbell

ANTHONY CAMPBELL, Crofter, Kentangaval (67)—*examined.*

38,893. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft at Kentangaval?—Yes, a very bad one.

38,894. It is not a good one?—It cannot be much good.

38,895. Are you desirous of getting a croft in Barra?—A little croft would do me.

38,896. But you have a family perhaps who may come after you?—Yes.

38,897. Have you anything special to say about Kentangaval, or fresh evidence to give of any kind?—It is about forty years since I went to Kentangaval, and I see three families on one man's croft to-day.

38,898. The crofts there are too small?—Yes.

38,899. Do you agree generally with what the other witnesses have said about Barra?—I did not hear them.

Allan Macneil.

ALLAN MACNEIL, Crofter, Tangasdale (49).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,900. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft?—Yes.

38,901. What is the rent of it?—£7.

38,902. What stock do you keep?—Two horses, four cows, and a heifer, and about forty sheep, including lambs.

38,903. Are you able to make a living out of your croft?—No.

38,904. Have you a family?—Yes.

38,905. Do you follow the fishing at all?—No.

38,906. Then it is by the work of your family that the living is made, is it?—I have been troubled with rheumatism for some years and cannot do much work, but I generally employ a male or female servant to work for me, as my family are under age.

38,907. You keep a servant in addition to your family, owing to your complaint?—Yes, particularly in the autumn and spring time.

38,908. Then you could hardly take up more land if it were offered to you, could you?—Yes, if I could get suitable land; but the land I have is sand, and I have got quite enough of that.

38,909. But a good deal of Barra is either rock or sand, is it not?—There is a part of it at the west side.

38,910. Do you agree with the evidence you have heard?—I have no difference of opinion.

38,911. Have you any additional evidence to give besides what we have heard already?—I have nothing to add.

38,912. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Are there many cottars in your township?—There are six.

38,913. Do these get potato ground from the crofters?—Sometimes they get small bits, the setting of a few potatoes.

38,914. Are these cottars fishermen?—Some of them are fishermen: others are labourers, and some are old maids.

38,915. Would those of them who are fishermen be willing to take crofts of their own?—It is my belief that they are very desirous of getting them, and that they would be better than they are.

38,916. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—May I ask whether you have the

Castlebay, Barra.

best croft in Tangasdale?—I have the largest croft there.

38,917. Did you accept a share or an allotment on Ben-Tangaval when it was refused by the fishermen?—Yes, I had a share of it, whether it was refused by fishermen or not.

38,918. And you gave it up of your own accord?—Yes, I did.

38,919. Would you be willing now to give up a portion of this large croft that you have to accommodate some of the fishermen, seeing that it is near Castlebay?—No.

Murdoch Mackinnon.

MURDOCH MACKINNON, Crofter, Tangasdale (86)—*examined.*

38,920. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft?—I have half a croft.

38,921. Have you a family alive who maintain you?—I have only a daughter left along with me; the rest are away.

38,922. But do your children who are away help you?—Yes, I could not live unless they did so. I have one son who does exceedingly well to me.

38,923. Have you heard the evidence that has been given to-day?—I did not hear it very well.

38,924. *Mr Gordon.*—What size of croft have you?—Very little indeed, only half a croft.

38,925. Do you want any more land?—I do not want it, because I cannot use it, unless my son would help me as he is doing.

38,926. Is there any desire for larger crofts among the people in your township?—Where there is a young man in a family there is such a desire. I lost my assistance, and I have not the courage to take any more land.

Hugh Maclean.

HUGH MACLEAN, Crofter, Borve (42).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

38,927. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft in Borve?—I have the half of one croft and the fourth of another.

38,928. That is not very much altogether, is it?—No.

38,929. Then do you live by fishing?—At times of the year.

38,930. Have you a good harbour at Borve?—Not except in good weather.

38,931. You have to haul up your boats there, have you?—Not except in very bad weather: we can ride them at anchor.

38,932. How many families are there in Borve?—Thirty-three families.

38,933. Are there any cottars?—Yes, thirteen extra families.

38,934. Do these cottars all have houses upon the crofters' land?—Some of them, but the greater number are on the common. They are all a burden on the crofts.

38,935. Is there a desire among the crofters to get larger holdings?—Yes.

38,936. And is there land available in your neighbourhood, or would you have to go to the end of the island?—I don't know of any other land in our neighbourhood, unless we go to the north end of the island, or any part of the Eoligary Farm.

38,937. Or possibly to Vatersay which has been mentioned in evidence?—Just so.

38,938. Would some of you Borve people be willing to leave Borve and take new holdings if you were offered them?—I think they would.

38,939. *Mr Gordon.*—Did you hear what the other witnesses said?—Yes.

38,940. And do you agree with them generally?—Yes.

38,941. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—When did you get your croft at Borve?—About fourteen or fifteen years ago.

38,942. Is it quite as long as that? Was it not when the people went to Allasdale?—It was then that I got the fourth of the croft.

38,943. Were not you a cottar about eleven years ago when I was over in Barra here?—I was two years married without land after I left my mother's family: before then I was in my mother's house keeping up the land that they had.

Castlebay, Barra.

Hugh Maclean.

38,944. But you were not the crofter then?—No.

38,945. You had a horse and a cow and two stirks with eight or nine sheep eleven years ago?—Yes.

38,946. Then when the people went to Allasdale you got lands of your own?—Yes.

38,947. Could you give me the names of any of the crofters at Borve who would be willing to remove?—I did not examine them, but I, myself, am one.

38,948. What sort of a croft would tempt you to go away?—I think any man to take the best part of his living out of a croft would require about 8 or 9 acres of arable land, exclusive of the Common.

38,949. How many acres have you now?—I don't know how to measure in acres, but I can give a guess of it.

38,950. Well, would you give a guess?—I believe I have 4 or 5 acres of land that could be ploughed somewhere or another, with the help of a spade.

38,951. And how many of pasture?—I believe upwards of as much again.

38,952. Then you have no share of the common ground,—the *machair* and the hill?—Yes.

38,953. Can you tell me what stock you have?—Two cows, two horses, a heifer, and a stirk.

38,954. And how many sheep?—Seven or eight and about three one-year olds.

38,955. How many sheep altogether?—About twelve.

38,956. Are you sure you have no more?—None except this year's lambs.

38,957. Don't you think that is a very fair stock for a £3 rent?—If we had a living ourselves after feeding our stock. I buy a third part of the feeding for the stock.

38,958. Were you ever on the mainland of Scotland?—Yes, in parts of it.

38,959. Did you ever meet a crofter there paying £3 who could keep the same number of stock that you have?—I never inquired what they were paying or keeping, but I am sure one cow there would cost as much in food as all my cattle together.

38,960. Does that mean that you were overstocking your place?—Yes, because they are not kept.

38,961. Is not that bad management?—Well, we cannot do without them. I am compelled to do it by my circumstances.

Donald Macintyre

DONALD MACINTYRE, Castlebay—*examined.*

38,962. *Mr Forsyth.*—I understand you wish to make some statement to us?—It is about my own affairs.

38,963. Do you mean that you come on your own behalf, and not representing anybody else?—Well, of course, to help others as well as I could if possible.

38,964. And you want to make a statement as to our own affairs. Is it in connection with land?—Yes.

38,965. Have you a croft?—No.

38,966. You have a house, I presume?—No.

38,967. Are you living with relatives?—I live with my father-in-law.

38,968. Are you a Barra man?—I am a Barra man, and my ancestors before me.

38,969. You are desirous of getting a holding, are you?—Yes, I came for that purpose too, but I have been for the last eight or nine years in my father-in-law's house. I asked for a stance to build a house: I offered to build a cottage with slated roof at Castlebay, where I would be near my boats and my comrades. I was willing to pay whatever rent they might put on it, even on the rocks close to the shore; it would not matter so long as the sea did not wash me away. I could not get the chance, however.

38,970. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is your father-in-law a crofter?—Yes.

Castlebay, Barra.

Donald Macintyre.

38,971. And you say you have been for many years asking for a croft?—For nine years regularly: I never missed a year.

38,972. Did you sign a letter asking for a stance?—I offered in Garrygal where there was a lot to let, but another man got it.

38,973. Do you follow the fishing?—Yes, that is how I make my living.

38,974. Have you got a family?—Yes.

38,975. Can you suggest any reason why you were refused a site, seeing that the estate make out that they wish to encourage the fishing industry at Castlebay?—No, I cannot say why I should be refused a stance. I don't see why I should not get one as well as any other.

38,976. Did they give you any reason for refusing it?—Not that I remember, until I was told there was no place to put up one.

38,977. Are there others in the same position, who are refused sites?—It appears there are a good many.

38,978. Can you name any person who is in the same position,—who wishes to build but cannot get a site?—John Maccallum, Malcolm Johnston, Glen, Rory Gillies, and others.

38,979. You stated that these men, like yourself, are being refused stances for their houses?—Yes.

38,980. Did any of these put up a shed or kind of dwelling-house for themselves against the will of the estate?—Not that I know.

38,981. What about Johnston?—He bought the shed, and it is there still.

38,982. From whom did he buy it? [*Mr Donald Macrae.*—Mr Malcolm Johnston has requested me to state on his behalf that he is present, and is very anxious to make a personal statement with regard to his own stance.]

38,983. *Mr Ranald Macdonald, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Were you aware that stances were marked off for fishermen along this road in 1883?—No, I was not aware of such a thing.

38,984. Was it not printed and circulated among the people here?—If it was I did not see it or hear of it.

38,985. Were you aware that forty-five allotments for fishermen were marked off at Ben-Tangaval and that only thirty-five applied?—Yes.

38,986. Did you apply at that time?—I applied for any part where I could get a stance or a station.

38,987. Did you apply for a stance at Ben-Tangaval?—I did.

38,988. Why did not you get it?—That is more than I can say: I have been wondering why I did not.

38,989. Did you make a written application?—I made no application whatever, because an application from the like of me is nothing.

38,990. My information is that forty-five allotments were offered and only thirty-five accepted, and in order to divide the place among the people the rent had to be increased to more than was originally contemplated?—Yes, that is right enough; but if it was forty-five over again what benefit is that to me when I could not get it?

38,991. I was here myself at the time, did you apply to me for it?—No, I did not apply to you, but I thought the person to whom I applied might give me the chance as well as you; I thought he had the command and control over the land that would enable him to give me a place if it was to let.

38,992. Are you aware that Lady Cathcart has no power to allow you or any one to build upon the crofters' holdings?—Yes, I know that.

38,993. And are you aware that the crofters have no power to allow you or any one to do so?—Yes, I know that.

38,994. And you know that the law was enacted by Parliament in order to prevent the congestion which takes place whenever too many are allowed to settle on the land?—Yes, but I am aware that there are other places where houses could be built as well as on crofters' lands.

38,995. There is no great available land for fishermen's crofts just now, but there is a lot in Ben-Tangaval which you could apply for?—Yes, but it is not sufficient for me. The only reserved land hereabout is the fish-curing station.

Castlebay, Barra.

Donald Macintyre.

38,996. You can offer for this vacant land if you think proper.

38,997. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Do you know that there are lands in Castlebay that are not occupied by crofters?—Yes, I know by hearing it from old people here. I am not very long in Castlebay, but by hearing from other people I know that there is land in Castlebay and pretty close to the house where I stay at present; it was to be put for stances of houses and then let out to the crofters again instead.

38,998. But here, along the shore here?—I don't know anything about this at all.

38,999. Do you know that there is plenty land here for sites that is not crofter land?—So far as I understand, it is all crofters' land here.

39,000. *Mr Ranald Macdonald.*—It is all crofters' land except the curing station. [*To witness.*] What sort of a house would you be able to build?—That is more than I am able to state.

Malcolm Johnston.

MALCOLM JOHNSTON, Fisherman, Garrygal—*examined.*

39,001. *Mr Forsyth.*—Did you wish to get a stance for a house here?—Yes.

39,002. In Castlebay?—Yes.

39,003. And do you find you cannot get one?—Cannot get one.

39,004. You are anxious to continue your work here as a fisherman and you find that a great drawback, do you?—Yes.

39,005. I suppose you are aware that there are, so far as we understand, nothing but crofters' lands and curing stations in Castlebay?—I am aware that Mr Paterson, the factor, promised me the site of a house over about here, and after applying for it the next time I did not get it. Seemingly, it was under the Crofters Act when I asked for it.

39,006. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—What exact place do you refer to?—There is a house down there, between here and Mrs Glancy's, at the head of the little loch.

39,007. Do you know if there is any part of Garrygal reserved from the crofters?—Yes, all the curing station was reserved from the crofters when they took Garrygal.

39,008. In that part that is reserved, would it not be possible for them to give a stance for a house?—I should think so.

39,009. Would that be a suitable place?—Yes.

39,010. There was some mention made of your having purchased a shed. What have you to say about that?—I applied to Mr Paterson here for the site of a house and was refused. I then asked Mr Ross, fishcurer, Castlebay, for the loan, for a while, of his wooden shed on the curing station until I should get up a house for myself. He gave me that, and no sooner was I in than Mr Paterson came and told me I must leave it. He promised me the site of a house on condition that I would leave the shed. So I left the shed, and I came from Canna purposely to get the site of the house and the share of the hill in Garrygal. He asked me for security, and I gave him the letter of security, and the next time I asked him for it he said there were so many after it that her ladyship was to choose who was to get it, and I did not get it. After that he would not stop to speak to me, but I followed him to South Uist, and he made me write a letter stating what sort of house I would like to build. I stated this in a letter and sent it in to him at the hotel here, but never heard a word of it since. This shed that I was formerly in I bought from Mr Ross for £12. I understand that Mr Paterson has been at Mr Ross for letting me into the shed at present.

39,011. That shed is not situated on the crofters' land?—No, at the curing station.

39,012. You, first of all, removed from this shed which you now occupy under promise of getting a site for a house?—Yes.

Castlebay, Barra.

Malcolm Johnston.

39,013. Which promise has not been fulfilled?—No.

39,014. And now they wish to prevent you from returning to the shed?—Yes.

39,015. Without the promise of a stance?—Yes, I have had to go back to the same old place again.

39,016. Did you buy this shed with the idea of its being a dwelling-place for you?—Yes, I could not take anything else.

39,017. But you simply wish to have it there as a temporary place until you get another house of a more permanent character?—It was under that impression that I bought the house. I had to go there until I could get somewhere else.

39,018. You are perfectly distinct in your statement that you have been refused a site over and over again? [*Mr Ranald Macdonald.*—I may state at once that Lady Cathcart is most anxious to encourage the fishermen, and her object all along has been to concentrate the fishing at Castlebay, and so far as she has the power to give them stances at Castlebay, provided they put up decent houses.]

Ranald Macdonald.

RANALD MACDONALD, Cluny Castle, Aberdeen, Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart (59)—*examined.*

39,019. *Mr Forsyth.*—You have a statement to submit to us I believe?—Yes.

39,020. Kindly read it.—'I am the factor on Lady 'Cathcart's mainland estates and I have also, for a 'long period, acted as secretary and adviser to her 'ladyship in connection with the management of her 'affairs generally. I took special interest in guiding 'the improvements she endeavoured to carry out after 'she succeeded to the Long Island Estates, including 'the re-arrangement and enlargement of crofter holdings, and the erection of piers and hotels, &c. Before 'Lady Cathcart's succession I was factor for the late 'Mr Gordon, and I was previously private secretary to 'the late Colonel Gordon for several years, up to the 'time of his death in 1858. I have spent the whole 'of my business life in the service of the successive 'proprietors of the estates now belonging to Lady Cathcart. I am a native of the Long Island and have been all my life intimately acquainted with the position of the estates and of the people. I must explain, 'however, that during recent years I have not been so 'closely associated with the management of these 'estates as I was down to a comparatively recent period 'when extensive estate improvements were carried 'out.

'The Estate of Barra, which includes the main island 'of Barra and the smaller islands, comprising the 'parish of Barra, was at one time the property of the 'late General Macneill of Barra. It was purchased by 'Colonel Gordon in the year 1840 at a price of '£38,050.

'*Particulars of estate before* 1840.—So far as I can 'ascertain the old estate documents do not appear to 'have been delivered to Colonel Gordon along with the 'title deeds of the estate, and there is not much material 'from which to gather information as to the holdings 'on the estate during General Macneill's time prior to 'the purchase, but I have the rental for the year from 'Whitsunday 1836 to Whitsunday 1837, being the 'rental, I believe, on which the estate was purchased. 'The total rental of land let to tenants and crofters in '1836 was £1948, 17s. 7d. This was in addition to 'subjects in General Macneill's own hands of the 'estimated annual value of £950. The total rental 'at the time of the purchase, including mansion-house 'and fishings and £500 for kelp, was brought up to '£3695. The present rental of the estate is about '£2268, which includes the rents of houses and other 'subjects created since the estate was purchased by the 'expenditure of capital. The land rental, including 'curing stations, is £2122; as against £2995 in 1836, 'the reduction being about 30 per cent.

'The total area of the Estate of Barra is:—

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

Land,	acres	22,190·649
Roads,		21·134
Water,		99·128
Foreshore,		2604·751
Total acres,		24,915·662

'The following are the details of the larger holdings 'at present existing on the estate:—

	Arable.	Pasture.	Total.	Rent.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	£
Eoligary,	320	4791	5111	490
Vatersay,	–	3472	3472	400
Bayherivagh,	151	1025	1176	70
Total,	471	9288	9759	960

'The following are the details of the crofter townships 'and other holdings occupied by the smaller tenants:—

Township.	Number of holdings.	Arable.	Pasture.	Common pasture.	Rent.
		ac. ro. po.	ac. ro. po.	Acres.	£ s. d.
1. Glen,	20	20 1 13	59 3 10	108	29 8 0
2. Kentangaval,	17	16 2 35	130 3 21	147	29 5 6
3. Tangasdale,	17	31 2 –	197 2 4	200	37 12 0
4. Borve,	35	94 1 25	146 5 16	383	77 10 0
5. Craigstone,	18	35 – –	226 – 16	276	55 17 0
6. Allasdale,	7	30 – 6	104 – –	945	80 0 0
7. Brevig,	19	45 3 14	176 2 1	–	30 7 0
8. Earsary,	22	34 2 8	114 1 29	–	24 18 0
9. Skallary,	7	15 – 16	101 – 16	–	13 14 0
10. Bualnabodach,	9	14 1 27	127 – 14	–	13 12 0
11. Leenish,	12	29 1 24	32 1 14	9	18 0 0
12. Rhullos,	1	47 – –	224 3 36	–	15 0 0
13. Bruernish,	21	44 – –	205 – 32	440	36 10 0
14. Bentangaval,	35	28 – –	1722 2 16	–	70 0 0
15. Garrygall,	40	59 – –	906 – –	–	60 0 0
16. Pabbay,	1	10 – –	559 1 4	–	11 0 0
17. Mingulay,	19	41 3 36	65 1 34	1410	51 6 0
18. Bernera,	4	13 2 34	94 – 8	252	18 15 0
Add to Common Pasture extent of general hill commonty,	–	–	–	1991	–
Totals,	304	611 – –	5194 2 31	6166	672 14 6

'*Crofter rental in* 1840 *and* 1845.—The average rent 'among the smaller holdings is about £2, 4s. The 'average rent per acre of the larger holdings is about 2s. 'and of the smaller holdings is about 1s. 1½d.

'From the rental at the date of Colonel Gordon's 'purchase, I have ascertained that the particulars of 'crofter holdings at that date were as under stated, and 'as Colonel Gordon reduced to a considerable extent the 'crofter rents shortly after his purchase of the estate. 'I show also the particulars of the crofter holdings in 'the year 1845:—

Township.	1840.		1845.	
	Number of holdings.	Rent.	Number of holdings.	Rent.
		£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Glen,	25	169 15 0	19	79 18 4
Kentangaval,	11	85 10 0	21	68 5 0
Tangasdale,	14	100 0 0	13	56 0 0
Borve,	31	222 0 0	35	135 6 10
Craigstone,	15	112 11 7	23	85 19 6
Allasdale,	17	140 9 0	21	80 1 8
Brevig,	22	145 5 0	16	79 4 6
Ersary,	8	55 0 0	13	44 0 0
Skallary,	4	41 0 0	5	36 0 0
Leenish,	–	–	6	20 0 0
Balnabodach,	1	25 0 0	2	16 0 0
Rhullos,	6	37 7 6	11	44 4 0
Bruernish,	17	117 12 0	24	55 0 0
Ledaig,	–	–	14	20 0 0
Pabbay,	2	20 0 0	3	20 0 0
Mingulay,	11	82 0 0	19	48 16 8
Berners,	4	20 0 0	4	17 10 0
Hillesay,	8	56 14 0	13	31 2 2
Fuay,	6	36 0 0	–	–
Uigh,	6	36 0 0	–	–
Green,	27	165 7 0	31	81 8 2
Climd,	13	107 7 0	13	52 9 6
Lamalum,	1	5 0 0	–	–
Gighs,	1	0 15 0	–	–
Total,	250	1780 12 7	306	1091 6 4

Castlebay, Barra. — Ranald Macdonald.

'*States showing effect of visits of Crofters Commission.* '—In the years 1890 and 1891 Barra was visited by a 'division of the Crofters Commission, and I have framed 'a statement showing the result of these visits, and 'also how the rents fixed by the Commission have been 'paid. I will state the totals brought out in this state- 'ment which I put in (Appendix A, page 935). The 'Commission dealt with 278 holdings of a total rental 'of £814, 13s., the arrears on which amounted to £7583, '15s. 10d. For these holdings the Commission fixed 'the rent at £524, 14s., being a reduction of 35·801 per 'cent., and of the above sum of arrears submitted to 'them the Commissioners ordered to be paid £1423, 19s. 'or 22 per cent. Including the rent up to Martinmas '1893, and giving credit for all payments to this date, I 'find that the rents and arrears due under the decisions 'of the Commission amount to £2643, 6s.; of this sum '£2391, 8s. has been paid, leaving £251, 18s. still 'due or slightly more than a half year's rent. There 'are at present 69 crofters in arrear and 229 clear.

'*Barra Fishing.*—The population in Barra is de- 'pendent to a considerable extent on fishing, and I 'believe I am right in saying that, with properly 'equipped boats and other favourable conditions, they 'make admirable fishermen. The harvest of the sea, 'properly developed, is much more important for the 'Barra people than the harvest of the land, which is 'more adapted for grazing than the production of crops, 'and, therefore, the general tendency of all the re- 'arrangements by Lady Cathcart has been to bring the 'crofter fishermen nearer to the great natural harbour 'of Castlebay and the other natural harbours on the coast, 'as it is undeniable that the fishing industry cannot 'prosper when the fishermen are scattered here and 'there. It is absolutely necessary that a considerable 'number of fishermen should be residing in close prox- 'imity to one another to enable crews to start together, 'late and early as circumstances require, and to attract 'fish buyers to a common centre, and to make proper 'arrangements for the disposal of the fish caught. The 'importance of these requirements is well understood 'and acted upon by the most successful fishermen on the 'east coast of Scotland. It was Lady Cathcart's inten- 'tion to place these advantages within the reach of the 'Barra fishermen as far as local circumstances would 'permit. In addition to allotments, it was proposed 'to give to the fishermen at Castlebay building stances, 'with gardens attached, at the annual ground rent of '10s. 6d., so that they could be conveniently near each 'other, and that they would get the benefit of competi- 'tion for their fish which can never be got to the full 'extent where the fishermen are distributed in small 'numbers at different places.

'*General improvement by Lady Cathcart.*—Lady 'Cathcart on her succession devoted a great deal of 'care and thought to the position of the people on her 'Long Island Estates, and devised and carried through 'various schemes for their improvement. In Barra, 'where the principal industry was fishing, she con- 'structed a pier, erected an hotel, and gave encourage- 'ment for the erection of shops and curing stations. 'She also entered into an arrangement under which the 'telegraph was extended first to Lochboisdale under a 'large guarantee from herself alone, and afterwards to 'Castlebay under a joint guarantee by the Fishery 'Board and Lady Cathcart.

'The question of the relation of the people to the 'land began to occupy a good deal of public attention 'shortly after Lady Cathcart's succession, and it was a 'matter to which she gave most anxious consideration 'from a date long anterior to the public agitation in 'regard to it.

'In the year 1883 the island of Vatersay, which 'had been in the possession of a single tenant, fell out 'of lease and an application was made by 45 crofters 'and others living at Glen and Castlebay who wished 'to have the island divided up among them, and to 'remove with their families to the island. This 'application came before Lady Cathcart, who, after 'careful local inquiry, sent the following letter to the 'petitioners:—

'Titness Park,
Sunninghill, Berks,
'14*th March* 1883.

Castlebay, Barra. — Ranald Macdonald.

'To Mr John M'Lean, and the other crofters and 'cottars of Glen and Castlebay, Barra; offerers 'for the island of Vatersay.

'My secretary reported to me the import of the 'interview he had with your deputation at Aberdeen, 'and your written offer for the island of Vatersay, 'dated 15th February, has been since submitted to me.

'I regret that I do not see my way to accept your 'offer; but, although it is not usual for a proprietor to 'give reasons why an offer for a farm has been declined, 'yet in the special circumstances of this case, I think 'it right to make you aware of some of the reasons 'which have influenced me in not acceding to your 'proposals. I need scarcely assure you that this matter 'has received my most anxious consideration, and after 'weighing the whole circumstances, and taking the 'best advice, I have come to the conclusion that, even 'if you had offered a full rent for the island it would 'be a great mistake to plant a crofter population in the 'isolated island of Vatersay—never hitherto occupied 'by crofters—for the following among other reasons: '—(1st) the water supply in this island, in dry 'seasons, fails, and to meet the difficulty connected 'with this risk Bentangaval has hitherto been let to 'the tenant of Vatersay, as a shift for the stock in very 'dry seasons; (2nd) the offer submitted to me has the names of 45 people appended to it—each the head of, 'or representing, a family all presently located at or near 'Castlebay, on the main island of Barra, and mainly 'dependent on the fishing industry. With the view of 'developing the fishing, and thus helping these people, 'I have recently expended a large sum of money in the 'erection of an excellent pier in a sheltered position at 'Castlebay, most conveniently situated for them, and 'have also built there a comfortable hotel for the 'accommodation of the fish merchants and others, 'where also the principal public school has recently 'been built: to transfer 45 families with upwards of '100 children, or even a less number,—from a locality 'where these advantages have so lately been provided 'at great expense,—to an island without a school, 'church, shop, post office, medical practitioner, or 'any other civilizing influence would, in my opinion, 'be a retrograde movement, and against the best 'interests of the people themselves; (3rd) in your offer 'for Vatersay no information is given as to the ability 'of the applicants to pay the rent, or stock the island; 'or how the outlay necessary to provide houses and 'offices for 45 families is to be met, while most of 'those making the application to be so transferred are 'already deeply in arrear with their present rents; '(4th) I am satisfied, from past experience, that it 'is injudicious from every point of view; and a misfor- 'tune alike for proprietor and people, to have a populous 'crofter colony in a small isolated island. I refer to 'Mingulay, an island in the Barra group, as an instance 'of this. It has a considerable crofter population, and 'their social condition may be judged of by the fact that 'they are upwards of nine years in arrear of rent. The 'rental of Mingulay is £57, 7s., and the arrears when the 'accounts were last made up amounted to £534, 10s. 8d. 'The other small island inhabited by crofters is Eriskay, 'and it was from this island that the cry about want of 'food was first heard this season. But while I am con- 'vinced that your translation to Vatersay would be a 'great mistake, even in your own interests, I am 'desirous so to arrange the re-letting of this grazing 'as to benefit the Barra crofters, by setting free land 'in the main island of Barra, which on certain definite 'terms may be let to crofters to augment their present 'crofts,—my object being to carry out in Barra the 'scheme commenced, and so far successfully carried out 'in Benbecula, so far as the special circumstances 'permit, viz.:—to increase as far as practicable the size 'of the crofts occupied by tenants who depend on 'husbandry for their livelihood, so that they may be

Castlebay, Barra. — Ranald Macdonald.

'large enough to provide work for a family all the 'year round, and yield at least as much as would be 'food for the family. The Estate Regulations, 'specially prepared in 1879 for the encouragement of 'crofters, give all reasonable facilities for the improve- 'ment of the crofts by fencing and draining, &c., and 'I may mention that leases have already been given 'to upwards of 200 crofters in the development of my 'plans for their improvement.

'Most of the forty-five applicants for the island of 'Vatersay are, as already mentioned, mainly engaged in 'the fishing industry, and I am in hopes that they will 'adopt more and more the system of prosecuting the 'fishing found by the east coast fishermen, by ex- 'perience, to be the most successful and conducive to 'their prosperity and comfort.

'The increasing demand for fish in the large towns, 'and the increasing facilities for sending fresh fish to 'the markets, promise better chances of success to the 'fishermen than to the small crofters; and from the 'geographical position of Barra, surrounded with 'excellent fishing banks, I believe the social condition 'of the inhabitants will be improved by developing the 'fishing industry, and in order to promote this, every 'effort should be made to secure more satisfactory 'postal and telegraphic communication with the main- 'land, and greater facilities for conveying fresh fish to 'the railway terminus at Oban. By concentrating 'your energies in that direction, rather than seeking to 'obtain a precarious living on a small isolated island, 'with all the drawbacks I have mentioned, you would, 'in my view, not only improve your own condition but 'assist in the development of an industry of national 'importance.

'I am not stating mere theories in tendering to you 'this advice, for I can state from my own personal ex- 'perience and knowledge that not one of hundreds of 'the successful fishermen on the Cluny Estates in the 'counties of Aberdeen and Banff has as much as one 'acre of land. Having found from experience that the 'cultivation of land and the prosecution of the fishing 'cannot be successfully carried on concurrently, they 'have voluntarily given up the lots formerly occupied 'by them, and now concentrate their efforts on the 'fishing, which they find pays better; and the lots, still 'known as "Fisher lotted land" are let to others. I do 'not expect a change like this to take place at once in 'Barra, where in present circumstances, it is necessary 'for the comfort of a fisherman's family, to have land 'for potatoes and for keeping a cow for milk, but I 'hope you who are mainly occupied in fishing will, on 'reconsidering the whole matter, be satisfied that the 'interests both of proprietor and tenant will be best 'promoted by acting on the principles which I have 'thus indicatad in a general way, and which it will be 'my endeavour to carry out for the good of all con- 'cerned. I remain, yours faithfully,

'(Signed) EMILY GORDON CATHCART.'

Lady Cathcart's Experiments.—'While, for the reasons 'stated in this letter Lady Cathcart did not divide the 'island of Vatersay into crofts, she has made several 'experiments in the way of breaking up considerable 'portions of large grazings, in all extending to over 4500 'acres, to be divided as large crofts and as allotments 'to fishermen, the particulars and the results of which I 'shall now endeavour to explain.

'I have already referred to the application by 45 'crofters and others to have the island of Vatersay 'divided among them and to Lady Cathcart's reason 'for declining the application. In the letter conveying 'her decision Lady Cathcart stated that she was desirous 'so to arrange the re-letting of Vatersay as to benefit the 'Barra crofters by setting free lands in the main island 'of Barra which might be partly divided into large 'crofts and partly into allotments for fishermen.'

Bentangaval.—'The grazing of Bentangaval, situated 'on the main island of Barra, conveniently near the 'harbour of Castlebay, and extending to 1750 acres, 'had, prior to 1883, been let with the island of 'Vatersay. In re-arranging the lease of Vatersay, the 'peninsula of Bentangaval was reserved with the 'object of letting it to the fisherman settled near Castle- 'bay. A memorandum was prepared at the time 'setting forth the terms on which Lady Cathcart was 'prepared to let. That memorandum was as follows':—

Castlebay, Barra. — Ranald Macdonald.

Memorandum.—'Lady Gordon Cathcart has sus- 'pended consideration of the offers received for 'Bentangaval, to give an opportunity to fishermen and 'others who want potato ground and cows' grass to 'make definite proposals to take this piece of ground, 'containing 1750 acres.

'It is proposed to give an opportunity to 45 heads 'of families who can produce certificates of good char- 'acter to take Bentangaval as a club-farm, the rent to 'be £3 each per annum, each tenant to take at valua- 'tion seven of the sheep at present on the hill. A 'preference will be given to energetic fishermen who 'can be well recommended. All new houses are to be 'built, not on Bentangaval, but at or near Castlebay 'so as to be conveniently near to the harbour. Suitable 'sites will be marked off by the factor, with a small 'piece of ground for a garden attached, the rent of 'which will be 10s. 6d. per annum.

'Sub-letting and over-stocking will be prohibited. 'Proper regulations are to be made by a committee of '5 selected by the 45 tenants, every 9 tenants to 'elect a member of committee from their own 'number. After these rules are approved of by the 'factor, they will be obligatory on all the tenants. 'The committee and the factor will set apart from 'time to time suitable pieces of land for cultivation and 'will make such rules as will be most conducive to the 'general benefit of the whole tenants, and any tenant 'who will continue to transgress these rules after being 'twice reported to the factor as being a delinquent, 'will be deprived of his share of the grazing at the 'first term of Whitsunday or Martinmas thereafter.'

Division of Bentangaval.—'It was estimated that 'Bentangaval, if divided as allotments among 45 fisher- 'men, would maintain for each a cow, a stirk, and 7 'sheep. After considerable delay, Lady Cathcart's 'offer was accepted by only 35 heads of families, but 'they did not, as expected, pay for the stock according 'to arrangement, and Lady Cathcart had to take at 'valuation from the outgoing tenant, the whole sheep 'stock, and to clear the ground. As only 35 applicants 'came forward, the shares were proportionately larger 'than under the original scheme, and the rents were 'fixed at £3, 16s. per share, making a total rent of '£135; and I may mention that practically the same 'rent was offered by a single individual, who would 'have been an excellent tenant.'

Garrygal.—'About the same time the grazing of 'Garrygal near Castlebay, extending to about 1250 'acres, was divided among other 40 fishermen. The 'grazing had been for some time in the tenancy of Dr 'Macgillivray, the tenant of the farm of Eoligary, and 'his lease had not expired, but Lady Cathcart made 'terms with him under which he consented to give up 'his lease, as regards Garrygal, getting Sanderay and 'Flodday in exchange. These two islands formed up 'to that time part of the grazing of Vatersay. The 'grazing of Garrygal was given out at a total rent of '£100 in 40 shares to 40 tenants chiefly connected 'with the fishing industry, and it was intended that 'it should be worked as a club-farm, this having been 'also the intention as regards Bentangaval.'

Bruernish.—'In the same year, 1883, a part of the 'farm of Bruernish, extending to 360 acres which had 'been in possession of one tenant, was also divided 'among 20 heads of families, chiefly fishermen, and 'the farm of Leenish, extending to 70 acres, was divided 'into allotments and let to 12 families, at a total rent 'of £18.'

Allasdale.—'Lady Cathcart got a careful survey 'made of the parish of Barra, and it was felt that the 'want of a gradation of holdings in Barra was a draw- 'back, and to remedy this an effort was made to try the 'experiment of large crofts alongside the other experi- 'ment of allotments for fishermen. Accordingly, in the

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

'year 1883, arrangements were made with the tenant of 'the farm of Allasdale, consisting of 1080 acres of the 'best land in the island, under which he vacated the 'farm which was thereupon divided into seven crofts 'of different sizes and let at rents varying from £14 'to £18, the tenants entering into leases, under which 'they received assistance and encouragement to build 'houses and improve the ground.'

Nature of Experiments.—'The experiments which 'Lady Cathcart made were thus of a twofold character. 'The farm of Allasdale, which was a considerable 'distance from the fishing centres, was divided among 'crofters who were expected to devote themselves to 'the work on the crofts entirely, while the grazings 'of Bentangaval, Garrygal, Bruernish, and Leenish 'were let as allotments on the club-farm system to 'fishermen—the object being to give them facilities for 'growing potatoes and keeping cows to produce milk 'for their families. The intention was that the club 'tenants of Bentangaval and Garrygal should live at 'Castlebay, Glen and Kentangaval in the fishing 'hamlets where their houses were situated conveniently 'near the harbour of Castlebay.'

Result of Experiments.—'The results of these experi- 'ments have, without exception, been extremely dis- 'appointing.'

Bentangaval.—'Bentangaval was let with entry as 'at Whitsunday 1883. In 1891 the Crofters Com- 'missioners heard applications for fixing fair rents for '25 out of the 35 Bentangaval tenants. The total 'arrears submitted to the Commission were £772, 'showing an average arrear for each holding of £27, '11s. or thereby. The average payment per holding 'for eight and a half years, from the date of entry up to 'Martinmas 1891, was £4, 15s. or thereby, as against '£32, 6s. the rent for the period mentioned. The lands 'had not—at least for some time—been properly 'stocked, and such stock as had been put on the lands 'were not properly managed, the people not having 'had previously adequate knowledge or experience 'necessary for the management of stock, and I believe 'the possession of the grazing had not been a source of 'material profit to the holders of these lots. The 'Crofters Commission reduced the rent per share to £2, 'and ordered a sum of £198 to be paid out of the 'arrears of £772. The total rents and arrears which 'have become due in the twenty-eight cases referred 'to since the Commissioners issued their decisions 'amount to £310, of which there have been paid sums 'amounting in all to £251 leaving £59 unpaid.

'Similar results may be shown as regards Garrygal, 'Bruernish, and Leenish, and I now submit a tabulated 'statement showing these results.' (Appendix B, page '936.)

Allasdale.—'In the case of Allasdale the arrangement 'under the leases was that the tenants were to sit the 'first year rent free to enable them to build houses 'and start their crofts. They had leases for ten years, 'from Whitsunday 1883. In December 1888 the 'tenants had fallen very heavily into arrear. Exclud- 'ing the first year under the lease which, as already 'stated, was not charged, four years' rent had become 'due, amounting *in cumulo* for the seven holdings to '£440, and only £161 has beed paid, the average aggre- 'gate yearly payment being £40, as against a total rent of '£110. Matters had become so very unsatisfactory 'that Lady Cathcart served all the Allasdale tenants 'with summonses, and the result was that the tenants 'entered into communication with the agents, and 'made representations, which were duly transmitted to 'Lady Cathcart, to the effect that they had sustained 'severe losses through not understanding the manage- 'ment of land and stock, and through going into debt 'at the start, and that they had never been able to meet 'their liabilities to the proprietrix. They also repre- 'sented that the rent they had undertaken to pay was 'more than they ever would be able to pay, and they 'asked a reduction of rent. Lady Cathcart, after 'consideration and inquiry, agreed to reduce the aggre- 'gate rent from £110 to £80, the reduction being from '£18 to £13, 6s. 8d. on the larger crofts and from '£14 to £10 on the smaller crofts. She also agreed 'that the reduction should date back to the com- 'mencement of the leases, provided the arrears on 'the reduced basis were duly paid. All the tenants 'thankfully accepted the liberal concession made, and 'undertook to pay the arrears. When the Crofters 'Commissioners were sitting in Barra in 1890, these 'tenants applied to the Commission to have fair rents 'fixed and the arrears dealt with. Four of these with- 'drew their applications and Lady Cathcart opposed 'the applications by the remaining three crofters as 'being in breach of the good faith of the arrangements 'made in 1888, and the Commissioners dismissed these 'applications. The leases have now expired and the 'result of the experiment over the whole period of the 'lease can be seen. For the nine years' possession, the 'total sum which became due in name of rent calculating 'same from the first at £80 was £720, and the total 'sums paid amounted to £481, leaving an arrear of '£239, as at the close of the period of the lease, which 'has been since increased to £279. I have prepared a 'tabular statement showing the general result of the 'Allasdale experiment.

'The Allasdale case I consider specially important 'in various ways. The tenants who were selected as 'being the most suitable in the parish of Barra stated, 'when they applied along with others, in the most 'absolute and unqualified way that they were in a 'position to cultivate and stock the ground and to pay 'the rent which they offered. It is not doubted even 'now, after very disappointing results, that they fully 'expected and believed that with large crofts they 'would be able to pay the rent and maintain their 'families in comfortable circumstances, and this was the 'general expectation when the crofts were let to them. 'Again in 1888, when the re-arrangement was made, it 'was pointed out to them that unless they could pay 'the reduced rent and honourably carry out their obli- 'gations as modified by the arrangements, any re-adjust- 'ment was useless. They again gave the most absolute 'assurances that if the reductions asked and ultimately 'given were conceded, they would clear off the arrears 'and pay regularly for the future. They have not 'done so, and I suppose it must be assumed that the 'reason is that they have not been able to do so.

Castlebay, Barra. Ranald Macdonald.

APPENDIX A.

STATEMENT showing Number of Holdings dealt with by the Crofters Commission in Barra, with the particulars of decisions of the Commission, and also showing the Rents and Arrears which have become due since decisions of Commission and what payments have been made to account thereof.

I. Cases dealt with in 1890. *First Payment of 'Fair Rent' at Whitsunday* 1891, *for Half Year Preceding.*

Township.	Number of Holdings dealt with.	Old Rent.	Fair Rent.	Average Reduction per cent.	Arrears dealt with.	Arrears ordered to be paid.	Total Sums due as 'Fair Rent' and Arrears up to and including Martinmas 1893.	Total Payments up to 16th June 1894.	Balance due as at 16th June 1894.	Number of Crofters in Arrear.	Number of Crofters *not* in Arrear.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
1. Kentangaval,	16	42 12 4	27 15 0	...	390 19 7	67 4 0	150 9 0	150 9 0	...	...	16
2. Tangasdale,	17	55 10 0	37 12 0	...	450 13 2	72 5 0	185 1 0	180 3 0	4 18 0	3	14
3. Borve,	33	123 11 8	70 5 0	...	1009 16 0	122 11 0	333 6 0	331 9 6	1 16 6	3	30
4. Craigstone,	16	37 16 0	27 17 0	...	386 1 9	59 15 0	143 6 0	142 6 0	1 0 0	1	15
5. Glen,	19	49 3 6	28 3 0	...	346 7 11	58 14 0	143 3 0	141 8 0	1 15 0	2	17
6. Breivig,	19	46 0 6	30 7 0	...	493 18 6	73 4 0	164 5 0	162 7 6	1 17 6	2	17
	120	354 14 0	221 19 0	37·425	3077 16 11	453 13 0	1119 10 0	1108 3 0	11 7 0	11	109

II. Cases dealt with in 1891. *First Payment of 'Fair Rent' at Whitsunday* 1892, *for Half Year Preceding.*

7. Garrygall,	36	90 0 0	54 0 0	...	704 8 1	148 10 0	256 10 0	239 5 0	17 5 0	8	28
8. Leenish,	12	20 0 0	18 0 0	...	152 16 1	52 0 0	88 0 0	72 5 0	15 15 0	7	5
9. Skallary,	7	22 0 0	13 14 0	...	139 7 11	27 14 0	55 2 0	55 2 0	...	...	7
10. Ersary,	22	48 17 6	24 18 0	...	720 11 4	70 13 0	120 9 0	112 6 0	8 3 0	5	17
11. Balnabodach,	9	16 6 6	13 12 0	...	149 12 6	38 19 0	66 3 0	66 3 0	...	...	9
12. Rhulios,	1	19 0 0	15 0 0	...	118 12 4	60 0 0	80 0 0	80 0 0	...	...	1
13. Bruernish,	21	52 0 0	36 10 0	...	414 4 4	95 10 0	168 10 0	138 16 6	29 13 6	8	13
14. Bentangaval,	28	106 8 0	56 0 0	...	772 1 0	198 0 0	310 0 0	251 0 0	59 0 0	11	17
15. Pabbay,	1	18 0 0	11 0 0	...	115 10 6	44 0 0	57 0 0	41 10 0	15 10 0	1	...
16. Mingulay,	19	57 7 0	51 6 0	...	1064 9 8	203 0 0	276 12 0	203 2 6	73 9 6	16	3
17. Bernera,	2	10 0 0	8 15 0	...	154 5 2	32 0 0	45 10 0	23 15 0	21 15 0	2	...
	158	459 19 0	302 15 0	34·177	4505 18 11	970 6 0	1523 16 0	1283 5 0	240 11 0	58	100

Abstract.

Cases dealt with in 1890,	120	354 14 0	221 19 0	...	3077 16 11	453 13 0	1119 10 0	1108 3 0	11 7 0	11	109
Do. 1891,	158	459 19 0	302 15 0	...	4505 18 11	970 6 0	1523 16 0	1283 5 0	240 11 0	58	100
	278	814 13 0	524 14 0	35·801	7583 15 10	1423 19 0	2643 6 0	2391 8 0	251 18 0	69	209

APPENDIX B.

Statement showing Results of Experiments by Lady Cathcart in Barra by dividing Large Holdings, (1) for Fishermen's Allotments, and (2) for Crofters' Holdings.

I. *Fishermen's Allotments.*

	Number of Shares.	Old Rent Total.	Old Rent per Share.	Rent per Share for eight and a half Years, from Whitsunday 1883 to Martinmas 1891.	Average Payment per Share for eight and a half Years, from Whitsunday 1883 to Martinmas 1891.	Number of Shares dealt with by Crofters Commission.	'Fair Rent' per Share.	Average Arrears per Share dealt with by Crofters Commission.	Average Arrears per Share Ordered to be Paid.	Average 'Fair Rent' and Arrears per Share from Martinmas 1891 to Martinmas 1893.	Average Payments per Share from Martinmas 1891 to 16th June 1894.	Average Arrears per Share as at 16th June 1894.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1. Bentangaval. Entry as at Whitsunday 1883, .	35	133 0 0	3 16 0	32 6 0	4 15 0	28	2 0 0	27 11 0	7 0 0	11 2 0	9 0 0	2 2 0
2. Garrygall. Entry as at Whitsunday 1883, .	40	100 0 0	2 10 0	21 5 0	1 13 0	36	1 10 0	19 12 0	4 2 6	7 2 6	6 13 0	0 9 6
3. Bruernish. Entry as at Whitsunday, 1883 (exclusive of A. M'Rae), .	20	38 0 0	1 18 0	16 3 0	3 0 0	20	1 5 0	13 2 0	3 12 0	5 2 0	4 16 3	0 5 9
4. Leenish. Entry as at Whitsunday 1883, . .	12	20 0 0	1 13 4	14 13 4	2 0 0	12	1 10 0	12 13 4	4 6 8	7 6 8	6 0 0	1 6 8

II. *Crofters' Holdings.*

	Number of Holdings.	Rent (as re-arranged in 1888.)	Total Rent for Period of Lease.	Total Sums paid during Period of Lease.	Balance due at Whitsunday 1893.	Average Rent per Holding during Period of Lease.	Average Payment per Holding during Period of Lease.	Percentage of Rent Paid.	
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.			
Allasdale let on lease for ten years, from Whitsunday 1883, . .	7	80 0 0	720 0 0 *Note.*—No rent was charged for year from Whitsunday 1883 to Whitsunday 1884.	475 0 0	245 0 0	103 0 0	69 0 0	67	Excluding rent for first year not charged.

Castlebay, Barra. Ranald Macdonald.

39,021. I may supplement my statement by saying that since I came to Barra, three or four days ago, I went down and made an inspection of the farm of Allasdale. From the reports which had reached me before I came to the island I was quite prepared to find that the tenants there were not in comfortable circumstances, but I am sorry to say that I found their circumstances were very much worse than I could possibly have anticipated. It was my own confident expectation after this place was divided among them that they would be able to earn a comfortable livelihood, and the result is to me very disapponting indeed, because I had something to do with the suggestion that this place should be divided into large crofts. It was partly in order to meet the cry which was raised in the island that there was no gradation of holdings,—nothing between the very small crofts and the very large farms, and I was particularly anxious to watch the experiment which had been made in the case of these large crofts at Allasdale. The place is not now worth anything like what it was when they got it: they have been cropping the *machair* land, and the consequence is that a considerable proportion of what was producing fine green grass, eleven years ago is now little better than a sandy desert. I came to a slope which seemed to be nothing but white sand, and I was told by the ground officer, who accompanied me, that the former tenant grew potatoes there during the time he was tenant of Allasdale, and that the crop raised was equal to 25 times the quantity planted,—for every barrel of potatoes planted he lifted 25. That piece of ground I was very sorry to see is now completely useless. They have been attempting to cultivate little patches here and there: I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that some of them have been exceedingly industrious, and the main reason why they have not been successful must be that the kind of soil and the rocky nature of the place render it really unsuitable for arable crofts. There is one tenant in particular to whom I wish to make reference. It might be supposed that the want of success of these holders of large crofts at Allasdale was attributable to their want of experience and want of knowledge how to cultivate these crofts; but one of the tenants there was for many years a ploughman first and afterwards a farm grieve in the county of Nairn. He is known by the Nairnshire farmers to be an exceedingly skilful, smart man, thoroughly acquainted with the best modes of farming. He was brought under Lady Cathcart's notice in Nairnshire, as grieve upon a farm a few miles from Kinsteary, and she was particularly anxious to get a place for him in Barra, because she was assured by Mr Anderson of Lochdhu, Mr Hugh Mann, and other gentlemen who recommended him as a most deserving man, that if he came out here his example would be the means of doing good to his neighbours. I have not the slightest doubt that if I had taken him to Aberdeenshire and given him a small farm of 35 to 40 acres there, he would have been a very successful farmer indeed. I am really very sorry that he has lost his own money and has done no good to himself and no good to the others. I can thoroughly rely upon what he told me. He said he came there with about £300, and to-day, after losing the best part of his lifetime in attempting to make a living on what was considered to be one of the best crofts that the soil of Barra could produce, he has lost the most of his money. The experiment is specially disappointing in the case of this man. Another tenant at Allasdale whom I saw the day before yesterday said to me that he was very sorry that ever he left Borve, and the remark he made was 'It is much better to have a little 'fire that warms you than a large fire that burns you. I 'would have been very much better if I had remained 'upon my little croft at Borve than come here.' He attributed his want of success largely to the way in which horses, sheep, and cattle from the neighbouring farms were allowed to trespass over Allasdale. He said it was impossible to protect their crops. His wife repeated the same idea in a different form. She said 'This place is suitable for a tack, and it ought always 'to be a tack.' She was against coming there, because it was not suitable land for cultivation. Her sons when they found the place was not likely to pay them, all left herself and the old man. I went to another of the crofters at Allasdale, and I found the wife at home, the husband having gone to the fishing at Fraserburgh That man is not any better off with this large croft at Allasdale than he would have been with one of the little allotments at Garrygal or Kentangaval. I should like very much if the Commissioners had an opportunity of going round the west side of the island on Monday to see the place for themselves and see what the people had to say. I can only add that I am quite satisfied that we could not at the time have made a better selection of suitable tenants for these crofts than we made in 1883, and I attribute the failure rather to the fact that really the land is not suited for profitable cultivation. I shall be very glad to give any explanations which the Commissioners may desire to have on any of the points mentioned in my statement.

Castlebay Barra. Ranald Macdonald.

39,022. Your statement is very full and complete as to details. There seems to have been an increase in the number of holdings since 1840?—Yes.

39,023. I think they increased to 304 as against a smaller number in 1840?—Yes, but these new holdings of allotments for fishermen are included.

39,024. Then, with the exception of these, your policy has not been to allow sub-division?—Our policy has been all along to prevent sub-division, but from what you have seen to-day, you can, I think, appreciate the extraordinary difficulty we find in checking it.

39,025. But, as a rule, you find that you have been able to prevent the sub-division of land?—Not successfully, but we have always endeavoured to do so, in the interests of the people themselves.

39,026. I see that if it were not for the new holdings there would be no great increase in the total number?—No great increase.

39,027. Then your opinion generally is, that crofting and fishing combined is necessary in this country?—That is the very opposite of my opinion: I do not think so at all.

39,028. I mean to say, that they cannot live by crofting alone?—Oh, certainly not.

39,029. And that if they are to live at all, fishing must be resorted to along with the crofting?—In present circumstances, where there are no farmers to sell them potatoes and milk, I felt that it was in a measure necessary to give them small allotments; but I am decidedly of opinion that if, like the fishermen on the east coast, they could get milk and potatoes to buy, it would be much better for them to concentrate their whole attention on the fishing. But in these islands at present that is impracticable. However, the lots should be very small.

39,030. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I notice you give a rental of the island for the year 1836–37?—Yes.

39,031. Which shows a much higher rent than now?—Very much higher.

39,032. That rental refers to the time of General Macneill?—Yes. I stated, I think, that the purchase was made on the basis of that rental; but we found that the rents were too high, and the late Colonel Gordon of Cluny found it necessary to reduce the rents in some cases to one half.

39,033. Do you think that these rents were ever exacted?—I could not, from my own knowledge, give you an answer. I think it is likely.

39,034. But it is not certified in any way that these rents were ever paid or charged?—Well, the proof is that it was given to us as a *bonâ fide* rental by the agents of General Macneill.

39,035. And was it certified that it was let to these people at these rents?—Oh, yes, certainly.

39,036. And you do not know whether there is anything fictitious about it; whether it is not more an estimate of what they must let at, rather than really the actual rents charged?—Oh, no, it was no estimate; it was a real rental.

39,037. You don't know though whether these rents

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

were paid by the people or not, or whether they had been charged for any considerable time?—I could not tell for how long.

39,038. Or whether the rents were put up just for the sale of the land?—I would not like to make that insinuation, but I can say this: a few years after the estate was purchased, it was found that the rents were too high, and a very large reduction was made. There are some cases where this might have been accounted for by alteration of boundaries, but if you take, for instance, the case of an island like Mingulay, there could be no such reason there.

30,039. Did you state how many cottars there are in the island?—I think I have a statement to that effect. I have the notes which I took when I was here in 1883, and I can give you the cottars in every township:—

	Crofters.	Cottars.
In Craigston, . . .	41	8
Tangasdale, . . .	26	16
Keutangaval, . .	18	19
Bruernish, . . .	14	19

I am sorry I have not a summary at present to refer to, but there was a very large number of cottars. I can put that in if necessary.

39,040. There is still a large number of cottars?—Still a large number: but there should not be so many now, because there were 75 allotments offered to fishermen who were most of them cottars.

39,041. The number of crofters at present is, I think, 304?—Yes.

39,042. Now we find that a very large portion of the parish of Barra is held in large tacks?—Yes.

39,043. These include not quite the half, but nearly the half of the island?—But these two tacks include islands which, in my opinion, are totally unsuited for crofter holdings. I prepared a statement showing the amount of land held in large tacks on the main island of Barra, and it is not very large.

39,044. In round numbers the two tacks include very nearly the half?—I find that if you allow the same extent of land as the Napier Commission allowed for an ordinary croft (27$\frac{1}{2}$ acres), the extent of land on the mainland of Barra would just make 52 crofts. On the same basis the parish of Barra would make about 80 crofts.

39,045. And the other half of the island you say is divided among 304 crofters and a large number of cottars?—Well, the cottars, of course, have no right to it.

39,046. We had evidence over and over again here to-day that the land in these tacks is suitable for crofter holdings. You heard that evidence, did you not?—Yes, and I have no doubt the people think so.

39,047. Yes, you certified to their truthfulness and honesty: and they stated that the land in these tacks was much better fitted for occupation than the lands they have?—Yes, but some of them explained that the quality of their land had deteriorated by being so frequently cropped without regular rotation.

39,048. They did not quite get the full benefit of the land they held, but still they contended that it was very much better land in the tacks. They explained, of course, that the land in the crofts did not get justice, on account of the smallness of the crofts. Now, do you think that that is by any means a reasonable division of the land of Barra?—Well, if I could make an ideal division of the lands of Barra, I would not make it exactly as it is; but I am satisfied that considering the low value of agricultural produce and of stock, it will not pay a crofter to work a croft in an island like Barra. The crofts must either be arable or pastoral; if the croft is arable it is necessary that a certain piece of it, a few acres, should be in such a condition that the man can plough it. Now, I think, it would be very difficult to get three acres in one piece on the mainland of Barra where you could work a plough. All the arable land is in small patches surrounded by rocks, and considering the value of labour now, it would not pay any man to devote his time to the cultivation of such land. It is only as a sort of accessory that it would be profitable or judicious to have any cultivation at all on the island. It is necessary that a certain quantity of potatoes should be grown in Barra, and it is also necessary that a certain amount of the soil should be under crop in order to provide winter keep for cattle, but beyond that, very little cultivation is, in my opinion, advisable.

39,049. Does not that seem to point to this, then, that it would be necessary to give the land presently held as tacks to the cottars of Barra in order to work it?—No, it points in the very opposite direction, because if you work land economically at all, such land as there is in Barra, you must have it in a large piece. I think that on Monday night, after you have gone round the tack of Eoligarry, you will agree with me that Barra is peculiarly suited only for pastoral purposes, and that it is impossible to have such land as Barra profitably used by any one in small patches.

39,050. But do not you agree with the cottars, who say that they are under a very great disadvantage in not having land, and that the crofters of Barra, small as the crofts are, are much better off, because they have as much land as they have?—I do not.

39,051. You admit their truthfulness, and they have asseverated over and over again that they suffer for want of land?—Yes.

39,052. But should they not know from their own experience what would be better for them?—They are quite mistaken, they have had no experience at all of that sort of thing.

39,053. Don't they see the crofters alongside of them?—But I don't know that the crofters are very much better.

39,054. They have been telling us,—particularly one man whose veracity you vouched for,—that the crofters were very much better off than the cottars?—I have not the slightest doubt that every cottar would say he would be all right if he had half a croft; and every one with half a croft would say he would be all right if he had a full croft. But it is quite a mistaken delusion of the people.

39,055. These men have been admitting that the land is a great benefit to them,—the crofters would take more, but they admit that the crofts they have are a great benefit, and it would be a tremendous disadvantage to them to be deprived of the land; and surely they are good enough judges of that?—They are not good judges, I think. I do not for a moment doubt that they are saying what they think is correct.

39,056. Would they be better off without land?—I think so, except small allotments for potatoes and cow's grass.

39,057. Would you get any man in Barra to agree to that?—I don't know that.

39,058. So that you are perfectly singular in holding that opinion?—I think any man with any agricultural knowledge at all would agree with me that no man can profitably work a croft in Barra.

39,059. But those who have been asking crofts have given evidence quite contrary to that, saying that they derive a great deal of benefit?—Those who have been asking crofts are just like the Gaelic saying, 'Faoileag an droch cladaich,' they don't know the value of their labour. I met two men from South Uist who are getting 5d. an hour for work at Oban, and I venture to say that you will not get one man in Barra working on his croft who will get anything like that as an equivalent.

39,060. You would not wish the people to remove from Barra?—Certainly not.

39,061. They wish to prosecute this important industry of fishing which is so much for the benefit of the country?—I am very anxious that they should get every facility for doing so.

39,062. And for their comfortable living in this island they say over and over again that they require to have land?—Yes, they say so, and I have said that in present circumstances it is very desirable that they should have small allotments if they are fishermen: and I say further that in consequence of the nature of the

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

soil in Barra and from the experience that I have had, and from what I have seen, I am satisfied that it is impossible, looking at it from a purely economical or commercial point of view, to profitably cultivate a croft in Barra.

39,063. You now come to admit that they would be the better of a little croft?—I said so in my statement, —not now for the first time,—that small allotments in present circumstances are necessary.

39,064. I could not get it from you just now,—I thought you said they would be better without any land. Now would they not be the better of land sufficient for having a cow or two?—I think one cow would be quite enough for a fisherman. My very decided and distinct opinion is this, that any man who is a fisherman ought to have as little as possible to take him away from his main industry. In present circumstances I say that to have a small allotment, a cow's grass, and potato ground, is very desirable, and we are very anxious to give them that. We offered them that, years ago.

39,065. That is very much what they have been saying they want, crofts along with fishing, in this island: that seems to be the general testimony. But, now, would it not be desirable further to remove the cottars from the various townships and give them crofts on the tacks, thereby relieving the crofters and giving them suitable and comfortable crofts that would keep them?—No, I think not.

39,066. How would you do it?—I would like any person to show me how a cottar can make a living on a croft in Barra.

39,067. Nobody proposes that he is to make a living on it; but that it will be a certain stay to him, and that he will employ his off-time on it. Don't you know that they have a great deal of off-time in Barra here from the fishing?—No, I don't agree with you there at all.

39,068. But don't you know that they say so themselves?—Yes, but I hope if I do not see it somebody will see the day when they will be able to follow the fishing all the year round the same as the fishermen on the east coast. The fishermen on the east coast come here; why should not they go there as well? The east coast fishermen go to Lowestoft, and they fish from the beginning of January to the 31st of December.

39,069. But in the meantime the fishing is prosecuted in this way that they have a great deal of spare time?—Well, that is a very bad way of prosecuting the fishing.

39,070. But are not they good fishermen?—Excellent.

39,071. Then they ought to know pretty well themselves how it should be conducted?—I think they have something to learn yet in regard to that.

39,072. And you know that the east coast may be different in some respects from the west coast?—Well, not in that respect.

39,073. But in some respects?—I don't see in what way it would affect the success of the fishermen.

39,074. Is there not a more continuous fishery on the east coast than on the west?—I don't think so; the east coast men come round here when they cannot fish profitably at home.

39,075. But, generally speaking, is it not more continuous on the east coast?—Just because it is not prosecuted here. The crofts take the people away when they might be at the fishing.

39,076. But there are a great number of cottars. In this ideal position that you wish them to be, a landless people, how don't they make a good living at the fishing?—I don't wish them to be a landless people at all.

39,077. How do not they make a good living at it? That cannot account for the failure of the fishing on their part. You say that the crofts will account for the failure of the fishing here, but there is a great number who have no crofts: how do you account for the fishing in that case not proving a success?—Well, I have given a very great deal of attention to the fishing industry: I felt an interest, naturally, in the fishing carried on here, and—

39,078. Don't you see that the reason you give is not adequate,—that the crofts take them away from the fishing?—The crofts do take them away.

39,079. But that is not an adequate reason for the failure of the fishing, seeing there is a great number who have no land, who would be quite willing to prosecute the fishing if it could be done to profit?—I am not prepared to say why the crofters do not prosecute the fishing all the year round.

39,080. You say the crofts take them away?—There is doubt of it. I attribute the failure of the fishing largely to the attention of the fishermen being diverted from the main industry.

39,081. But you forget the great number of cottars: they, at all events, should be able to make it a profitable fishing?—Well, I would not like to say what is the reason in the case of the cottars.

39,082. Evidently, it is not an adequate reason. Don't you see this, that the people of Barra here say that if you give them a croft they will prosecute the fishing more successfully than without the croft?—Yes, but I don't think they would. They say so, but I am quite satisfied they would not.

39,083. Can you say that the cottars are more successful fishermen than the crofters?—I could not say.

39,084. They all say, and you have admitted their *bonâ fides* over and over again,—they say every one of them that a croft would be a help to them, and that they would he independent men, many of them, if they had a croft as a stay?—Well, I am perfectly satisfied that except for the convenience of having potatoes and milk which they cannot get conveniently without a small allotment,—having more land would be a great drag upon them.

39,085. Don't you think milk is to them a very great convenience,—not a small matter in any sense?—I am not saying it is a small matter.

39,086. You make a small matter of it by calling it an exception, but I do not think it is a small matter. We have heard the people here speak of the poverty in which they are, and the want of butter and of milk; surely that is a serious matter, is it not?—Well, I believe, and I am very glad to think so, that the standard of living is higher and better now than it ever was.

39,087. Without butter and without milk?—They said they got Dutch butter.

39,088. But I think some of them said there was very little butter used, and no milk?—Well, I am sure I should be delighted if their circumstances could be improved.

39,089. Don't you think the living could be very much better if they had crofts?—No, I don't think so.

39,090. They would have potatoes and butter?—They would have the same with these allotments.

39,091. Then, of course, you agree with the crofters that there is a very great amount of land here in this island, at least equally good, if not better than the land which is occupied by the crofters?—Well, there is not very much to say about that: I should say that Borve—

39,092. You say that farmers pay 2s. an acre?—Yes.

39,093. That shows that the land must be pretty valuable?—The farmers pay 2s. and the crofters 1s. 11d. per acre.

39,094. There cannot, I daresay, be a better way of contrasting the value of the land?—I don't know that that is just a very sure criterion. I would like if you would take a look at Borve and Craigston to-morrow, and compare the land there with the land you see farther down, and take into account the extent to which it has been deteriorated by miscropping.

39,095. But there is no denying the grave state of matters that there is a large number of cottars,—landless cottars,—here, and a great stretch of country occupied by two tacks?—I don't exactly put it that way. There are two tacks in the parish of Barra: one of these is composed altogether of islands, and the other one largely composed of islands. The portion of the latter

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

tack (Eoligarry) which is on the main island of Barra would, according to the estimate made by the Napier Commission, afford crofts of decent size to 18 families.

39,096. What is the acreage?—277½ acres for each croft.

39,097. What is the whole acreage of the tack of Eoligarry,—is it 5000 acres?—That includes the islands.

39,098. It would take in a good number of crofts of the size they are in Barra?—Yes, but I don't suppose anybody would wish to perpetuate that state of matters.

39,099. It would accommodate a good many of them?—It would accommodate them badly.

39,100. Why, badly?—Because they are dissatisfied with the present state of things: the crofters cannot make a living.

39,101. How do you say that Eoligarry would accommodate them badly?—The small crofts would accommodate them badly.

39,102. But they have been saying that these crofts are a great benefit to them, and that if you remove the cottars and go on and remove a few of themselves and enlarge their holdings to a small extent, they would be very well off indeed. But they do not deny the benefit they get from them just now, small as the crofts are?—In present circumstances there is nobody would think of removing them, but that is not the question. The question is to what extent these crofts can be profitably occupied.

39,103. But they have been telling us about the advantages they derive from these crofts; and you get a rent from them?—But that is not the question at all.

39,104. That is the question I am speaking of?—But that is not the remit to the Commission.

39,105. Oh, but excuse me: I have been pointing out to you that they have been deriving a great deal of benefit from them, and that the estate has been getting a benefit from them: the estate has been getting a rent from these crofts, and the people have been deriving a benefit from them, and they say their circumstances have been very much improved by having them?—Well, I have to say that instead of depriving them of anything, we are most anxious to assist them in every way in our power. Upwards of 4000 acres have been given to crofters from what was formerly large grazings, during the last thirteen years.

39,106. I see that you made important experiments, with the desire no doubt of benefiting the crofters?—With a sincere desire to benefit the crofters.

39,107. I have not the slightest doubt of it, and I am very sorry to learn that, in your opinion, the results are disappointing?—Very disappointing.

39,108. But after all these people who came from Garrygal expressed themselves as having been considerably benefited?—I am not so much disappointed although Garrygal was not a success as I am with the large crofts. I did not express disappointment so much with the fact that they had fallen into arrear of rent, and that they did not carry out their promises especially about Ben-Tangaval, because I hope in time that will come all right: but I expressed very great disappointment that those large crofts which were tried as an experiment have been such a great failure.

39,109. But don't you think you had a good deal of reason to be pleased with the result of the Garrygal experiment and not disappointed at all?—I did not express any disappointment about that.

39,110. I thought you said similar remarks applied to Garrygal?—But if you read about Bentangaval, and how they fell into arrears of rent, and did not keep their bargain about taking over the sheep, and paid only a small fraction of their rent for a number of years, there is some room for disappointment. But I do hope that these lands round Castlebay will in course of time turn out better than they have done at first, and consequently I did not express the same disappointment about them as about Allasdale.

39,111. We had not the crofter view about that. We have heard your point of view, and we have no doubt these facts as you state them are perfectly correct, but still I just simply note that we have not the tenants' version of the matter. But may I ask whether they themselves applied for Allasdale,—was it a proposal of the crofters themselves to take that farm?—Of course, they were always wanting more land, as you have heard, and stated they would move to wherever they could get more land and large crofts. The proposal was made on my own suggestion that this grazing which was a most valuable place at the time, and would have let very readily at the full rent that they offered to give for it, should be divided into two parts, and that the one half should be made into three crofts and the other into four, and that it should be offered to some of those who were believed to be the most suitable, having capital and skill to make the most of these crofts. There were several applications for the crofts, and the men were in some cases selected.

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

39,112. But the proposal with regard to that particular farm did not originate, did it, with the crofters themselves?—Not originally, but whenever they heard that the farm was to be divided into crofts, as you may readily imagine there were numbers of applications for the crofts.

39,113. Then, this is very much a proposal of your own which they afterwards adopted. But was there not an application originated by themselves for taking Vatersay, which you refused?—Yes.

39,114. So that you see it is rather important to follow the views of the people themselves, and might it not be possible that if you had experimented according to the desires of the people themselves your experiment might have been more successful?—I don't think so: I certainly don't think so. None of those who applied for Vatersay were capable of taking these large crofts. They were a different class of tenants altogether.

39,115. I saw that several reasons were given for the refusal. It was stated in that letter that was sent to them that the place had never been occupied by crofters?—Yes.

39,116. Are you persuaded in your own mind that that is correct?—From the best information I could get, that is correct.

39,117. But still, we had information to-day to the effect that it was so occupied?—You had information to the effect that Miss Macneill was there, and that there were a certain number of dependents.

39,118. The witness said they were tenants there?—But they were not in the rental.

39,119. That matters very little: the people know about these things, not from rent rolls but from even better evidence than that?—Well, I don't know that it is better evidence, for with every intention to speak what is strictly true, it is not such strictly reliable evidence as a rent roll.

39,120. But the rent rolls do not show sub-tenants?—No.

39,121. And these are in reality very creditable to the Highlands, such tenants as those who paid rent to the landlord, and there is no doubt at all that there was a very large population?—There was a class of people here as you know who were called *sgallags*.

39,122. And another of the reasons put forward for refusing this application was put forward by themselves, the want of water. Now, don't you think that perhaps too much stress was laid on that?—I know we got the very best information at the time.

39,123. But you see a large population lived there before, and they must have lived somehow or other?—Oh, they get water a certain portion of the year. There is a certain population living there,—33 I think at present,—equal to the number on six average crofts.

39,124. The only place then that you consider a complete failure is this, Allasdale?—That is the greatest failure.

39,125. Are these crofts that were meant to be self-sustaining, where the people were not to fish at all?—Yes.

39,126. Well, you see, the witnesses before us to-day did not approve of such being formed in Barra: their idea was that they should all be crofts that would be merely an adjunct to the fishing?—Yes: well, I suppose

these are the most suitable crofts,—something like these allotments here.

39,127. Then with regard to that failure, I am sorry I do not know the particulars of it from the people's point of view, but you, yourself, admit that the idea of going there did not originate with them, and that the holdings are not formed on the principle which the people here generally approve?—With all due respect, I don't think that is putting it quite fairly, because they were most anxious to go there. I am very sorry that I made the suggestion, now that it has turned out so very different from what I expected.

39,128. I have no doubt it was meant with the very best intentions; but you see the failure may be accounted for very well upon the principles which are held by the people, that self-sustaining holdings are not practicable here, and that fishing crofts are what are really wanted?—Of course, it shows this, that excepting for potato ground and for milk to their families, it is really not profitable to cultivate land in Barra. These little places near fishing ports are very useful and very necessary, and we wish to encourage them; but we are quite convinced that considering the soil and the climate of Barra, large crofts are not profitable.

39,129. I think there is a general consensus of opinion in regard to that,—in fact the people wish it to be divided into smallish crofts,—not self-sustaining, but what would in other places be considered small. Now it would be desirable to know a little more about these stances that have been offered at Castlebay at 10s. 6d. Have these been taken up to any considerable extent?—We offered them by means of printed notices which we circulated, and we did not get a single application from the fishermen. They seemed determined that any house they built should be built here and there in isolated places upon crofts. Some of them who built houses in Garrygal could have built them alongside the road, and they obstinately refused to do so.

39,130. You heard these witnesses saying to-day that they asked for stances,—that they would be willing to take such stances if they could get them, and that they had been refused?—They have been refused only in a certain kind of way, because I repeat that we are quite desirous of encouraging the building of houses for fishermen who are able to put up a decent house,—not an expensive house. We would like it to have stone and lime walls about seven or eight feet high, and a slated roof, and they can fit up the inside as plainly as they like; the house to cost about £60 or £70. We don't want ugly wooden erections alongside the road.

39,131. How can you account for these sites being refused?—I cannot account for the sites being refused, except that since the passing of the Crofters Act, Lady Cathcart has, to a large extent, lost the control of the ground set apart for these cottages.

39,132. But still, this offer was made, and we have men coming forward and saying that they had been asking for stances and could not get them; that they were asked to submit a letter showing the sort of house that was to be built; that they did so, and after all were not able to get the stance?—Of course, you have got letters from a man who took up a defiant position,—a man who said that irrespective of the Crofters Act or of the law of the land he would do so and so.

39,133. Did he say so when he made his application?—He stated that here to-day.

39,134. But you cannot account for the refusal then by anything that was said to-day?—No, I can only repeat that Lady Cathcart has always been anxious to encourage the concentration of the fishing industry at Castlebay, for reasons which I give fully in my statement; and that if any refusal is made, it is because these people want to get sites upon ground over which Lady Cathcart has no control at present.

39,135. Still, they have said they would take it anywhere about here?—They may have said that here, but I don't think they communicated that to Lady Cathcart. They want to get croft houses built on land near their fathers' places.

39,136. It is rather curious that there should have been so many cases showing so distinct a refusal?—It is not at all strange to those who know how difficult it is to stop sub-letting and the building of two or three houses on one croft. Castlebay, Barra. Ranald Macdonald.

39,137. This is not sub-letting you see?—Well, it is a decided step in that direction; because the first step in the way of sub-letting is to put two dwelling-houses on a small croft.

39,138. But they wanted a site anywhere, they told us, and that was refused; is that the state of matters?—I told him that he could apply for a vacant allotment at Ben-Tangaval; he seemed to know that that was vacant but he would not do it.

39,139. But still he got no promise that he would get the allotment?—I stated then, and I repeat now, that any fisherman who gets a proper certificate and who is able to put up not an expensive house but a decent house, costing £50 to £60, will get a stance for 10s. 6d., if Lady Cathcart has any available ground near Castlebay.

39,140. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I should like to ask a question or two with regard to these experiments. I shall take the experiment which, according to your evidence, was most disappointing, that of Allasdale. Now, I should like to know from you, how was Allasdale occupied at the time of the potato failure?—I am not sure if I can tell you that. There were twenty-one tenants there in 1845, and the rent was £80, 1s. 8d.

39,141. I suppose that rent included a kelp rent?—I don't know.

39,142. I should like to ask two preliminary questions with the view of ascertaining what the £80, 1s. 8d. was really for,—I may mention that in 1840 the rent of Allasdale was £140, 9s., so I think it very likely that that sum would be what the people call a kelp rent, but that it was reduced to £80, 1s. 8d?—I should rather imagine that to have been the case.

39,143. That was by Colonel Gordon?—Yes.

39,144. Now, could we ascertain what the rent was in the year 1820, when we will have the rent before the production of kelp?—I am sorry I cannot tell you that. As I said in my statement, we did not get the old papers from General Macneill's Trustees, except that rental of 1836-37, to which reference has been made.

39,145. I have been told in the island that the rent was £60 before the introduction of the kelp manufacture?—It is possible.

39,146. Now assuming that £60 was the rent of Allasdale, say in the very beginning of the century, then the larger portion of the £140 which I think you said was charged immediately before Colonel Gordon bought the property would be purely a kelp rent?—Possibly: I have no proof or evidence either way.

39,147. But you who know the history of the country perfectly well,—you are familiar with it, I have no doubt,—can perfectly believe and understand that?—I have nothing to say, either for or against it.

39,148. So that it is quite possible that when Colonel Gordon reduced the rent to £80, still that rent included part of the old kelp rent?—Whether it did or not I am not able to say.

39,149. But it is possible?—It is possible.

39,150. Now in 1883, Lady Cathcart let this place to seven tenants?—Yes.

39,151. Am I right in saying that three were to pay £18 each and four £14 each?—That is so.

39,152. Making a total rent of £110?—Yes.

39,153. For land that possibly in the beginning of the century was rented at £60 before the kelp rent was put on?—Possibly, but I suppose you are aware that the rents in the beginning of the century and the rents in 1883 were very different.

39,154. They were fairer in the beginning of the century?—The increase of rents all over Scotland and England has been very great in a much less period of time than from 1820 to 1883.

39,155. But I suppose you will agree with this, that the land in Barra is very different, say from land in the Lothians or in the east country: there is very much less in the way of permitting improvements executed by the tenants on the soil or possible to be done on

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

soil here, and yonder?—There are no permanent improvements here at all; it is now quite in the opposite direction.

39,156. So that by your own showing, by natural law, rents should be falling in the west while at the same time they might be going up in the east because of permitting improvements?—No, I don't think that would necessarily follow. There would be some rent created on the mainland by improvements such as buildings and drainage and dyking and so on, which naturally would not apply here.

39,157. These tenants then were started with a rent of £110?—Yes.

39,158. Now you admitted very shortly thereafter that that was a rack rent?—At the time when they got Allasdale, there was a *bonâ fide* intention to place them in comfortable circumstances, and the rent that was fixed at that time was not considered a high rent. In fact I had reason to believe that if the place had been put in the market, several good tenants could have been got to give £110 for Allasdale when the crofters went there.

39,159. Is it possible for us to ascertain from you what the separate rent of Allasdale was immediately before they took it?—Certainly; it was £70.

39,160. And they were charged £110?—Yes.

39,161. Did you consider that a perfectly fair start, entering upon a new era of estate management, introducing a new policy, the policy of creating new holdings? Did you not consider at that time that it was an essential element of success at the start that the rent should be a moderate rent?—Well, I believe it was a perfectly fair and moderate rent.

39,162. An increase of £40 over what the previous tenant paid?—Yes, even with an increase of £40.

39,163. I suppose you will agree that if the fishing industry in Barra had been a success that year and in the following years,—you all expected I have no doubt that it would be a much greater success than it has turned out,—is it not quite possible that if there had been an average amount of success at the fishing, these tenants would have paid even this big rent, and would be found to-day in comfortable circumstances?—I don't know that the fishing affected them at all, because they were away from the port altogether. These big crofts were given to them in order that they would have full work from the crofts, and would not have to depend upon any outside labour, and I don't think the fishing would affect them much.

39,164. But they have sons, and they have daughters?—Oh, I don't think they would fish much.

39,165. If the fishing had been a success, would not their sons and daughters have made a considerable amount of money at the fishing in Barra here?—I did not expect their sons and daughters would come to the fishing at all. I expected the entire family to find employment on the ground.

39,166. On £70 worth of land, among seven tenants?—Yes; there are 1080 acres of land.

39,167. But 90 per cent. of that land is not arable land. Did you expect that seven heads of families, and the sons and daughters could find employment all the year round on 7 acres of arable land?—I did expect they would find employment for an average family. I find, as a rule, five to a family,—the man and wife and three of a family—and what with their cattle, sheep, and horses, I fully expected there would be employment for them on a croft of that size.

39,168. For five able-bodied people all the year round?—Well, they would not perhaps be all able-bodied.

39,169. On 7 acres?—On the 1080 acres.*

39,170. There is no employment on the greater part of that?—Oh, yes, looking after the cattle.

39,171. Did you expect that five individuals out of each family would be employed on 7 acres of arable land and in looking after the pasture, all the year round?—Yes: I did not expect that any of them would go to the fishing.

39,172. And that the daughters would remain at home?—Yes, the dairy produce, and the poultry, and pigs would keep them employed at home.

39,173. What stock of milk cows did you expect one of these families to have?—The tenant who was there before them (Mr Macdonald) used to sell 50 head of cattle.

39,174. I am asking how many milk cows did you expect one of these families to have?—I expected six or seven. I mean that the larger crofts would have seven or eight cows, and the others about six. Crofters generally sell their cattle when one year old.

39,175. How much dairy produce in the shape of butter and cheese did you expect a family to export off 7 acres of arable land in Barra?—I know they don't do so much of that in Barra as in other places, but I think in these large crofts they should have a fair return from dairy produce.

39,176. We have got so much information in regard to stock. My next question is with regard to the reduction of the rent. You instituted legal proceedings against them?—We did.

39,177. Because they fell into arrear?—Yes.

39,178. In very bad years, starting on new land; and in which Court were the proceedings instituted?—We allowed them the first year there rent free.

39,179. But in which Court were the proceedings instituted?—In the Court of Session.

39,180. Why in the Court of Session?—Well, I cannot answer that question.

39,181. Did these men go to Edinburgh in answer to a citation from the Court of Session?—I don't know.

39,182. Would you be surprised to know that every one of them who was cited went to Edinburgh at his own expense?—I did not know that.

39,183. How many years had they been in this new place before proceedings were instituted against them in the Court of Session?—They were five years there.

39,184. Did the same seven families not complain that their rent was far too high?—They did, when they went to Edinburgh.

39,185. When they found that it was an impossible rent?—Yes.

39,186. So that the moral of the matter is that people who are landless, if they don't get what they would choose themselves, will be very likely to take anything that is offered to them in the shape of land at any price?—I don't quite see that that is of universal application.

39,187. They were not allowed to have their rents fixed as fair rents before the Crofters Commission?—They were perfectly satisfied with their rents when they went there.

39,188. They lodged applications with the Crofters Commission, and the landlady lodged a minute of objection, and totally opposed a 'fair rent' being fixed?—She did.

39,189. Now in regard to Ben-Tangaval.—Before you leave Allasdale, I may mention that when I was there two days ago I made a special inquiry as to the number of cattle they were able to sell off their places, and I ascertained that it is only about one-half of what the former tenant was able to sell. He told me that he used to sell forty two-year-olds at the Portree market, and ten to fifteen according to the season at the Barra market with about 100 sheep; and I found that the crofters—some of them—did not sell a beast at all last year and the year before that, about three. I think three would be about the average that six of them sold off their places.

39,190. But it is admitted, of course, that the experiment was a failure?—It was a failure.

39,191. What is the name of the tenant who had Allasdale immediately before these crofters took it?—Mr Donald Macdonald.

39,192. Had he other lands at that time?—He had no other lands.

* Mr Macdonald has since explained that, according to the plan of Allasdale, the extent is as follows:—

Arable and green pasture,	450
Hill ground,	630
Total area,	1080

39,193. This Allasdale was all the land he had?—All the land he had. I am very glad to say that he was able to go and take a farm that was three or four times the size of Allasdale.

39,194. But it is admitted, of course, that these people are very far down just now?—So that is a proof that he was not highly rented.

39,195. It is admitted that they are very low now?—Yes, I am very sorry to say so.

39,196. That accounts for their not having sold stock last year. Now, we will go to Ben-Tangaval. Is there any possibility of ascertaining what was the rent of Ben-Tangaval, or was it let as a separate holding?—It was not let as a separate holding: it was let as part of the grazing of Vatersay.

39,197. So that it is impossible to tell what any previous tenant paid for it?—I could not tell you what any previous tenant paid, but I may tell you that we got an offer of £131, 5s. from a man who would make a very good tenant, before it was given as allotments to the fishermen.

39,198. And what did you take from these crofters?—£135.

39,199. They applied to the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

39,200. And the Crofters Commission reduced your fair rent of £135 to a fair rent of £74?—I believe they did. If we had let it to this tenant we would have been getting £131 for it.

39,201. Yes, but you would have had 45 pauper families in Barra?—Oh, I am not by any means sure about that. It certainly has been a disappointment at first, and there were some very disappointing features about it, but it may lead to the development of the fishing industry at Castlebay, and I don't express the same disappointment with it as I do in the case of Allasdale.

39,202. But in putting new tenants into new places, you admit it is an essential element of success that all the conditions at the start should be absolutely fair?—Yes, I do; that is quite a fair observation.

39,203. And is it not your opinion also that the landlord on the one side is too much interested in the matter to be accepted as a fair judge of what is fair, as the crofters are on the other side?—Perhaps, it may be so.

39,204. Would it not be a wise thing in making such experiments to refer questions of boundary, questions of rent, and questions of the number of tenants and suitableness of ground to an independent body of men?—I do not think so.

39,205. You think the factor after all is the wisest?—I think the factor who is intimate with all the conditions and who has no interest in doing anything but what is fair, ought to be a judge of that sort of thing.

39,206. Do you then consider, on principle, that a man is a fair judge in his own case?—It is not his own case.

39,207. Is he not the landlord?—No, he is not the landlord.

39,208. He is the landlord's agent?—He, no doubt, acts in that capacity, but one of the first considerations is that the tenants should be put into a position where they can live, because if the tenants go to poverty the proprietor must suffer.

39,209. Now, there is another matter. You heard a witness here,—I think it was Malcolm Johnston,—state that he applied for a house stance pure and simple, finding, I presume, that at that time he had the means to put up a slated house; and that he repeated his application year after year. You had lands in Castlebay at that time and in the interval that were on your own hands absolutely, that you had to let,—lands that were not crofters' land?—I am not prepared to admit that. In the first place I know nothing about his application.

39,210. Did you not state yourself here repeatedly to-day, that stances were hereabout available for any fisherman who could take up such a stance and build a decent house?—I stated that we were most anxious to encourage the fishermen to apply for these stances.

39,211. Did you not state that the land was there for house stances?—I marked off the ground for them there.

39,212. That is not crofter land?—I think it is crofter land now.

39,213. Was it crofter land six years ago?—It was.

39,214. And when did you mark it out for stances?—In 1883.

39,215. You know the Crofters Act?—I think I should.

39,216. Thoroughly. You know that there is a special clause in the Crofters Act which says that the landlord has the power to resume possession of portions, or for that matter of it of the whole of crofter lands for building purposes or for any other public purposes?—Well, we should be very glad if fishermen of good character come forward to use every means in our power to give them stances so as to concentrate the fishing at Castlebay.

39,217. You have nothing against the character of the men who came here to-day?—Well, I confess I don't like the exhibition one of them made when he said he would set the Crofters Act at defiance.

39,218. But during the years he was applying for a stance, there was nothing against his character?—I am not saying anything against his character. I only wish to say that if any *bonâ fide* fishermen who are well recommended and are able to put up decent houses come to us we will use every effort to provide them with sites at 10s. 6d. each.

39,219. Where must they apply for a recommendation?—To any clergyman or justice of peace, or, indeed, any well known person.

39,220. Are we to understand then, that if any man who is a fisherman produces a recommendation from a minister of the Gospel, you are prepared to give him a house stance in Castlebay?—Yes, I shall be glad to give it so far as we have the power.

39,221. But you know that you have the power under the Crofters Act?—There is not the slightest difference in our attitude now from what it was formerly, or in our desire to give every facility for the concentration of the fishing at Castlebay.

39,222. But you admit that a fisherman who is not allowed a stance for a house, has not a fair opportunity of prosecuting the fishing in Barra?—Yes, I do.

39,223. How then can you explain the fact that respectable men have repeatedly applied,—one of them said he applied to the factor nine times running for a house stance, and that he was prepared to put up a slated house upon it,—and still they are without it?—I know nothing of the application: I need not repeat again and again what I have stated as to our desire.

39,224. But if you find that there is no land for building purposes here in Barra, you are aware that you have the power by a simple application to the Crofters Commission to resume possession of crofter land for that laudable purpose?—If we got applications from a certain number of fishermen who are in a position to put up decent houses along the road I am prepared to say that their applications will be favourably entertained.

39,225. You are aware that the cottars lodged an application with the landlady two years ago for land?—Yes, I am.

39,226. How many names were to that application?—There were a good many names: I did not count them.

39,227. Would there be between forty and fifty?—I don't doubt it.

39,228. Was that application by between forty and fifty cottars,—that petition I should have called it,—fully considered?—Yes.

39,229. Have you got a copy of the petition?—I believe I have.

39,230. Would you be kind enough to read it?—

'To Lady Gordon Cathcart of Barra, &c., &c.

'We, the undersigned cottars residing on your lady-'ship's estate of Barra, respectfully approach your lady-'ship with the view of placing before you the difficult posi-'tion we are placed in, and humbly to petition that some

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

'method may be devised for removing that difficulty. 'Before the passing of the Crofters Act many of our 'neighbours had been in the habit of giving us the privi- 'lege of the use of a small patch of potato land and a 'little grazing for our small stock, by which with what 'little work we could get and the gathering of shell-fish 'we were enabled to eke out a livelihood; but since the 'Crofters Commissioners have held their sittings in 'Barra under that Act, we are informed the crofters 'cannot be allowed to give us any potato land or graz- 'ing without incurring forfeiture of their own tenancy, 'and we are thus placed in the position of starvation 'facing us in the future. Such is our position, and we 'humbly petition your ladyship to give our petition 'your favourable consideration. And your petitioners 'will ever pray, &c.

(Signed)

'Donald × M'Intyre.	Donald × M'Donald.
'Michael × Campbell.	Donald × Currie.
'Malcolm M'Lean.	Donald M'Millan.
'Allan MacLean.	Neil × Steele.
'John × M'Phie.	Angus × M'Donald.
'Donald × Macdonald.	John M'Neil.
'Murdo × M'Donald.	Duncan × Campbell.
'John × Macneil.	Neil × Macdonald.
'Colin × M'Neil.	Michael M'Kinnon.
'Ronald × Galbraith.	Malcolm × M'Kinnon.
'John × M'Donald.	Widow Chirsty × M'Neil.
'Donald × M'Lean.	Donald M'Neill.
'Widow Flora × M'Kinnon.	Malcolm × M'Leod.
'Michael × M'Neil.	Samuel × M'Kinnon.
'Jonathan × M'Neil.	Hector M'Donald.
'Alexander × M'Intyre.	Donald × M'Kinnon.
'Jonathan × M'Dougall.	Samuel × M'Donald.
'Jonathan × Maclean.	Norman × M'Neil.
'Donald × M'Lean.	Archibald × Boyd.
'Neil × M'Innes.	Neil M'Neil.
'Peter M'Neil.	Roderick × M'Neil.
'John × Campbell.	Donald × M'Kinnon.
'Malcolm × M'Kinnon.	John × M'Kinnon.
'John × M'Kinnon.'	

Signed by 47 cottars, 38 of whom sign by mark and 9 by hand.

39,231. So that it is possible that the education of cottars may be neglected in Barra, without removing them to Vatersay at all?—It is not so likely to be neglected now.

39,232. No, for if they are sent to Vatersay I assure you they will insist on having a school there.—Would you like me to read the answer to the petition?

39,233. It would be as well to read the answer.—Perhaps you had better read the answer, as I have read the petition.

39,234. I will be very pleased to do so: I cannot read it as well as you do, but I will do my best.

'5 Albyn Place, Edinburgh.

'To Mr Donald M'Intyre and the other subscribers of 'a petition to Lady Gordon Cathcart.

'Gentlemen,—We are directed by Lady Cathcart to 'acknowledge receipt of a petition addressed to her lady- 'ship signed by forty-seven heads of families in Barra, 'describing themselves as cottars, residing on the estate 'of Barra. The petition states that before the passing 'of the Crofters Act, the crofters had been in the habit 'of giving the subscribers of the petition ground for 'planting potatoes and grazing for their stock, but that 'since the Crofters Commission held their sittings in 'Barra the petitioners have been informed that the 'crofters cannot be allowed to give them any potato 'land or grazing without incurring forfeiture of their 'own tenancy. The petitioners invite Lady Cathcart's 'consideration of these circumstances.

'Since Lady Cathcart succeeded to the estates of 'Benbecula, South Uist, and Barra in 1878, she has 'given much consideration to the circumstances of the 'crofters and cottars, and has from time to time ex- 'plained to them the views by which she has been 'influenced in the management of her estates. The 'estate regulations, which were carefully framed, con- 'tain distinct provisions against sub-letting, and these 'regulations have been in force on the estates for a long 'period. The prohibition of sub-letting was intended 'to benefit the people as well as the estate, for it is 'obvious that the crofters, who in many cases com- 'plained of the smallness of their holdings, could not 'without injury to themselves sub-let any part either of 'their arable land or their grazings. Notwithstanding 'these wise and salutary regulations, many of the 'crofters allowed grown up members of their families to 'settle on the crofts instead of seeking to form indepen- 'dent homes, and earn a livelihood for themselves, and 'in many cases it seems that in defiance of the estate 'regulations, cottars have been allowed to build 'houses, to crop patches, and to put stock on the town- 'ship lands. The evil is one which is of modern 'growth, but has, in recent years, attained such propor- 'tions that the crofters have repeatedly complained of 'the encroachment of the cottars, who while paying no 'rent have, it is said, in some cases, placed upon the 'crofters' grazings a larger stock than that belonging 'to some of the crofters themselves. It is one of 'the evils inseparable from the crofting system, that 'lands in the common occupancy of a number of tenants 'are not so efficiently managed or so carefully protected 'as lands in individual occupancy, and that encroach- 'ments are permitted which would not be tolerated by 'an individual tenant. There is no doubt that the cir- 'cumstances presented a great temptation to a crofter 'having relations or dependants whom he wished to 'befriend, as in the individual case the injury was 'viewed as comparatively trifling, but by the multipli- 'cation of such cases the interests of all concerned 'have suffered serious detriments. When the Crofters 'Act was under the consideration of Parliament, the 'necessity for preventing sub-division and sub-letting 'was admitted on all hands, and the Act contains very 'stringent clauses which declare that a crofter who sub- 'divides his holding, or sub-lets the same or any part 'thereof, or permits the erection of cottars' houses 'thereon, is to forfeit his holding. What the peti- 'tioners now ask is, that Lady Cathcart should consent 'to this statutory enactment being violated, and the 'ruinous practice we have referred to perpetuated. In 'reply, we are directed to state that Lady Cathcart, 'however much she may regret the unfortunate circum- 'stances of the cottars, cannot sanction any infringe- 'ment of the provisions of the Crofters Act on this 'subject.

'The practice of giving land and grazings to the 'cottars must, in the circumstances we have explained, 'be discontinued, but we venture to think that this 'will not involve the hardship to the cottars which the 'petitioners appear to apprehend. The great majority 'of the cottars in Barra are fishermen, who depend on 'the prosecution of that calling for their livelihood, 'and Lady Cathcart is gratified to learn that many of 'them are the owners or part owners of the large- 'decked fishing boats which are now coming into use 'in the prosecution of the fishing on the west coast. 'With these boats the fishermen are able to prosecute 'their calling practically all the year round. The cod 'and ling fishing can be prosecuted when weather 'permits during the winter months and onward to the 'month of May. After that there is the west coast 'herring fishing season beginning in June, and when 'that is over, the fishermen find employment at the 'east coast fishing. A good many of the fishermen 'have recently been employed during the autumn 'months at the fishing at Canna and elsewhere in the 'Minch.

'What the petitioners appear to desire is that they 'should be allowed to continue the practice of dividing 'their energies between the sea and the land. There 'is a general concurrence of opinion among those who

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

'have studied the question, that it is not possible 'to combine the occupations of crofter and fisherman 'successfully. On the east coast of Scotland the 'fishermen are simply fishermen and nothing else, 'having voluntarily given up the fisher lands they 'used formerly to occupy, in order to concentrate their 'energies on the prosecution of the fishing, and 'authorities appear to agree in thinking that if the 'fishermen of the west coast would follow their 'example, they would share in the prosperity which the 'fishermen of the east coast enjoy. The Western 'Highlands and Islands Commission after minute 'local inquiry reported:—"If a race of professional "'fishermen could be established on the west coast "'pursuing their calling with the same assiduity, and "'in the same fashion as those on the east coast, we "'see no reason why the same measure of success "'should not attend the former as has already been "'achieved by the latter. We fear, however, that such "'a race of professional fishermen, devoting their "'whole time and their whole abilities to the sea, can "'never be found so long as the west coast fisherman "'is partly dependent on his croft, and we have "'consequently formed a decided opinion that the "'combination of crofting with fishing is inexpedient."

'Lady Cathcart has always held somewhat strongly 'the views thus expressed by the Western Highlands 'and Islands Commission. As, however, many of the 'fishing population of Barra did not share these views, 'and from time to time petitioned for land, Lady 'Cathcart, some eight years ago, as most of the 'petitioners are aware, resumed the grazings of 'Bentangaval and Garrygal near the harbour of 'Castlebay, which had up to that time been in the 'possession of tacksmen, and let these grazings to a 'number of cottar fishermen as club farms. The 'experiment has been an entire failure. The tenants 'have not put a sufficient stock on the lands; they 'have mismanaged both lands and stock; they have 'disregarded practically every stipulation in the agree-'ment under which they obtained possession, and 'they have paid scarcely any rent since they entered.

'From the considerations we have mentioned, it 'would appear to be the true interest of those of the 'petitioners who are fishermen, to devote all their 'energies to the prosecution of the fishing.

''The observations we have made do not apply in 'the same degree to those of the petitioners who 'are not fishermen but labourers depending on casual 'employment for a livelihood, which appears to have 'been in some cases supplemented by obtaining either 'gratuitously or for a consideration, permission to crop 'and pasture lands in the occupation of the crofters. 'Lady Cathcart regrets that to those in this position 'she cannot hold out any prospect of an improvement 'in their circumstances. There is not in the island 'of Barra much demand for casual labour of a kind 'which they are able to supply, and their prospects 'of obtaining constant and remunerative employment 'are of the most discouraging kind. At present a 'comparatively small proportion of their time is 'occupied with profitable labour, the greater part of 'it being, no doubt, unavoidably spent in idleness 'and in the misery which is inseparable from that state 'of things. Lady Cathcart has at various times and 'in various ways endeavoured to improve the position 'of the cottar labourers, but her efforts have not 'resulted in an enduring benefit to them. It was 'with the view of providing employment in the 'locality that Lady Campbell undertook considerable 'financial responsibility in connection with the estab-'lishment of the Normal Company which unfortunately 'resulted in failure, and her experience of this and 'other enterprises has led her to the conclusion that 'the circumstances do not encourage the expenditure 'of capital in establishing local industries in Barra. 'It would, therefore, appear that the true interest of 'the cottar labourers in Barra is to follow the example 'of their fellows in other parts of the country, and 'take their labour to the market where from time to 'time it may be most in demand, so as to secure 'constant employment at the highest rate of remuner-'ation. 'We remain, your obedient servants,

'(Signed) SKENE, EDWARDS and GARSON.'

39,235. That is the reply?—Yes.

39,236. Now, there is one statement in this reply, concerning which I should like to ask you a question. 'What the petitioners now ask is that Lady Cathcart 'should consent to the statutory enactment being 'violated, and the ruinous practice we have referred to 'perpetuated.' Now, is that really what the petitioners ask?—Well, that is the construction which the Edinburgh agents put on the petition.

39,237. Can you, yourself, find in the petition of the people anything to warrant this statement, that what the petitioners ask is that Lady Cathcart should consent to the statutory enactment against sub-division being violated, and the ruinous practice we have referred to perpetuated?—I think practically it amounts to that.

39,238. Would you read anything in the petition to warrant such a statement?—I do not see how the petitioners could get land without practically infringing the Crofters Act.

39,239. But could not the estate say that there was no land to give them, without saying that they were wanting a thing they never wanted? Would you be good enough to read the portion of the petition which bears out your inference?—They seem to want in that petition that the crofters should be allowed to give them potato land,—that is the construction the agents put upon the petition; and they said, we cannot take upon ourselves to allow the crofters to give them potato land, because it would be an infringement of an Act of Parliament. That is my explanation.

39,240. But you will admit that the crofters in that petition did not ask anything of the kind?—Practically, it amounts to that: it was to get potato land from the crofters. They wrote to Lady Cathcart, to see what she could do, and the answer was, that Lady Cathcart could not consent to that, because an Act of Parliament prevented it.

39,241. But you will admit that the petitioners did not, in the petition, ask to get potato land from the crofters?—That is the construction put upon the petition.

39,242. But what is your own construction? You are a witness here. Or do you leave it to them?—Yes, and I say this. They wrote to Lady Cathcart; they said the crofters cannot give us potato land the same as they used to do, and we are in straits, and the answer was that she could not ask the crofters to do what was against the Crofters Act. That is just putting the matter into simple language.

39,243. You admitted to-day that you heard evidence regarding Ben-Tangaval and Garrygal, and that practically the experiments there were a success?—Well, I would not exactly go so far as that: it was a very disappointing failure at the commencement, but it looks a little better now. Speaking about Ben-Tangaval and Garrygal, as it has a very important bearing upon this petition, I wish to point out again that Lady Cathcart, in 1883, gave an opportunity, and invited the crofter fishermen of Castlebay and Barra to apply for the 85 allotments. They did not do so, and the land had to be given to other people; and when a few years after that they apply, and other people have the land, it is very difficult to take it from them, especially when there is a Crofters Act which prevents sub-division. Lady Cathcart could not have given a stronger proof that she was anxious to accommodate the cottar fishermen of Castlebay and Glen, than to take these two grazings of Ben-Tangaval and Garrygal and offer them.

39,244. Admitted,—handsomely admitted.—And offer them to 85, and I don't suppose (I am speaking, of course, roughly) that the one half of those who actually applied were crofter-fishermen at all.

39,245. We will take then Ben-Tangaval, you will admit that now that the tenants are there, and that a judicial rent has been fixed, the experiment is satisfactory at the present moment?—I would scarcely go so far as to say that, but I hope it will turn out better.

Castlebay, Barra.

Ranald Macdonald.

39,246. What has been the result at the last rent collection?—At the last rent collection, how much was struck off? I make no complaint whatever about it, but it is certainly a very marked improvement upon the old state of things.

39,247. And you believe with the people themselves that this has been of very great benefit to them?—I have little doubt it was.

39,248. How can you account for this statement with regard to Ben-Tangaval,—'The experiment has been 'an entire failure'?—What is the date of that letter?

39,249. 1891.—That is before the Commissioners were here?—Well, if you consider the actual state of things at the time that letter was written you will not be surprised to see that statement made.

39,250. Quite so, but we are all delighted that the experiment, having now got a longer trial, is not an entire failure?—Well, it is not an entire failure.

39,251. I should like you to tell us what failure there is in the matter?—I don't wish to repeat what I put into my statement; but they failed to take the sheep; they failed to accept the offer that was made to them; they failed to pay the rent to a most lamentable extent up to the time when the Crofter Commissioners were here,—they paid hardly anything: there could not be a more disappointing failure than that up to that time. Then there were 78 per cent. of the arrears struck off.

39,252. By the Commission?—By the Commission, and since that time they have done better. But I do not at all attach so much importance to the payment of rent: I look more to the importance in putting these people here in a position to concentrate their energies upon the fishing at Castlebay.

39,253. Have you any reason to suppose that the fishing industry has suffered any detriment by Ben-Tangaval being given to these people for homes?—I did not say so.

39,254. So that really and truly, now that the people are there, and a 'fair rent' has been fixed by the Commission, the arrears that accumulated under a rack rent have been cancelled, and the case tested at the last rent collection day, you are prepared to admit that experiment is comparatively a success?—It is more hopeful, certainly.

39,255–56. And is there any reason to doubt that a development of that experiment would be beneficial to the island of Barra?—A development of that experiment is not so very easy, because you cannot now get land quite close to Castlebay, being all already let to crofters and fishermen, and it is obvious that fishermen cannot prosper if they are miles away from the harbour.

[Adjourned.]

FORTY-SIXTH SITTING.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

DALIBROG, SOUTH UIST, June 20, 1894.

Present:—

James Noel Muller Forsyth, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
George Gordon, Esq.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary*.

Neil Macphee.

Neil Macphee (40), Crofter, Kilpheder, [Cill-Pheadair] South Uist—*examined*.

39,257. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes, just now, but my name is not on the roll yet; I will be in next September. My father died.

39,258. At any rate your father had, until lately, a croft here?—Yes.

Dalibrog, Sonth Uist.

Neil Macpl

39,259. Have you got any written statement that you wish to read to us?—No.

39,260. But you wish to give evidence as to land in this district: is that so?—Yes, I will try my best.

39,261. What sized croft have you got, or what stock have you on it?—We have a full crop.

39,262. And what stock do you keep on a full crop in Kilpheder?—We have only three head of cattle and three horses just now.

39,263. Is that the ordinary stocking of a full croft?—It may be more than that.

39,264. Is it your wish to obtain a larger holding if it could be got?—Yes.

39,265. And do you represent the views of the people of Kilpheder?—Yes.

39,266. You were appointed as a delegate at a meeting held by the people, were you?—Yes.

39,267. Do the people of Kilpheder find that the crofts they have are not large enough to give them a living without assistance from work or otherwise?—Oh, they are always complaining.

39,268. You mean that they are complaining of the small size of the crofts?—Yes.

39,269. And is it their wish, if they could obtain it, to get larger holdings on which they could live by the croft alone?—Yes.

39,270. Do the people there do much or any fishing?—No.

39,271. There is no harbour near there at all, except Lochboisdale?—No. Some of them work at lobster fishing.

39,272. And do they assist themselves also with kelp-making?—Oh yes, they work at kelp along with that.

39,273. *Mr Gordon.*—Is your township very crowded?—Very much.

39,274. Are there many cottars in it besides the crofters? How many crofters are there in the township of Kilpheder?—Thirty-seven, but there are only twenty-three full crofts.

39,275. And so many of them are sub-divided?—Yes.

39,276. And how many cottars are there, do you know?—Three cottars.

39,277. Do these cottars have any stock at all?—Yes.

39,278. Do they pay any rent?—Not a penny.

39,279. Where do they keep their stock?—On the crofters' pasture.

39,280. How much stock would each of them have?—One has two cows and the other has a horse.

39,281. Do these cottars work at the kelp?—No.

39,282. What do they work at?—They are working at the railroad.

39,283. They don't live at home?—No.

39,284. But practically their stock live over the crofting township?—Yes.

39,285. What would be the average stock of the crofters in Kilpheder?—Some of them are overstocked.

39,286. You have no hill pasture, have you?—No, it was lost some time ago.

39,287. Who got the pasture that used to belong to the township?—The Lochboisdale crofters.

39,288. North and South Lochboisdale?—North Lochboisdale.

39,289. Was that Carrisaval where you had the pasture?—Yes.

39,290. Is there any land near you that could be got to make an addition to the township?—Yes, some of our pasture adjoined that Milton Farm.

39,291. But Milton is a long way from you. Does not the farm of Askernish come in between you and Milton?—No, the hills belong to Milton, but the west side belongs to Askernish.

39,292. Does your pasture cross the public road to the east?—No, we have only the peat stance.

39,293. You are bounded upon the north by the Dalibrog township?—At one time we were.

39,294. But now?—No, we lost the whole pasture.

39,295. But are you not bounded by the township of Dalibrog on the north?—Yes.

39,296. Well, you mentioned the farm of Milton, where you think land could be got?—Any amount there.

39,297. Is there any other place that you could get land on?—Yes, Kilbride Farm.

39,298. That is away down to the south?—Yes, and Glendale Farm. Donald Ferguson is the farmer at the south side.

39,299. You mean that for pasture?—Yes.

39,300. Is there any old arable land on Glendale?—Yes, near the Sound of Eriskay, and another on the east, Hartavagh Bay, and round the borders between Hartavagh and the south. There is land beside Lochboisdale.

39,301. How many crofts of a proper size could be got in your township, or, in other words, how many people would have to be removed from the township of Kilpheder before the crofts would be of a self-supporting size?—My idea is just a full croft to each crofter, and pasture along with it.

39,302. You think the township could accommodate 23 crofters if they had some hill ground?—Yes.

39,303. Would that make the crofts of a size sufficient to maintain a man and his family?—Oh yes, he may get some living off it.

39,304. Would he find employment on a croft of that size all the year round, or would he have to go to the mainland for work occasionally?—That is according to the price of cattle and the like of that; unless he has that, maybe the crop might fail, and he must turn to look elsewhere.

39,305. And could he employ part of his time at the kelp-making?—Well, but the kelp-making runs the same way: just according to the weather.

39,306. How much can a man, working a fair day's work, make at the kelp?—Maybe they might work some weeks and have nothing for it.

39,307. Why?—Because of the weather.

39,308. Too much wet?—Yes, it would spoil the whole, one wet day.

39,309. But suppose the weather is fairly favourable, what can a man make in the day or in the week, working from eight to ten hours a day?—Well, that question is not easy to answer.

39,310. I am not tying you down to a specific sum, but would he make say 15s. in a week?—No.

39,311. Would he make 12s.,—2s. a day?—No.

39,312. What do you get for the ton: is it 20s.?—They got 20s., I heard, last year.

39,313. Would you consider 20s. a fair price?—No, it would not make a penny a day to the people.

39,314. What would you call a fair price?—If they got £4 a ton for kelp, they may calculate it at about 2s. a day: I mean if the weather would be mixed, just like what we have. It is according to the weather altogether; the kelp trade is altogether dependent on the weather.

39,315. But you think that if the township was reduced to 23 crofters and no cottars, a living could be made by the crofters in it?—Oh yes, but they would require some hill pasture; it would be nothing without pasture.

39,316. And you think it could be got off the pasture of Milton?—Plenty.

39,317. Would that be within a reasonable distance of your crofting township?—Oh yes, but you see that new township Lochboisdale cuts us from Milton Farm; they come in between us. But in 1846, when my father was living, he had the whole pasture.

39,318. What the North Lochboisdale crofters now have?—Yes, the Kilpheder township pasture.

39,319. Now, assuming that land could be got for a part of the people, would the others be inclined to move to new crofts?—Oh, I believe they will.

39,320. Would you go yourself?—Yes, to-morrow, if I got the chance.

39,321. And a better place?—Yes.

39,322. *Mr Maccallum.*—How many families, did you say, are altogether in the township of Kilpheder?—Thirty-seven.

39,323. Do you remember a time when there were not so many?—Yes. In 1846 there were only 23 crofters in Kilpheder township.

39,324. Now, where did they come from, those who came there at that time?—They came from Loch Eynort, that is on Milton Farm; they came from South Frobost and North Frobost, also in Milton Farm.

39,325. They were placed there, I suppose, by the estate?—Yes, South Frobost is in the estate to-day.

39,326. Then is the increase of the population there at all owing to sons or relatives of the crofters settling down among you, or is it owing altogether to their having been removed altogether to Kilpheder from other parts by the estate?—A few of them came in their father's place; there was not much sub-division. There were only six in the township in 1882 by the landlord, not by the crofters themselves.

39,327. When was the township of Lochboisdale formed?—In 1846; the first new settlers as far as I know.

39,328. Then, besides the people that were settled on Kilpheder, was the township area diminished by the formation of Lochboisdale township: was that wholly taken from you?—Yes, that is the first, the new settlers.

39,329. The whole of the township of Lochboisdale was taken from Kilpheder?—From Kilpheder.

39,330. And how many were settled in Lochboisdale at the time when the land was taken from Kilpheder in 1846?—Seventeen. That was the second year, about 1846–8, or thereabouts. I was not born then, but that is my opinion.

39,331. The township of Lochboisdale was taken out of the old township of Kilpheder?—Yes.

39,332. And in the diminished township there were other settlers put in also?—From 1846 to 1882; that is just when they stopped.

39,333. From what place did the people that were settled in Lochboisdale come?—They came from Loch Eynort, I think, 15 of them; but there is a delegate here who can tell.

39,334. Why were they removed from Loch Eynort and from Frobost?—By force; by summonses. As far as I know, to clear the farm for Dr Maclean, the brother of Mr Charles Maclean, the present farmer. That is what I heard.

39,335. These places were cleared to form a large tack?—Yes.

39,336. And the people were settled on Kilpheder?—On Kilpheder pasture.

39,337. Do you think, now, that these people were removed from these places for their benefit? Was it with the intention of benefiting them?—No, no; it was a very, very poor place where they were put: the worst they could have got in Scotland, I think, at the time, and they can give evidence about it themselves.

39,338. And are the places that were cleared then still held in a large farm?—Yes.

39,339. And is that farm mainly pastured, or is it mainly cultivated?—It is waste land just now.

39,340. Some part of it, I suppose, is cultivated, but for the most part it is pastured?—Yes.

39,341. Is the land held in large tacks, generally speaking, better or worse than the land held by the crofters?—The land that the farmers have is better; the large farmers have the best land.

39,342. The large farmers, you mean, have the best land?—Yes.

39,343. And do you think now, that if the people were removed from the congested townships there they would be much more comfortable?—Oh yes.

39,344. Are you quite sure, in your own mind, that the land in the large tacks is much better fitted for crop and for cattle-raising and sheep-raising?—Oh yes; I remember one year that the townships here were buying seed; they gave seed to the crofters in South Uist for sowing the ground. They bought the seed from the farms for sowing the crops, and I was one of them myself.

39,345. How many large tacks are there altogether

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Neil Macphee.

in South Uist?—Five, I think:—Kilbride, Glendale, Askernish, Milton, and Ormaclette.

39,346. Did you mention Drimisdale?—No.

39,347. Is it a large farm?—A very large one.

39,348. So that there are six very large tacks?—Yes.

39,349. When were these large tacks formed? You told us when Milton was formed, but can you tell us when the other tacks were formed?—Just about the same time: it was the same clearances.

39,350. There were great clearances then?—Yes.

39,351. Then before these clearances, had the crofters the whole of the island?—Yes, except Ormaclette itself, and Milton itself: Maclennan is the name of the farmer. He was there in Milton in 1846.

39,352. Do you know when was Milton formed, or was there a time when the whole of Milton was held by small tenants?—Just about that time; the large farms were formed in two years out of smaller holdings, according to my information.

39,352A. Your information is, then, that at one time the whole of the island was held by crofters, before these large tacks were formed about 1846?—Yes, except Milton. At that time Milton was the name of the farm, but to-day Milton is the name of the whole townships that were added to it.

39,353. There was a small farm of Milton then, but Milton now includes a large number of other townships?—They added to Milton about that time Loch Eynort, Kildonan, Arivulin, and North Frobost.

39,354. All these townships were added in 1846 to the old farm of Milton?—Yes.

39,355. Then the old farm of Milton was comparatively a small farm?—Yes, it would keep a farmer comfortably enough.

39,356. Then is it the case that, when the estate was sold, and came into the possession of the Gordons, the rents of the crofters were very high?—According to the information I got when the kelp failed.

39,357. They were highly rented on account of the kelp industry then?—Yes.

39,358. The rents were put up because the people could engage in kelp-making?—They put the rent not on the land but on the kelp.

39,359. Kelp-making was a very remunerative occupation then, and the rents were therefore very high?—Very high.

39,360. But that rent did not represent the value of the land, but the value of the kelp?—The value of the kelp. The rent was valued on the kelp, not on the land, in 1822. It was then the crofts were formed.

39,361. And was that rent exacted from the crofters after the kelp industry failed?—Yes, till the Crofters Commission came.

39,362. But I suppose they were not able to pay: they fell into arrears on account of the rack-rent that was put on them?—That is in the estate books.

39,363. And was the failure to pay that rack-rent made the excuse for evicting them?—Oh no, but just to make the large farmers bigger. They did not like the people, and put sheep on them.

39,364. Were the evictions conducted in a kindly way? Were other places prepared for them, or was anything done to help them?—Oh, just by force of ground officer, or other officers, but altogether by force: oppressing them.

39,365. Can you tell us anything more particularly than that about the force that was used?—There are some delegates older than I am who can tell you.

39,366. But it was clearly shown, I suppose, that it was very much against their will?—So far as my information goes, the whole of them were so cleared.

39,367. Then, during the present management, has much been done for the crofters to make them more comfortable?—At that time they came to sub-divide crofts; full crofts were divided into small crofts.

39,368. You represent that the large farms were made larger, and the crofts were made smaller by sub-division by the estate?—Yes.

39,369. But, recently now, has there been much land added to the crofter townships?—No, but taken from them.

39,370. Has that been done recently?—Just putting new settlers, the same as Kilpheder has, not adding anything to the townships.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Neil Macphe

39,371. Can you give any instance of any new settler being put upon a crofting township by the estate?—Oh yes.

39,372. Where: have any been placed in Kilpheder on the crofters' land by the estate?—Oh yes, the whole lot: I told you about Lochboisdale, by the estate office.

39,373. But that has not been done recently?—In 1882; the last ones, the last six, were put in our township pasture.

39,374. And has that been going on in other townships as well as in yours?—Yes, in North Boisdale they put six in the pasture too, about the same time.

39,375. Where did these come from?—From Lochboisdale; the cottars got small pieces on Boisdale pasture.

39,376. And this happened as lately as 1882?—A little before that: maybe the delegates can tell you exactly.

39,377. We hear a good deal about the desire of the present proprietrix to better the condition of the crofters: can you tell us anything at all that has been done to the crofters of late to improve their condition?—No, not in this district, at any rate.

39,378. The chief improvement that they look for is to get more land?—More land: that is what they want.

39,379. And there has been no attempt to do that?—No.

39,380. Have any of the large tacks been out of lease lately?—Yes, Milton Farm was, at the last term; it got a new lease.

39,381. Any other lately?—Kilbride, last year.

39,382. And the other tacks? Was Bornish out of lease?—Yes, and a new lease on Drimisdale.

39,383. Now, in any of these cases, was there any attempt made to get the crofters settled upon any of them?—Ormaclette: it was there they put applications in to get more land, but there are delegates from it.

39,384. Applications were made for part of Ormaclette?—Yes.

39,385. And was that application successful?—They are not granted yet.

39,386. But were there any large tacks offered by the factor to be divided among the crofters, seeing there is such a desire on the crofters' part for land?—I never heard of such a thing.

39,387. These tacks, you say, would be useful: would Bornish, for instance, be useful?—The whole of the place between this and Ormaclette would be very useful.

39,388–9. Did you get no opportunity of offering for it, or of settling there: I suppose you made no application?—No: but the people intend to do that very soon—to put in applications for it; that is what they told me.

39,390. Then have these farms been let to separate tenants,—those that were out of lease? Is it the case that two of these large farms have lately got into the hands of one farmer?—Yes, that is so.

39,391. So that the large holdings are constantly being increased?—Yes.

39,392. And is it your opinion that there is sufficient land in this island for settling all the cottars and crofters comfortably?—And fishermen; they will keep them for a hundred years, better than they are just now.

39,392A. Generally speaking, are there many cottars in South Uist?—Yes, about 20 or 30. The delegates can tell, from the particular townships.

39,393. You want to confine yourself more to your own township?—Yes.

39,394. *Mr Munro.*—At the time that the lease of Milton expired, did it occur to you or any other of the crofters to make application to the proprietrix to have that farm divided amongst you?—No.

39,395. You made no such application to the proprietrix?—No. Some of the people did not know that the lease was out at the time, and, for another thing, they have no man to tell them anything that should be done.

39,396. But if there is so much 'land hunger' in the island, how did it not occur to you to apply to the proprietrix to divide this farm amongst you?—They were afraid, after their trouble, that they would not get it. They did not know the Crofters Act very well.

39,397. But why were they afraid they would not get it?—Maybe they were afraid from the estate.

39,398. Did they not think it worth their while to try the experiment with the proprietrix?—As far as I know, they did not understand that they could get it.

39,399. Now take this farm of Milton: supposing that that farm were offered to the crofters at present on the land, would they readily take it up?—To-morrow; they are ready to take it to-morrow.

39,400. And do you think they could cultivate it to advantage?—Yes, and stock it.

39,401. And build the necessary houses?—They would try their best.

39,402. What is the average size of a croft at Kilpheder?—Well, we have just 26 acres between outrun and arable,—that is the extent of the holding we have. Some little pasture we have, in peat stances; we had about 800 acres of good pasture, but lost it; it was given to the new settlers.

39,403. Was there a meal mill at one time in Milton?—Yes.

39,404. Is there a meal mill there now?—No.

39,405. What is the reason of that?—It is the fault of the estate, so far as it has fallen through.

39,406. If there was a meal mill at one time in Milton, it points to the fact, of course, that there was employment for that mill; the meal mill would not be there unless the people required it for grinding their corn?—No.

39,407. And now there is no corn there to grind, I suppose?—No.

39,408. Is that owing to the fact that corn is not now produced in the island, or that the people prefer to import the meal they require?—The people were cleared, you see, and they were put in the other townships.

39,409. I think you mentioned that the clearance took place about 1846?—Yes, about that.

39,410. Do you remember if there was a failure of the potato crop that year?—I heard about that.

39,411. And I suppose that the condition of the crofters at that time would have been very wretched?—They were working for a pound of meal a day as their wages, making the road.

39,412. Who was proprietor of the island at the time?—Colonel Gordon.

39,413. Was he the proprietor?—Yes; Dr Macleod was the factor, I think.

39,414. I suppose that the crofters at present in the island are not in a comfortable state?—No.

39,415-6. And you think that more land would put them in a comfortable condition?—Steamers were always coming with meal to keep them up. As to the Mingary Mill, that miller ran out to nothing. He fell into debt and is away. The Estate Office forced the man to give the rent, and he is away.

39,417. And the mill is not used at all now?—No; that miller was a crofter at Dalibrog before he went to the mill; but he is away now.

39,418. *Mr P. R. Buik, W.S., Edinburgh, Agent for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—When you speak of the time when the crofters were settled on North Lochboisdale, of course your evidence on that point is hearsay: you cannot remember the time yourself?—I took that in, in the questions.

39,419. I did not hear your evidence very well: and when you said that the old rent was a kelp rent, that was also hearsay, to a certain extent?—I answered that question—that South Uist did not get any reduction at that time after the kelp failure.

39,420. Yes, but you did not know the land at the time, so that you could not say what was a fair rent? You cannot say what was a fair rent in 1846 if you do not know what like the land was then?—I will tell you just to give you a fair answer about that. You will hear other witnesses who will tell you about that.

39,421. But your evidence is not derived from your own knowledge, but from what you have been told?—I gave that notice to the gentlemen. Dalibrog, South Uist. — Neil Macphee.

39,422. You said something about those new settlers in 1882. I did not quite catch what you said: Was it on Kilpheder township?—Yes: Strom Dearg is the place.

39,423. Is it on land on which the North Lochboisdale crofters now are?—No, but the peat stance we have at Kilpheder, and we cultivated it into arable land and then they put new settlers in it.

39,424. Can you tell me their names?—Yes.

39,425. What are they?—John Macphee, Ronald Morrison, John Mackinnon, Alexander Macdonald, 'Currie,' Catherine Macphee, and John Macdonald, who is in Lochboisdale; he had the croft in Kilpheder township.

39,426. And who is the sixth?—Well, perhaps I made a mistake: it may have been only five.

39,427. Did you tell the Commissioners how long it was since the Mingary Mills stopped work?—No, I did not tell that.

39,428. How long is it?—About three years.

39,429. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Let us take the large tacks *seriatim*. I should like to ask you to name, at your leisure, the crofting townships that were cleared, and that were added to the farm of Milton, and so far as your knowledge goes, the number of tenants who were in those townships. What is the first crofting township you would mention as having been cleared and added to the farm of Milton?—North Frobost.

39,430. How many tenants were there?—Twenty-four.

39,431. Now, another township?—Airidh-'mhuilinn.

39,432. How many tenants?—I think 12.

39,433. Another crofting township?—Kildonan.

39,434. How many tenants?—Twenty-four.

39,435. The next crofting township?—Loch Eynort.

39,436. How many tenants?—I think 16, and down here, the east borders here, on Maclean's Farm, 12.

39,437. That is on the sea coast?—Yes.

39,438. And Milton was a big farm before then?—Oh yes, the farmer lived very comfortably.

39,439. Now let us go to the farm of Ormaclette, and let us in the same way get the names of the townships that were cleared and added to it?—Upper Bornish.

39,440. How many there?—I think 24.

39,441. And what is the next?—Lower Bornish.

39,442. How many were there?—I think 16.

39,443. Let us take now the farm of Drimisdale: give us the townships; try and make a good beginning, and follow them in their order. Begin at Usinish?—I will begin at Buniliggie.

39,444. How many tenants?—I do not know how many.

39,445. You know there were tenants there?—Yes.

39,446. But you don't know how many?—No.

39,447. The next township?—Usinish.

39,448. How many?—Eleven.

39,449. The next place?—Malatea.

39,450. How many?—Four or five.

39,451. The next place?—Glaiclea.

39,452. How many tenants?—Three, I think.

39,453. The next one?—Glaic-an-Ruaidh.

39,454. How many?—Three.

39,455. The next place?—Lamassie.

39,456. How many?—I cannot tell.

39,457. The next place?—Malakes.

39,458. How many?—I don't know.

39,459. The next place?—Russell.

39,460. How many?—I can't tell.

39,461. The next place?—Achkerscallich; that is in Drimisdale Farm.

39,462. How many?—I don't know.

39,463. What is the next?—Unish.

39,464. Next, Kilbride Farm: how many crofters were cleared there?—Fourteen.

39,465. From the place called———?—Eriskay Sound.

39,466. Then on Glendale, or South Lochboisdale Farm?—Bahartaval, eleven.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Neil Macphee.

39,467. Any other township?—Beat, the south side opposite the pier.

39,468. How many?—I cannot tell.

39,469. I should like to put a few questions with regard to the local industry. Do the people of South Uist follow the fishing as the people in Barra do?—No.

39,470. What industry do they depend upon instead of the fishing?—The kelp industry.

39,471. Are you, or have you been an agent for the people in the kelp industry?—Yes, one year; not for the Company.

39,472. Has the estate been assisting the people in the matter of the kelp industry, or has the estate been putting difficulties in the way?—They put difficulties in the way.

39,473. Name one of them?—Interdict.

39,474. Has the estate been interdicting crofters from gathering and disposing of kelp?—Yes, the people that worked to me that year were interdicted.

39,475. Were the people allowed to gather the tangle and dry it on the beach without any interference?—Not when they were working to themselves.

39,476. That is to the estate?—Yes.

39,477. But if the crofters were gathering the tangle for themselves, with the view to sell it in the highest market, would they be allowed to do that, or would the estate interfere?—When I start that speculation I have to give them more pay.

39,478. Were the people prevented from selling their tangle through you?—Yes.

39,479. Were they interdicted from doing it?—Yes.

39,480. Did the people suffer serious loss because of that?—Very.

39,481. Just state the loss in your own way?—They kept them from work for two years: every one, I think.

39,482. Everyone that dealt with you was kept from work by the estate for two years?—Yes.

39,483. What about the kelp? Supposing, just now, that we assume that the estate had a perfect right to deal with whomsoever they liked, did they interfere with the people in giving the kelp to you, and did they interfere with you in selling it to the highest market?—Yes.

39,484. Well, state your case?—I lost the whole of the markets by the estate, because of the North British Chemical Co.,—that is the Company which the estate got the kelp from. The other Company I was representing sent me away to start the business between the North British Chemical Co. and the estate; they will not take the tangle at any other chemical works.

39,485. *Mr Forsyth.*—You mean that the tangle had to be given solely to this individual Chemical Co.?

39,486. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—And only through the factor?—Yes, the whole trade must be going through the factor or the estate office; no one else, but only through them.

39,487. *Mr Maccallum.*—Where is that company located?—In Glasgow.

39,488. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Have you reason to believe that you were not getting the highest market value for your kelp through the factor? Do the people believe that they were not getting the highest market price from the factor?—Well, they did not know whether they got it or not; they could not find out the selling price of the kelp, or the expenses, but what the factor for the chemical work said.

39,489. Did the factor give you an account every year of the kelp?—Yes, he told the people when the work was done; when they were going to settle the rents he would tell them how much they did, and the price of it.

39,490. Has the estate been summoning the crofters for rent, while a whole year's tangle, the property of the crofters, was on the hands of the estate?—I heard that some of them were summoned for arrears of rent and some money for tangle in the estate office.

39,491. How long does that money lie in the estate office, as a rule?—About half a year.

39,492. Is that the most?—Yes, every half-year, and maybe they get some payment every three months.

39,493. Is it in money they are paid?—Yes, but if they have any arrears against them they will not get them.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Neil Macphee

39,494. Do they get the value of the kelp in money, and are they entrusted with the payment of their own debts? Do they got money, or is it meal and abatement of rents?—They keep the rent from them, and they give them any balance due to the crofters.

39,495. Is there dealing in meal as well as in kelp?—Not just now, but some years ago there was.

39,496. But, to this day, the crofters are not allowed to dispose of any kelp except through the factor?—Through the factor.

39,497. Can you prove that; have you documentary evidence to prove that?—Yes.

39,498. You brought down the Member for the Inverness Burghs some time ago,—some two or three years ago—to examine into the question of kelp, didn't you?—Yes.

39,499. Have you got a letter from him showing how far he was able to investigate the matter, and where he was forced to leave it? Have you Mr Beith's letter?—Yes.

39,500. Can you produce it?—Yes. (*Read by Mr Munro.*)—'15 Belhaven Terrace, Kelvinside, Glasgow. 'There is only one outlet for tangle or kelp in the 'chemical trade. Mr Stamford is the sole buyer. He 'asserts that the crofters have no power to sell either 'tangle or kelp except through the factor, or with his 'consent. He is now being supplied by the factor, 'and says he will write and ask him if the crofters 'have power to sell direct. The writer stated that he 'would ask Sheriff Brand how the case stood, and if 'the Sheriff replied that the crofters were as free to 'sell their tangle or kelp as they used to sell their fish 'or potatoes, he would offer the tangle and kelp through 'Mr Hay, as from the crofters direct, and he hoped 'Mr Stamford would buy it. Mr Stamford said he 'would be pleased to have the stuff offered, if the 'crofters were free to sell it, but he did not promise to 'buy. He said that the factor told him that he paid 'over to the crofters all the money he got from him '(Mr Stamford), and did not keep back any of it to 'pay rent. MacPhee denied this, and Mr Stamford 'said he did not believe him. So the matter 'stands at present. The writer has addressed Sheriff 'Brand, and awaits his reply. (Signed) GILBERT BEITH, '8th February 1890.'

39,501. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Do you know, as a matter of fact, that the factor has been keeping the kelp money to meet rent and arrears?—Yes, when he got the money; I don't know what is between the factor and the Company.

39,502. That is not the point I am asking. This is the question: In the dealings between the factor and the crofters, do you know that the factor keeps the kelp money from the crofters to put against rents,—that is, that he does not pay them the money, but that he keeps it from the rents?

39,503. *Mr Forsyth.*—Can you give any instance of that to your own knowledge?—Yes, myself. The whole of the crofters are the same as myself. I gave the kelp to the factor, and I asked the money, and he refused me.

39,504. On what grounds; does he give any reason?—On account of the arrears and rent he has against me.

39,505. You state that of your own knowledge, do you?—Yes, I just asked that from him.

39,506. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Now, with regard to Sheriff Brand, are you aware that Sheriff Brand, as Chairman of the Crofters Commission, declined to give a definite answer as to the kelp? Is it a fact that Sheriff Brand left the legal question of the kelp without passing an opinion upon it?—He said so; the case was uncertain.

39,507. *Mr Forsyth.*—You mean with reference to the withholding of kelp money for arrears?

39,508. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—No, no, but the claim of the estate that no crofter had a right to pass kelp except through the estate. Sheriff Brand declined to pass an opinion upon that point: is that the case?—Yes.

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39,509. And, as a fact, you know that the factor proceeded by interdict against a large number of the crofters for attempting to deal in kelp except through himself?—He interdicted them.

39,510. *Mr P. R. Buik, W.S.*—Can you tell me exactly what the interdict was for?—Against putting the tangles on Milton shores, or kelp-spreading ground.

39,511. Was this not the case, that the interdict was intended to prevent crofters from entering on the shores of Milton, and turning up the turf to build dykes on Milton?—No, the crofters that were working for the estate at the time were not interdicted.

39,512. But it was to prevent the crofters from turning up the turf on Milton Farm; not on the crofters' land but on Milton Farm?—Yes, on Milton Farm, the crofters that were working to me got interdict.

39,512A. Now do you think that Lady Cathcart makes any profit out of the kelp?—I think that she has something off it, or the representative.

39,513. Are you not aware that Lady Cathcart sells the kelp, and divides the whole of the proceeds amongst the crofters?—I cannot tell what is between Lady Gordon Cathcart and the chemical trade, and what is the price between them I never heard.

39,514. Did you never hear that the whole price was divided?—I heard one time when Ranald Macdonald here gave evidence before Sheriff Brand at the Land Court that they gave the price to the crofters, except the expenses, but the expenses I never heard, nor did any of the crofters.

39,515. Was that about the kelp industry?—Yes.

39,516. Was it not about the tangles?—The kelp.

39,517. You are aware, aren't you, that no pier dues are charged for kelp shipped?—Yes, I know; the dues are a shilling.

39,518. Are you not aware that that is not charged for tangle or kelp?—No, I did not know that, but regarding the mention of the pier at a shilling per ton, I pay a shilling per ton for kelp myself for what I ship at Lochboisdale, and I believe that that charge will be against the crofters as well.

39,519. You think that will be against the crofters, do you?—Yes, but I leave the crofters themselves to answer that question. The crofters knew nothing about the charges or expenses or the price: the estate office never gave them what is between themselves and the Chemical Co.

39,520. When does the settlement for the kelp take place between the estate and the crofters: is it not at the rent collection?—At the rent collection.

39,521. But before the rent collection, some of them, if they require it, get a little sum to account?—Yes.

39,522. And at the rent collection the crofters bring forward their memorandum of kelp shipped: they get a slip from the ground officer at the pier when it is shipped?—Yes.

39,523. And they bring that forward at the rent collection?—Yes.

39,524. Now did you never see a letter from the Company, I suppose to Mr Paterson, saying what the price of the kelp was?—No.

39,525. Did you ever ask for it?—Yes, I asked him that question myself.

39,526. When?—About two years ago, and he told me the price he would get for the kelp, and that he would give it to me. But I never saw the price nor even a statement from the Chemical Co., but what the factor said to me. He didn't give me a notice from the Company at all, nor the expenses either.

39,527. But did you ask to see such an invoice?—Yes.

39,528. When did you ask?—Before Sheriff Webster at Lochboisdale, and I asked the clerk.

39,529. But at what rent collection did you ask to see the account for kelp?—I asked the factor about it.

39,530. But you don't remember at what rent collection, do you?—Three years ago.

39,531. And did you never hear Mr Paterson read a letter from the Company, stating the price that he got for the kelp: just think a little, please?—I heard him one time read a letter, but he never gave it to me.

39,532. But he read it?—He read it that the last kelp fetched £1. Dalibrog, South Uist. — Neil Macphee.

39,533. He read that to you and to a lot of the other crofters?—To myself alone at the rent collection.

39,534. Did you say that you asked Mr Paterson for the money, and he would not give it to you?—He refused.

39,535. When was that?—The same day.

39,536. Three years ago?—Yes, I think three years ago.

39,537. What did he say?—He refused me, and would not give me a penny, he would give me a receipt; and I went out and I told the people 'that is what I have for my kelp, the receipt.'

39,538. You are quite sure of that, are you?—Oh, quite sure.

39,539. Do you know anyone else from whom money was kept back in a similar way?—I heard it from other people, when they had got too much money, that he kept the other half-year's rent from the kelp in advance.

39,540. Are you not aware that the people invariably asked that the money should be put to payment of their rent by Mr Paterson?—Well, when the people have the money in the factor's hand, the kelp money, the factor will give them a receipt for what they have to get, and if there is a balance he will give that to them, but I heard from people that if they have too much money to get, they wish to keep another half-year's rent from them, and that is what is done.

39,541. But do you not know that the people always ask Mr Paterson to put the kelp money towards the rent?—Well, they were afraid from the factor to ask such questions.

39,542. But you are not afraid of factors now-a-days?—Oh, I am not afraid of them at all, but the people were afraid. They were afraid from the factor if they were going to ask money he would keep them from the kelp altogether.

39,543. A sort of traditional terror?—Yes.

39,544. You made one statement which very much interested me, and that was that crofters were summoned for their rent when they had a year's tangle-money due?—Well, not a year, but a balance. I heard that there were 12 Court summonses, and when they went they found that there was money due to them for tangle.

39,544A. Was there more money due to them than they were due to the estate: did you hear that?—Fifteen or sixteen shillings I heard that the people got summoned for, and they had eight or ten shillings of a balance against that, and they put it against that, and the expenses besides.

39,545. And did they say that that money had not been credited to them before the summons was taken out?—No, they got the summons before they went to the office. The arrears of rent were sent to Lochmaddy to put against that, and that money should have been put to their credit before it was sent.

39,546. The summons was for a bigger amount than the amount they had at their credit for tangle?—Yes, a little more, but it is very hard for the estate to summon a poor man for 15s. while he has 8s. in the estate office for four or five months, and put him in 6s. or 7s. or 10s. of expenses at Lochmaddy besides that.

39,546A. But don't you think that it is very hard that the estate should not get their fair rents?—Oh, the estate was always crying out.

39,547. Now will you tell me the names of any of the tenants who were summoned while they had tangle-money?—Well, I heard Donald Beaton's name from the people.

39,548. Is that the only name you can give?—I will question the people about it.

39,549. Can you not give me the names?—I have no memory for it.

39,550. *Mr Munro.*—I would like to get a little more information from you regarding this kelp matter. Do you mean to say here to-day, now, seriously, that Lady Gordon-Cathcart or her factor makes a profit out of

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Neil Macphee.

this kelp industry?—Well, yes, according to the Company I was out from, but I don't know what is between the estate and the Chemical Company.

39,551. The position of matters is this, that Lady Cathcart insists that you conduct the kelp industry through her factor?—Yes.

39,552. Now does the factor give you a statement of the nett produce of the kelp that you hand over to him?—Never saw it, nor any in the whole estate.

39,553. In furnishing you with a statement of rent, does he not credit you there with kelp?—He gave me a return of kelp, and £2, 10s. is the price, and £1 is in the estate book. No word about expenses, no word about commission, but just that is what you have for the kelp. One ton of kelp, and £2, 10s. the price of it.

39,554. Does he not at any time show you the account sales of kelp when he disposes of it for you?—Never saw it.

39,555. I will put the thing this way: supposing that you gave five tons of kelp to the factor in the course of the season, how does he credit you with these five tons in the rent receipt?—This is the account: Five tons of kelp at £2, 10s., or say £3, or say £1; last year it was £1: that would be five tons of kelp at £1. We never heard any expenses, or any detailed accounts or sale statement.

39,556. Do you think that the factor arbitrarily fixes the price of the kelp himself?—I don't know about that, but, according to the Company I was with, I know what was between the Company and myself.

39,557. Then if you had perfect freedom of action to prosecute the kelp industry as you thought right yourselves, do you consider you would make more out of it than you can out of it through the factor?—Yes, if we got open market for it.

39,558. That is, if the interdict were withdrawn, and you were allowed to gather the kelp and dispose of it without any other restriction upon you, you consider you could make better of it than you now make through the factor?—Yes, to be sure.

39,559. Now was there any reason given when Lady Gordon Cathcart interdicted you from gathering kelp or tangle?—So far as I know, just to cut me away altogether, and leave the trade to themselves, through themselves.

39,560. Or was it to prevent you injuring the land, on Milton, for example?—Yes, for example, to keep the people back altogether. That spoiled me and the people.

39,561. Now does a belief prevail generally in the island that they are not getting fair-play in the matter of this kelp industry?—No, through the factor, every ounce.

39,562. But that is not an answer to my question. Are there many people who share the belief you now entertain that they are not getting fair-play from the factor in this matter. Do more people than yourself believe that you are not getting fair play in this matter of the kelp industry?—Oh, well, the poor people don't know what is the price of kelp and such like.

39,563. But do you know any other people besides yourself who have the same belief that you now entertain about this business?—They are all in darkness about the kelp trade except myself.

39,564. So that you are just speaking for yourself?—I know about the things, but they don't know about it themselves. They know nothing about the kelp or tangle trade except what they got.

39,565. *Mr Maccallum.*—By starting a kelp agency, you thought you would benefit the people, I suppose?—Yes.

39,566. That you would give them more than the estate was giving?—I gave them a penny more per yard.

39,567. And that you would also benefit yourself?—Oh, as to my benefit, I don't look for it; but I look for the people.

39,568. But it was not altogether a benevolent venture of yours, I take it; you meant to make a profit off it, I suppose, and to benefit the people at the same time?—Yes, I got letters to get the tangle.

39,569. And the people were willing to deal with you?—Oh yes, they were. They gathered about £300 worth of tangle, and it ran out to nothing, and two years besides that the factor would not give them any work. I have about 120 between crofters and cottars, and the factor kept them back for two years, in spite, because they gave me the tangle. That is fair evidence about the thing.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Neil Macphee.

39,570. So that that shows that these people were not convinced that they were getting the whole proceeds of the tangle through the estate?—Yes.

39,571. They were not satisfied with the dealings of the estate?—And, another thing, they were complaining against the tangles. When the kelp tangle started here at first—about 1882 I think was the date—it was Barney Sweeney who was agent for the tangles at that time, and he gave them 4d. per yard for the tangles, and paid them every month regularly. He was here for three years, and he was put away from the estate altogether, and then the factor came in in his place to pay the people, and when the factor got in, he paid the people every half-year, or just two or three instalments in the year.

39,572. How much a yard did the factor give?—Oh, the same price.

39,573. But settlement once in the half-year, instead of once a month?—Yes, but he kept 1s. per £ from them.

39,574. Why was that done?—Mr Paterson here.

39,575. So he offered lower terms?—He kept off 1s. per £ as soon as Mr Sweeney left.

39,576. Now it was put to you whether the tangle and the kelp did not go free on the pier, and I did not hear very well what your answer was. Did you say that you got your tangle and kelp free on your pier?—No, I paid more than 1s. per ton: I am not sure: it was either 1s. or 6d. a ton. (*Mr Buik.*—One shilling a ton is the proper dues.)

39,577. So that you got no privilege in that way?—No.

39,578. But the factor gets his kelp on that pier free, does he?—I cannot tell you that.

39,579. To whom does the pier belong?—It belongs to the estate.

39,580. Was this pier put up for the benefit of the people generally, do you think?—It is more comfortable anyhow than it was: but the dues are very heavy.

39,581. I suppose it was put up for encouraging the fishing industry, to a great extent?—Yes.

39,582. And what do they charge for a fishing boat every year?—The harbour-master would know that; I don't know the charges.

39,583. Is it not £1, 5s.?—I cannot tell you.

39,584. Would you consider that a high charge?—I cannot tell you what the dues of the pier are.

39,585. But suppose it to be £1, 5s. a year: would you consider it high for a poor fisherman to pay for a small fishing boat?—Oh, it is too high here, at any rate.

39,586. And you think that to charge £1, 5s. a year for a fishing boat is no encouragement at all to the fishermen?—No.

39,587. *Mr Forsyth.*—I should like to put a few questions to Mr Paterson to elucidate this matter, and he can put in a statement at the next meeting.

Donald Paterson

DONALD PATERSON, Askernish, Factor for South Uist (49)—*examined.*

39,588. *Mr Forsyth.*—Is it the case that the whole of the kelp manufacture passes through your hands as factor?—Yes.

39,589. And that the estate holds that the whole sale of kelp should pass through your hands?—Yes, for the British Chemical Company.

39,590. Then you are prepared to put in accounts to show that none of the profits still rest with the estate, but that the people get the whole of it: is that the case?—Yes, I can do that since 1887.

39,591. And with reference to the interdict of the crofters from kelp-making or kelp-gathering, are we to

understand that this was with reference to the damage to the shore only, or with reference to the kelp-making: and also I should like to know what restrictions you do impose upon kelp-making?—It is damage to the shore,—damage to the *machair* lands: we were afraid the *machair* lands would be blown away, and, as a matter of fact, a good deal was blown away. Every man is free to make kelp if he conforms to the estate regulations. If he does not disturb the stock on the farm and does not bring too many dogs, he can land as much as he likes, and he gets £1 a ton for them delivered at Lochboisdale Pier. That refers to tangle. We deliver them to the Company.

39,592. That is the price fixed between you and the Chemical Company, and the whole of the price is given to the people, and accounted for at the half-yearly settlement?—Yes.

39,593. And do you hold that it is the desire of the people that the kelp or tangle-money and the rent should be put into account and stand one against the other?—They wish that done, and any balance is handed over. When the kelp is delivered at Lochboisdale Pier, the ground officer gives them a check-weight. There is a steelyard there, and he gives them a check from the counterfoil book. The man who makes the kelp keeps this slip, and at the rent collection he presents it, and is paid accordingly at the price we get from the Chemical Company. The price for the kelp is only fixed when it gets to Glasgow, where the cargo is analysed. We don't know what the price will be. I am sorry to say that last year the make was very small, and for the 30 or 40 tons we only got £1 per ton.

39,594. That would be upon the analysis?—Yes, upon the analysis in Glasgow. The year before was a very good kelp one, and I think we got £2, 2s., but that will be brought out in the statement.

39,595. *Mr Munro.*—I think you stated that the crofters had perfect liberty of action to prosecute the kelp industry, provided they conformed to the estate regulations?—Yes; of course on their own land we don't make any rules at all, but only on the tacks. Some tenants complain of too many kelpers' dogs and horses on the place.

39,596. So that the reason you prevented them from prosecuting the kelp industry on other land was that they broke the ground and destroyed it by forming dykes?—Breaking the ground was the principal cause.

39,597. But have they perfect freedom of action on their own crofting land?—Perfect.

39,598. And can they dispose of that kelp as they please?—We don't interfere.

39,599. They can give it to the British Chemical Co. if they please?—Yes, but they prefer to give it through us. They all say so.

39,600. Let me put this question to you, because it is a very important one. Is it the case, as Mr Macphee seemed to convey to us, that you did not give them the full benefit of what you obtained yourself for the kelp?—I am very sorry to think the Commission would think so.

39,601. Oh, we are not thinking so?—Well, I can guarantee that they get the whole of the benefit. In fact, they get my trouble for nothing.

39,602. You can see the importance, for your own sake, of getting the matter cleared up?—We give the pier and shipping of the kelp free, which would probably be worth £20 to £30 a year to the pier, so that the crofters get a bigger return. If we kept that off it would bring down the price.

39,603. You don't pay them the produce of the kelp in cash. I think you say you credit it to the rent?—They wished it to be so credited, and several of them wished it paid before the rent, and they got any balance.

39,604. And you do that without deducting any money at all?—Yes. Mr Macphee said we kept the rents in advance, but that was never done except at their own request. They would say: 'Well, we have 'got the money here, and it is as well for us to leave it 'with you as to be asked to pay it when we haven't it.'

39,605. Do you think the crofters generally are satisfied with that arrangement?—I think so, generally.

39,606. Do you ever furnish them with any statement of the actual result of the sales you make to the British Chemical Company?—Yes, I read a letter,—the letter that comes accompanying the cheque for the kelp. That letter states the amount delivered, so many tons in bulk at so much per ton, and we pay them according to that price. Dalibrog, South Uist. Donald Paterson.

39,607. So that, if a crofter delivers to you five tons of kelp in the course of the season, you give him what these five tons actually produce?—Yes.

39,608. Now, if any of the crofters asked you for a copy of that letter giving the details of the sale of the kelp, would you furnish him with it?—Most assuredly, and I read it at the collection, so that they are satisfied that I have done the best for them to get the largest possible price.

39,609. I notice a scale of pier dues exigible at the pier down here: do you always exact the full dues?—Not in every case.

39,610. Now, take the case of the herring boat: £1, 5s. is in the schedule. Do you exact the £1, 5s.?—I could not exactly say, but the pier master, Mr Brewster, will be able to tell.

39,611. *Mr Maccallum.*—There was an interdict got against Mr Macphee, was there, in connection with this?—Not against Mr Macphee, but against certain crofters who went to the Milton shores and broke up the ground in the *machair*, without asking the ground officer's consent as to where dykes ought to be allowed for tangle. The work, I may say, is superintended a good deal by the ground officer.

39,612. These crofters went and broke up the ground?—Yes.

39,613. And they were interdicted for that reason, and for no other reason?—No other reason.

39,614. Were these people who dealt with Macphee?—They were.

39,615. Was that a mere accident?—No, they broke the dykes without the ground officer pointing out where it should be.

39,616. But it happened, whether accidentally or not, that the people who were interdicted from using the ground were people that dealt with Macphee?—Oh yes.

39,617. And did no other person damage the ground at all, except people who dealt with Macphee?—No, those who worked for ourselves did not.

39,618. But were not they working for themselves rather than for you?—Yes, but under the superintendence of the ground officer.

39,619. But don't you see that this industry is for the people?—For the people.

39,620. And all who sold their tangle to you conducted themselves with perfect propriety, and all who worked independently conducted themselves with impropriety: is that so?—Well, we found that those who went there on their own accord were not so particular as to where they dug up the ground.

39,621. So you wanted really to keep this under your own control?—Oh, that was not the object at all.

39,622. What other object could there be?—To preserve the *machair* from being blown away.

39,623. And you thought that could not be done except by having the kelp under your own control?—And they are all working this year.

39,624. Because they ceased to deal with this man?—No, it was not, but because they did the work in a regular and orderly way.

39,625. Then you had no objection at all, had you, to their dealing with Macphee?—None at all, if he could find a market for them.

39,626. No objection whatever to their disposing of the tangle in any way they liked?—No, we never stopped them.

39,627. You had no objection to that?—None at all.

39,628. But still he states that he was charged for the pier, whereas you did not charge in the case of those who dealt with yourself; was not that putting him to a disadvantage to a certain extent?—Oh yes, if that is the case.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Donald Paterson.

39,629. They were put to that disadvantage that you charged those who did not deal with you pier dues, whereas those who did deal with you were not charged any pier dues?—It was only Macphee himself who shipped direct, and the quantity was very small: a ton or so.

39,630. But you charged him?—Well, he says so; I cannot tell you.

39,631. Why should Mr Macphee start now if there was not a reasonable prospect of his doing better for the people than you had for them?—I could not say.

36,632. Does it not show that you did not satisfy the people that you did the best for them?—I never heard any complaints from the people that they were not getting fair-play.

39,633. But was not it showing that by action, when they dealt with him, and was not that the most effective way of showing dissatisfaction?—But we have the very great majority of the people.

39,634. But we are talking of those who went away?—The majority worked with us.

39,635. But you would quite expect that from your position in the estate; you were in a great advantage in that way from having the power of the estate at your back. Then don't you think that it would be better to encourage the people to manage for themselves, and to dispose of their work freely?—Well, I think that they have every confidence in the estate to do the management for them and find the market.

39,636. That may be: they have great confidence in you: but I look for the good of the people themselves. Is it not a good training for them to study the markets for themselves, and to see how best to dispose of their own produce and industry?—Yes, that may be.

39,637. Should not every encouragement be given to them to manage for themselves?—Well, I have no opinion upon that point.

39,638. Is it not keeping them in babyhood to have them in leading strings like that?—Oh no, I think it is quite the other way; we give them several advantages.

39,639. Quite so: that is just leading strings. Would it not be better to allow them to work for themselves and to be independent, rather than to have the whole thing managed for them by you?—Well, I could not say, as it has never been tried.

39,640. But, generally speaking, is it not better that there should be no monopolies?—Oh yes, certainly.

39,641. And practically there is a monopoly here?—Well, I think it is a free-will monopoly. The people are quite willing to go on every year, more or less.

39,642. But, still, those who worked for an independent man were interdicted?—Yes, from breaking up the shore.

39,643. Now, with regard to this statement that is made as to the refusal to give payments in cash, did Macphee ever ask of you money for tangle or kelp?—I have no recollection.

39,644. You have no recollection of his ever asking you for that?—No. We don't get the money for the kelp until it is delivered at Glasgow.

39,645. Have you no remembrance of settling with Mr Macphee?—I have a recollection of settling with him at Dalibrog, I forget which year, and he had a certain amount to get for kelp, which he got. I think there was a balance which was handed to him.

39,646. At any of the settlements between you and him did he express any dissatisfaction?—No.

39,647. Never?—Not that I recollect. I went the length of satisfying him by reading the letter I got from the Chemical Co.

39,648. So that the settlements were always perfectly agreeable between you and him?—I think so.

39,649. And you cannot charge your memory with his ever having asked cash, except the balance remaining after paying his arrears?—I cannot remember; there are 600 or 800, and it is quite impossible for a man to remember them all.

39,650. But this is not the first time this case has come up?—Well, this particular case of Macphee's I never heard of before to-day.

39,651. Well, there has been a correspondence about it, and one would expect that you would specially remember this more than many of the cases that came up before you?—No, I have no recollection of it.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Donald Paterson.

39,652. Is it not rather curious, now, that having had your memory so often refreshed regarding it, you cannot tell us exactly what passed between you?—No.

39,653. But we have his distinct statement that he asked money and did not get it, and that you say you don't remember?—Yes, he says so.

39,654. But you do not deny his statement?—Well, I take it that he has told you what he thinks is correct.

39,655. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—With regard to the crofters and the kelp question, I should like to ask you if it is a fact that the foreshore lands are held under tack; in other words, that the crofter townships do not abut upon the foreshores where the tangle is gathered?—I cannot answer that question.

39,656. Take, for instance, Kilpheder and Dalibrog: do these townships border or extend down to the foreshore where they gather the tangle, or does a big farm come in between?—No farm comes in between.

39,657. You say that a tack comes between the crofting townships and the places where they gather the tangle?—Yes; you mean that the tacks are a good bit away from the townships?

39,658. No; what I mean is that the tack land comes between the crofter land and the shore?—Oh, the crofts abut on the shore.

39,659. Not the whole shore: they have to gather the tangle on the farms?—Yes, but they are quite at liberty to do so.

39,660. Yes, but that is another question. Now this is a question I should like to be answered clearly. How many crofters were interdicted from gathering tangle on that farm?—I forget the number, but I think it was either seven or nine.

39,661. Seventeen, I am told?—Well, I would not be positive, but that is my impression.

39,662. Assuming it to be 17: were those 17 always allowed to gather tangle there without let or hindrance until they began to have dealings with Macphee; were they ever interdicted before?—No.

39,663. Is it a fact that, after Macphee began to have dealings with the people and to deal in kelp, he had 120 crofters dealing with him or through him instead of through you?—I believe there was a considerable number for whom he measured the tangles instead of giving them to us.

39,664. Does not that, to your mind, clearly indicate that the people wanted a freer hand than they had in the estate office?—Well, I could not say.

39,665. You admit that over a hundred broke away from the estate office and began to deal with Macphee?—I suppose about that; I could not exactly say.

39,666. Is it not because they believed they would get better terms?—It is quite possible.

39,667. Is it not certain that that was their view?—At the time it might be.

39,668. And it was after these 120 began to deal with Macphee that you began to proceed by interdict against the men who were dealing with Macphee?—Oh, we only interdicted those who were breaking the green land on Milton.

39,669. But you never interdicted anybody before they began to deal with Macphee?—No.

39,670. Is it a fact that, after these proceedings, and after the people broke away from Macphee, that you refused kelp from Macphee himself?—He did not offer it to me; he sent it away of his own accord.

39,671. Is it a fact that Macphee offered kelp to you, and that it was refused?—No, he did not offer me kelp.

39,671A. So you say that you never refused kelp from him?—I have no recollection of refusing him; I know that he shipped his own kelp.

39,672. If Macphee would stand before the Royal Commission here, and state that he offered his kelp to you, and that you refused it, would you accept that as a fact?—I have no recollection of it.

39,673. Did you lead the Chemical Company in Glasgow to understand that you would not allow any

kelp out of South Uist except through the estate?—Never. I had no communication with the Chemical Company on that subject.

39,674. Did you catch every word of what Mr Beith said in that letter which was read?—Yes, I heard the letter read.

39,675. Mr Beith says here:—'There is only one out-'let for tangle or kelp in the chemical trade. Mr Stam-'ford is the sole buyer': who is this Mr Stamford?—He is manager for the British Chemical Company.

39,676. 'Is the sole buyer. He asserts that the 'crofters have no power to sell either tangle or kelp 'except through the factor, or with his consent.' This is a statement by Mr Stamford to Mr Beith. Did you personally, or by letter, or did the estate lead Mr Stamford to understand that the crofters had no right to make or to export kelp except through the estate?—I did not personally, and I am not aware that the estate did.

39,677. Does the estate hold that the crofters have not the right?—I don't think I need answer that question.

39,678. You said that the people are perfectly satisfied?—Well, I think so; I hope so.

39,678A. Does not the fact that 120 began to deal with Macphee shake your belief a little?—Well, it is four years since this all happened, and the people have all worked since.

39,679. Were they satisfied then?—Well, the dissatisfaction has all blown away, at any rate.

39,680. Are you aware that four years ago, or about that time, there was a large public meeting and demonstration in South Uist upon the kelp question?—I heard about it.

39,681. You know who were the principal speakers at that meeting?—No, I saw it by the papers.

39,682. Are you aware that Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, M.P. for the county, was present?—I believe he was.

39,683. And Mr Kenneth Macdonald, the Town Clerk of Inverness?—Yes.

39,684. And Mr Alexander Mackenzie of the *Scottish Highlander*, and Mr Wilson, solicitor, Lochmaddy?—Yes.

39,685. And about 2000 people?—I don't know.

39,686. Does not that satisfy you that there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the manner in which the kelp industry was managed in this island?—I don't know.

39,687. Do you believe that the people would have sent for these men, and that the people would have turned out to the number of 2000, to demonstrate against the matter if they were perfectly satisfied with the management?—I don't admit that there were 2000.

39,688. You admit that there was an indignation meeting?—I do not think there was an indignation meeting; it was simply free talk.

39,689. And resolutions?—I don't know.

39,690. I have a report of the proceedings, which I can submit.—I was not present.

39,691. And are you aware that, as a result of that meeting, a bill was introduced into Parliament for taking the kelp management out of your hands?—I never heard of that.

39,692. I will put in a copy of the bill.

HECTOR MACINTYRE, Cottar, South Lochboisdale (28). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter).

39,693. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a house at South Lochboisdale?—Yes.

39,694. Were you appointed to represent the people of South Lochboisdale?—Yes, for the cottars.

39,695. Are there many cottars at South Lochboisdale?—Seven.

39,695A. Have they any stock?—Some of them have: others none.

39,696. Their stock is grazing on the crofters' ground, I suppose?—Yes.

39,697. Are the cottars desirous of obtaining crofts if they could be got?—Yes, they are very anxious to get crofts. Dalibrog, South Uist.

39,698. Do they come here to say that there is plenty of land available in the island?—Yes. Hector Macintyre.

39,699. *Mr Maccallum.*—How many crofters are there in the place?—Twenty-one.

39,700. Are they large crofts, or what size, that they hold?—Small crofts, except one man; there are five large crofts with two on each of them; other six have very small crofts.

39,701. And seven families who have no land at all?—None at all.

39,702. Are the crofts sufficient for those who hold them, or do the crofters wish to get enlarged holdings also?—Yes, they consider what they have too small, and they would be glad to get more.

39,703. And would some of them be willing to move out of that place and go elsewhere, where they would get larger crofts?—They say so, but I am not sure what they might do. The delegate of the crofters is here, and will speak for them.

39,704. Do the cottars pay any rent?—No.

39,705. How did they come to be placed there?—They were crofters' sons who had to put up there because they would get no land elsewhere.

39,705A. Are they all crofters' sons?—Yes.

39,706. And are their parents in that township of Lochboisdale?—Most of them are dead.

39,707. Did older brothers succeed to their fathers' crofts, or how did these cottars not succeed to the crofts on the death of their parents?—They would not get them; others who did not belong to the place got the crofts.

39,708. Were there people taken from elsewhere and placed in these crofts?—They were on the same place, and they were put into these crofts when the old crofters died.

39,708A. Is it an old crofting township?—It is pretty old, but I don't know how old.

39,709. Have the crofts been in any way diminished in your recollection?—No. I heard that they were made less, but not in my time.

39,710. What occupation do the cottars follow?—They are from place to place fishing, and anything else that comes in the way for a day's pay.

39,711. What do they mainly depend upon?—On their work, the best way they can.

39,712. But what sort of work do they principally engage in?—Some sailing, and others at lobster-fishing at the present time.

39,713. Is this a suitable place for fishing: South Lochboisdale?—Yes.

39,714. And could they get holdings near their present places; is there any tack from which holdings might be formed for them?—Yes, if only just at the march between them and the present tack.

39,715. What tack is that?—Glendale.

39,716. By whom is that held?—Donald Ferguson.

39,717. Is that a suitable place for forming into crofter holdings?—Yes.

39,718. Were there crofts there before?—Yes.

39,719. What place on that tack was held by crofters; where was the old township?—A place called the 'big park' was formerly occupied by crofters.

39,720. Where is that?—Close to the sea-side.

39,721. How many crofts were there?—I don't know how many were there before.

39,722. Do you know when there were crofters there?—No, I don't know.

39,723. But have you heard that they were there?—There are some living and present here to-day who occupied crofts there before.

39,724. Is there any other place on that particular tack near you where there were crofters?—Bagharstava.

39,725. Have you any idea how many crofters were there?—I don't know, but some of the men are here to-day.

39,726. Any other place?—There were crofters bordering the sea all the way round from where they are at present until they reached Bagharstava.

Dalibrog, South Uist. — Hector Macintyre.

39,727. And is it on that farm that you would like to get a holding?—Yes.

39,728. Could the whole of it be taken up profitably, do you think, by crofters?—Yes, if they got the hill along with the sea-shore round.

39,729. I suppose they would have no difficulty in stocking it, would they?—I think they would be quite able to stock it.

39,730. The cottars have stock of their own at present?—Some of them have: the greater number.

39,731. Have you stock yourself?—Yes.

39,732. Is there a farmhouse and steading on the tack?—No.

39,733. The farmer is not resident, I suppose, upon the farm at all?—No.

39,734. If you got a croft on this farm, would you devote all your time to farming, or would you prosecute the fishing to some extent also?—If I got sufficient land to keep me going, I would devote my time to the land.

39,735. Is it your opinion that the farm should be divided into crofts of such an extent that they would be self-supporting, and that the crofters would not need to take to any other occupation?—I don't think it would suit to cut it into large crofts.

39,736. It would suit well for crofts for fishermen then?—Yes.

39,737. And would they be able to prosecute the fishing equally well if they had it, I mean as well as they prosecute it now when they have no crofts?—I think it would be easier for them.

39,738. How do you think that?—They would be more convenient to the fishing ground if they got crofts towards the sea-shore.

39,739. On the south side of the island?—On the north side of where they live.

39,740. They could be placed more conveniently for the fishing, you think, than they are just now?—Yes.

39,741. But would the time taken up with cultivating the croft interfere with your fishing?—No, at certain times of the year fishing is not suitable, and then I could work upon my croft.

39,742. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I should like to ask if you or the other cottars got any assistance from the estate for building the houses you occupy?—No.

39,743. And if you and the other cottars for whom you speak were to get the land that you mention, would you be able to build houses without any assistance?—Yes, we could all build our own houses.

39,744. *Mr P. R. Buik, W.S., Edinburgh, representing the estate.*—Do you know where Mr Donald Ferguson lives?—Yes.

39,745. Has he any land near his house?—He has a croft at home.

39,746. And his steading is there?—Everything.

39,747. It is there that he keeps the stock for Glendale?—There, and back and forward between the two places.

39,748. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is Mr Ferguson's house on the tack of Glendale?—No, it is on his croft. There are five crofts between his house and the tack.

39,749. The croft is quite separate from the tack?—Yes, quite separate.

39,750. Is the house and steading on that croft suitable for the croft itself?—I think the house is rather good for the croft.

39,751. And as to the steading: is it too large for a croft?—I think it is too good and too big for the croft.

39,752. Were they built for the farm of South Lochboisdale?—He started there as a merchant at first, and the houses were going on building and increasing yearly.

39,753. And the house is not too large for a merchant?—It is not too big for him.

39,754. And have you a shop?—Yes.

39,755. So it is the merchant's house?—Yes.

39,756. And not the house of South Lochboisdale?—That is the only house for the tack.

39,757. But it was built for the merchant, and not for the tack?—I am not sure whether he had the tack, but there are some here who know better. Dalibrog, South Uis — Hector Macintyre

39,758. *Mr Buik.*—You are aware, are you not, that Mr Ferguson holds the house and land at South Lochboisdale and the land at Glendale under one tack?—I don't know, but he pays one rent for the two; but one thing I know, that they were separate.

39,759. *Mr Gordon.*—Were they always included in the one tack?—I cannot tell whether he got them both at the same time.

39,760. *Mr Maccallum.*—What is the distance between the tack and this croft on which the house is?—There are 15 crofters between them to-day.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Crofter, North Boisdale (70). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter). John Campbell.

39,761. *Mr Forsyth.*—You have a croft, I think?—I have a half-croft.

39,762. What is the rent of your half-croft?—£3, 6s.

39,762A. How many crofters are there in North Boisdale?—Twenty-four whole crofts; nine of them are broken into two.

39,763. And are there many cottars there?—No, only one cottar.

39,764. Will a full croft on North Boisdale keep a family fairly comfortable?—Yes, one of the best crofts would.

39,765. How did these crofts come to be made half-crofts?—Sons were coming in along with their parents, and they got liberty from the factor to divide their crofts.

39,766. Was that long ago?—About 30 years ago, and some of them more than that.

39,767. Have you much grazing outside your crofts?—We have £1 worth of grazing outside our croft,—each whole croft.

39,768. Would you go to a better croft if you got the chance?—My brother is along with me on the croft, and the one or the other would go if we got the chance.

39,769. *Mr Gordon.*—How many stock have you on the croft?—I have a stock that my holding would not keep; I have five cows and two stirks, two horses, year-olds.

39,770. Is your township overstocked for crofts; are there too many crofters in it at present?—They are all wishing to get more, and especially hill ground.

39,771. Is there any hill ground near you that could be usefully occupied?—It is not convenient, but there is one island in the neighbourhood that would suit, which they had in former years.

39,772. What is the name of the island?—The fishing island, Eilean Iasgaich.

39,773. Who has that island just now?—Kilbride Farm.

39,774. Has Kilbride any other island in Lochboisdale?—That is the only one.

39,775. Do you know the farm of Glendale?—Yes.

39,776. Is there any old arable land on that farm?—Yes.

39,777. Do you recollect any crofts being upon the farm?—Yes, I do recollect of them.

39,778. How many were there, in your memory?—I am not sure how many there were.

39,779. Were there four, or five, or six?—So far as I know there were 12 at least.

39,780. Would there be room for 12 crofters on it still?—I cannot tell you very well in regard to that.

39,781. Are you a fisherman yourself?—No, I am not a fisherman; I never put a hook into the sea.

39,782. You live entirely on your croft?—Yes, but what I take out of the croft won't keep me for half a year.

39,783. Then what do you do for a living?—I have children working in the country who send me all the money they can spare.

39,784. How much land would you require to give you steady employment on your croft?—I would need

Dalibrog, South Uist. — John Campbell.

40 acres before I could take bread and meal out of it, and some potatoes.

39,785. And how much of the 40 acres would you propose to cultivate?—14 or 15 acres every year.

39,786. Could you or your brother stock such a croft if you got it?—I have a good stock already, but they are in very bad condition; but we have no money.

39,787. *Mr Maccallum.* — Did the township of North Boisdale lose their grazing at any time?—There were five crofters set down upon the back ground, where we had the best grazing: it injured us greatly.

39,788. At what time were they settled among you?—About 20 years ago. Mr Drever was factor. I can't tell the exact date.

39,789. How many crofts were in the township before these five were added?—The crofts and crofters were as they were before, and continued to be so, but these were settled down on the outer grazing.

39,790. What size of crofts do these have that were settled on your grazing?—I don't know how many acres, but they are not big. The greatest harm they do us is driving away our sheep or cattle when they come near them; we don't complain so much for the quantity of land that was taken from us as for that.

39,791. Were your rents reduced when these were settled on your grazing?—No, until the Crofters Commission came round.

39,792. Were these settled there by the authority of the factor?—Yes, it was by the factor's authority, and the people collected together to go to the factor to complain, but the factor told them that they need not, it was of no use.

39,793. Then has there been any sub-division of the crofts by the crofters themselves?—No. I, for instance, and my brother divided the croft between ourselves.

39,794. And have you separate houses?—Yes.

39,795. This Eilean Iasgaich: was it always in the tack of Kilbride, or has it been held otherwise?—The old men were telling me that it belonged to Boisdale in former years.

39,796. And, since you remember, has it been held along with Kilbride?—It was connected with Kilbride ever since I recollect.

39,797. Do you know anything about the formation of Kilbride into a tack? Was it made out of some holdings, do you know?—It was a free estate all south of Kilpheder, at one time without crofters.

39,798. Were there any crofters in olden times on the farm of Kilbride?—No, there were no crofters in Kilbride proper, as it is to-day.

39,799. Kilbride is just of the old size. It has not been increased by taking in anything from crofting townships, has it?—I cannot tell that.

39,800. Do you know the land in Kilbride well?—Yes.

39,801. Is it suitable for crofter holdings?—It is very suitable for crofts, and very convenient to the township next it.

39,802. Do you think that the townships adjoining it could be conveniently extended by taking in parts of Kilbride?—Nothing could be more suitable; just go over the march.

39,803. Is there much arable land in the tack of Kilbride that is not regularly cultivated?—Plenty arable land, and what is not arable is very suitable and useful if we got it.

39,804. But is there arable land that is not cultivated by the present tenant?—Three-fourths of the land suitable for cultivation is not cultivated, and will never be, by the present tenant.

39,805. You think that if the crofters got an opportunity, they would cultivate these lands?—Every inch of it, and what the plough could not do the spade would.

39,806. *Mr Munro.*—Supposing that you got a croft of 40 acres, as you point at, how could you stock it and erect the necessary buildings for it?—The buildings would be of a very inferior quality, in the first place, unless we got some help from the Crown. There are no roads in these tacks where a cart could go at the present time.

39,807. So that the answer to that question is that you could not take such a holding and put up the necessary buildings and stock it properly without outside assistance?—No.

39,808. From whom would you expect assistance to come, then?—From the Crown; there is no other way.

39,809. Would you be able to pay the money back to the Crown, supposing you got it?—If I were prosperous, I would do what I could.

39,810. But if you were not prosperous, I suppose you could not do it?—In my opinion, if I got the land I would certainly succeed. What I spend at present in meal and food could do that.

39,811. You would make a strong effort, at any rate?—I would.

39,812. *Mr Maccallum.*—I did not ask you where the five came from that were settled on your pasture. Can you tell me where they came from?—Some of them were cottars about the outskirts of the township, and others came from Donald Ferguson's tack, who were shepherds there.

39,813. Did these men build their houses on your pasture without Government or estate aid?—They have only small houses that they built themselves. We could all build the like of that.

39,814. And you have all built the houses you have?—Yes, we built our own houses, but they are not very good.

39,815. If these people, instead of being settled on your pasture, had got good crofts, do you think they would have built better houses than they had built on your pasture?—They would do their best to build better houses. Everyone who builds a house to-day builds a better one than was built in his father's time.

39,816. Would it not also be an inducement for them to build a better house that they have security for compensation, if ever they were put out of them, or if they got security of tenure?—Yes, we would do our best in that direction.

39,817. And don't you think that the inferiority of the houses is very much owing to want of security, and to the people having been changed from one place to another several times?—That is certainly true, but every penny we earn we have to put out some other way, on account of the scarcity of land.

39,818. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Where were you born?—In Milton.

39,819. What is the name of the township?—Baile-a'-mhuilinn.

39,820. Of what tack is that a part to-day?—Milton.

39,821. Who is the tenant of that farm?—Charles Maclean.

39,822. Was your father a tenant in Milton?—Yes, for 20 years.

39,823. Who built the house in which he lived there?—I think it was he himself. I was only three years when he left it.

39,824. Did he leave Milton voluntarily, or was he evicted?—He and everyone along with him were put out in order to clear the land for the tack.

39,825. How many years ago?—Over 60 years ago.

39,826. Did your father get compensation for the houses when he was evicted from Milton?—He got nothing.

39,827. Where did he go after that eviction?—He went as a herd to the Askernish Farm.

39,828. Did he get land?—He got no land, but herding cattle.

39,829. Did he get any croft during his lifetime after his removal from Milton?—He was nine years as a herd in Askernish, and then he got a croft in Kildonan.

39,830. Did he get a house ready made, or did he build his house?—He got a kind of a house that was not much worth, that was occupied by the man before him.

39,831. Had he to pay for it?—He paid for the roof, but the stones were worth nothing.

39,832. Did he improve that house?—Yes, he did; he was obliged to do so.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

John Campbell.

39,833. Did he get any estate assistance?—No.

39,834. How many years was he there?—Four years.

39,835. Did he leave voluntarily, or was he evicted?—An order came home from Colonel Gordon that a tenant could not have a tenant under him.

39,836. Was he, in Kildonan, a tenant proper, or was he a sub-tenant of a tacksman?—He was a tenant of the tacksman.

39,837. When he was evicted out of Kildonan, did he get any compensation for the improvements he had made?—No.

39,838. Did he get a croft after this?—He got a half-croft in Bornish. When the order came home from Colonel Gordon that a tenant could not hold a tenant, the whole of them were sent away, and my father got a half-croft in Bornish.

39,839. Did he get a house in Bornish?—He roofed the walls that another man had for a time.

39,840. Did he get any assistance from the estate for the house, or the barn, or the byre?—Not a halfpenny.

39,841. How long was he a crofter in Bornish?—Eight years.

39,842. Did he leave voluntarily, or was he evicted from Bornish?—No, he and all the rest of them were again evicted out of it. It was cleared up for one Maclennan.

39,843. Did he get any compensation for his improvements?—No.

39,844. Did he ever after get another holding?—When a great many left South Uist, he then got a place in Boisdale, where he is to-day.

39,845. Was it a new croft or an old croft?—An old croft at first: two years afterwards the township was re-divided, and he then got one of the crofts.

39,846. Did your father get a house on the old croft?—Yes.

39,847. When the re-division was made, was it an old croft or a new croft that he got?—There was a house on it.

39,848. He built a new house?—Yes, my brother has that house to-day.

39,849. Did he get any assistance from anybody to build it?—No.

39,850. Now, looking at the whole of these facts, how much your father has been able to do in his day, do you believe that if the cottars of South Uist got the opportunity of taking up new holdings on fair terms, they would not be able to build houses as surely and as well as your father has been able to do?—Yes, and better.

39,851. So that, so far as the building of houses is concerned, they are perfectly certain to be able to build houses without any Government assistance?—I don't know what kind of houses my questioner means, but I know they would build houses as good as those that are occupied to-day.

Angus Walker.

ANGUS WALKER, senior, Crofter, Dalibrog (75). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

39,852. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a croft?—Yes.

39,853. What rent do you pay?—£4, 17s.

39,854. Have you any grazing with it?—No grazing but poor grazing.

39,855. There is no common grazing at all attached to Dalibrog, is there?—There is some common grazing.

39,856. And you have your share of it?—Yes.

39,857. But it is not good: is that what you wish to say?—It is good what there is of it, but it is small.

39,858. Are there many cottars on Dalibrog?—Yes, five.

39,859. Have they stock?—Yes.

39,860. And this stock is grazing on the crofters' land, is it?—Yes.

39,861. Can you make your living out of your croft?—It is not easy.

39,862. How do you get your living otherwise?—We must buy; whatever we take off the croft is consumed.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Angus Walker.

39,863. And do you do any work or fishing to help yourself?—We are working at kelp, tangle, or any other work that comes in the way.

39,864. Are the people in Dalibrog desirous of getting larger holdings?—Yes, if each of them had a whole croft we would be better off.

39,865. Would some of them go elsewhere if they got a chance to get a better holding?—Yes.

39,866. *Mr Maccallum.*—How many full crofts are there in Dalibrog?—Fourteen whole crofts.

39,867. And how many crofters?—Twenty-one crofters,—the seven halves and fourteen whole ones.

39,868. And how many families are there without any land at all?—Five cottars.*

39,869. And you think, if the holdings were divided among 14, that that would be a sufficient size of croft?—I think that would do, and that they would be well off.

39,870. Where could the others be settled? That would leave 13 to be provided for?—In the very township which I left myself; I know the marches yet, and could point them out.

39,871. What place is that?—Frobost.

39,872. Would Frobost accommodate 13 families?—Yes, and more: it kept more before. They had a good hill ground on which they had good stock.

39,873. How many were in Frobost?—Twenty-five crofts.

39,874. And you had a croft there yourself, had you?—Yes.

39,875. Why were they removed from Frobost?—To clear the place up for one who came from Arisaig to take the tack there.

39,876. And it is now in the tack of Milton, is it?—It belongs to Milton to-day.

39,877. Where did these people go who were removed?—They were scattered in the south end about Lochboisdale, and some went to Iochdar.

39,878. Did you come direct to Dalibrog?—Yes, to a half croft.

39,879. Were additional crofters settled at that time in Dalibrog?—Yes, some in Dalibrog were removed to make room for those who came from Frobost.

39,879A. And where were they removed to?—They were living in small houses about the place they were, and latterly they went off to America.

39,880. Do you know how many crofts were in Dalibrog before the people from Frobost came there?—The same number that there is to-day. There were no new crofts made for the Frobost people.

39,881. But some of the Dalibrog people were removed to make way for the people of Frobost?—Yes.

39,882. Were the tenants in a comfortable way before they were removed?—They were so comfortable that they had no occasion to buy anything all the year round; they took out of the ground enough to keep them going.

39,883. Then it was not because of the poverty of the people that they were removed from that place?—No, indeed, but to clear the place for the tack.

39,884. You think it was because Frobost was specially suited for cattle and sheep-raising that they were removed?—Yes, I think so.

39,885. And is it the case that the crofters are now confined to the places least suitable for crop and cattle-raising?—It is certainly the case that it is the worst ground they occupy.

39,886. You think they were allowed to remain on these lands because they were not suitable for large tacks?—I am sure that is the case.

39,887. Could an extension of grazing be got for Dalibrog?—Yes; the mountains between us and the sea would be very suitable.

* On 24th August 1894, Walker wrote:—'I respectfully beg to correct these answers. I should have said that there are 39 crofters now paying rent, or anyhow in the possession of crofters on the very space that 23 crofters had to themselves 50 years ago. The correct number is 39 crofters and 5 cottars.'

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Angus Walker.

39,888. That is the hill of Milton?—Yes.

39,889. Do you think there is any likelihood of the demand of the crofters being met by the estate management, without interference by the Legislature?—I don't know anything about it.

39,890. Have they shown any readiness to meet the desire of the people for land?—Yes, if there was land ready for it, but there were no new lands, and the only land that was settled was crofts; they were ready enough to give vacant crofts to others, but no more.

39,891. But the desire for land, on the part of the crofters, is perfectly well known to the estate?—I am not very sure; but the estate managers certainly understand that. I think it is well known to them.

39,892. And have they not had plenty opportunities of giving land to the crofters, if they were disposed to do it?—Yes, if they like to give it.

39,893. Some of the large tacks in the island have been out of lease recently, have they not?—Yes, some of them.

39,894. Was there any movement at all, on the part of the crofters, to get part of these farms?—I did not hear that there was.

39,895. How can you account for their not making some application?—They were waiting this Commission, as they understood that this was the Commission to give them land.

39,896. And were they fully convinced, in their own minds, that it would be useless for them to apply to the estate?—I don't know: I can't say anything in regard to that.

39,897. *Mr Gordon.*—Have you any recollection with regard to the stock put upon the crofts?—No.

39,898. Have you any common pasture in connection with the township?—Yes, we have *machair* grounds in common.

39,899. And does each crofter put whatever stock he pleases upon it?—Yes, all that he has.

39,900. There is no restriction as to the number?—No.

39,901. Suppose you got additional common grazing, would you propose to manage the stock on the same system as you now occupy the common grazing, or as a club-stock?—I think, if we had that, we would look after it better than we do to-day, but the little we have to-day is not so much worth looking after.

39,902. There is no club stock in these islands, I suppose?—I saw one man looking after the whole of the stock here.

Donald Maclellan.

DONALD MACLELLAN, Crofter, Garraheillie (58).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

39,903. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

39,904. What rent do you pay?—£2, 2s.

39,905. Were you elected to appear as representative of the people of Garraheillie?—Yes, I was told to stand here to-day.

39,906. What do you wish to state to us with reference to the people there?—Anything that is asked of me.

39,907. Are the crofts too small?—Yes.

39,908. Would they move to larger ones?—Yes, if they got it.

39,909. How many crofters are there in the township?—Thirteen paying rent.

39,910. And any cottars who do not pay rent?—Yes, six.

39,911. Have you any common grazing?—Yes, on the hill ground our cattle are in common.

39,912. How do you make your living otherwise than by your croft: do you fish?—No, I never fished any.

39,913. But you cannot live upon a £2, 2s. croft, can you?—I tried, but I could not do without the support of my sons.

39,914. You have sons who support you?—I have four sons, each of them stronger than myself, even the youngest one.

39,915. How do they live: are they fishermen?—Back and forward in this country and in others.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Donald Maclellan.

39,916. *Mr Maccallum.*—How do the six cottars come to be placed there?—One of them came from the north five or six years ago: another came from Milton, and other two again came from the north.

39,917. Were they put there by permission or authority of the factor?—They were, at any rate, getting places to build houses on when they lost their own.

39,918. By permission of the factor?—I think it was.

39,919. Are they relatives of the crofters?—I don't suppose so.

39,920. Do the people of Garraheillie look for an extension of grazing?—Yes.

39,921. Is that what they would chiefly want, or would they like some to get crofts elsewhere?—If they could get the grazing on the north side of the township they would prefer it.

39,922. In what farm is that?—Askernish tack, held by the proprietor.

39,923. Could crofts be formed for them there, having arable ground and grazing, without interfering with what is cultivated just now on the farm?—Yes.

39,924. Is the farm of Askernish mainly pastured or mainly cultivated?—A little cultivated, but mostly grazing.

39,925. And is it well suited for crofters' holdings?—Yes, it is.

39,926. Is it better than the land of Garraheillie, held by the crofters?—The same kind, only that that land is not now strong.

39,927. Your croft is so small that, I suppose, you have to be constantly turning over the ground?—Yes, I must turn the same ground every year.

39,928. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Is Garraheillie an old crofting township, or is it an experiment of the estate within recent years?—It is a good few years since the crofters got Garraheillie.

39,929. How many years is it?—About 35 years.

39,930. Now off what lands was this township made?—Off Askernish.

39,931. Was all the land of Garraheillie township taken off Askernish?—They only got a small border from Askernish.

39,932. And off what crofting township was the rest of Garraheillie taken?—It was taken from the Dalibrog people, a part of it.

39,933. Is it a part of the hill of Dalibrog, or was it a part of the arable lands of Dalibrog?—Part of the crofts, the arable land.

39,934. So that when the estate settled the township of Garraheillie, they found arable land for the new crofters by taking the arable land from the crofters of Dalibrog?—Dalibrog was cut off before the people got it.

39,935. For whom?—One Chisholm, that was in Askernish; there was a bit further south; what they got from Askernish was not sufficient, so they moved southward a bit, in order to supply the people that came.

39,936. So that the land of Garraheillie was partly taken from the arable land of Dalibrog and partly from Askernish?—It was land in its natural state they got from Askernish.

39,937. And arable land from Dalibrog?—Arable land from Dalibrog.

39,938. What rents were fixed on the crofts originally?—Dalibrog was reduced £20 on the rental, and it was laid on the people that came to Garraheillie.

39,939. But I am asking you what rent was put on the crofters of Garraheillie originally?—Some £2, and some £1.

39,940. I don't think you understand my question. What rents were the crofters of Garraheillie paying before the Crofters Commission came?—I myself was paying £3.

39,941. Were your neighbours paying at the same rate?—Some 30s., others £2, 10s. and £2, 15s. and £2, 18s.

39,942. Could you tell us what the rent of the

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Donald Maclellan.

township was before the visit of the Crofters Commission?—I cannot tell exactly.

39,943. Were the other rents reduced by the Crofters Commission in the same proportion as your own?—Yes.

39,944. Did these people, when they got holdings in Garraheillie, all build their own houses without any assistance from anybody?—Yes.

39,945. And do you believe, if the large tacks were broken up to-morrow, and offered to crofters and cottars, that the crofters and cottars of South Uist would build houses without any assistance from the State?—Yes, if they were removed there.

39,946. We will not remove anybody, but if the tacks were offered, do you believe that a large number of people in South Uist would be very glad to get holdings in the tacks?—Yes, those who have half-crofts in particular, and those who have none at all.

39,947. Would these, if they got the offer of lands in the tacks, build houses without any assistance from Government?—Some of them would.

John Macmillan.

JOHN MACMILLAN, Crofter, Smerclette (70).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

39,948. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

39,949. You have heard the evidence given by the previous witnesses as to the desire for land?—Yes.

39,950. Do you agree with it?—Yes.

39,951. Is there anything more that you wish to add to it?—No, I have nothing to add, but I am complaining of having too little land.

39,952. You have too little land, and you wish for more?—Yes, if we got land we would like to get it as near as possible to where we are.

39,953. *Mr Gordon.*—Is there any land near you that would suit for extension?—Yes, Kilbride Farm.

39,954. Is it arable or pasture land: is it new crofts or an extension of grazing that you want?—More arable land.*

39,955. There is no grazing near that you could get for an extension?—Yes, there is.

39,956. Where?—In the same place, Kilbride.

39,957. Are there many cottars in your township?—Three.

39,958. And how many crofters?—Twelve.

39,959. Have the cottars any stock?—Yes, two of them have stock.

39,960. And their stock grazes upon the crofters' land?—Yes.

39,961. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—How many crofters are in Smerclette?—Twelve.

39,962. How many whole crofts are in Smerclette?—Three.

39,963. How many crofts are divided?—Nine.

39,964. Into how many crofts are the nine divided?—Eight of them were divided into two, and three families on the other.

39,965. Do the eight that are divided into two make 16 crofts?—Yes.

39,966. That makes a total of 22 crofters?—Yes.

39,967. About 40 years ago there were only 12 crofters there?—Yes.

39,968. And to-day there are over 20 crofters?—Yes.

39,969. Was that sub-division of crofts made by the estate or by the people themselves?—They were not cut down by the order of the estate: father and son divided them between them.

Donald Currie.

DONALD CURRIE, South Lochboisdale (58)—*examined.*

39,970. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you heard the evidence of Hector Macintyre, South Lochboisdale?—No, I was out at the time.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Donald Currie.

39,971. Did you hear the evidence given by the other witnesses?—No.

39,972. Were you not in the church?—No, not at that time.

39,973. Is your township greatly overcrowded?—Yes, there were only five crofts, and there are 14 tenants. But there were others as well.

39,974. Do you speak for yourself, or were you appointed a delegate at any meeting?—I was appointed by the township.

39,975. Are the whole of your neighbours anxious to get larger crofts than you have at present?—I believe most of them are.

39,976. How many crofts could the township contain comfortably?—That is a hard question to me. One of them has a croft already, and there are three on each other croft.

39,977. Would they be willing to go to other crofts if they got them?—Quite willing.

39,978. And do you think they would be able to stock them if they got them?—They could be able to stock a fair one.

39,979. Do they fish there?—Sometimes, but they are not dependent on the fishing at all.

39,980. They don't own boats, do they?—Small boats: they can't do without boats.

39,981. Do they go to the herring fishing?—Yes, as hired men to the East Coast.

39,982. But they have not a boat for herring fishing in this quarter?—No.

39,983. They make their living partly off their croft and partly by fishing and labour on the mainland?—Yes, they are Jacks-of-all-trades.

39,984. Do you think they would be able to take crofts, and stock them?—Most of them could, and I do believe they would build houses to suit themselves too.

39,985. There is no land in your immediate neighbourhood, is there, that would be suitable for an extension?—Yes.

39,986. Where?—There is a place capable of being cultivated that is very suitable in Baghartaval, in Glendale tack, and another place in South Lochboisdale, opposite the north side of the pier.

39,987. Is that near the Sound of Eriskay?—No.

38,988. Is it called Stor House?—Yes.

39,989. Is there some arable land there?—Yes, very good land.

39,990. Have there been crofts there before?—Yes, but not in my day. I have seen 13 or 14, but I was very young at the time: it was at the famine time.

39,991. But there is a general demand for land in the township?—Yes.

39,992. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I should like your opinion as to the size of holding that would suit the people that you represent, and the part of the country you speak about. Would they go in for large crofts that would keep a family all the year round without any labour of any kind outside the croft, or would what is called a fisherman's croft suit them better?—I think a middle size of that kind would suit us better.

39,993. The smaller size?—Yes.

39,994. Do you believe it would be a great advantage, then, on the coast there, where there is old arable land to make small holdings, say, that would carry a cow or two and a small stock of sheep, and combine the croft with the fishing industry?—Yes, 14 or 15 acres or even 12 acres would suit them fine, as far as I could judge. But a pastoral land is every bit as good to them.

39,995. But not a large holding?—Not on our side.

39,996. And combining a croft with fishing, making the two work together?—Yes, that is my opinion.

Ronald Macdonald.

RONALD MACDONALD, Crofter, North Lochboisdale (79)—*examined.*

39,997. *Mr Forsyth.*—You have heard the evidence that has been given to us about North Boisdale: do

* Writing on 20th August, Macmillan stated:—'A short explanation regarding questions 39,953–4 is necessary. There are 200 acres, roughly speaking, of arable land on Kilbride Farm, contiguous to our present holdings. This land is quite convenient to our township, and can be assigned to us without material damage to the remainder of the farm. There is plenty of pasture land on this and South Lochboisdale which might be assigned to us.'

you agree with it?—I do not belong to there; it is about Loch Eynort I wish to give evidence, although I am residing at Lochboisdale in the meantime.

39,998. Is there land in Loch Eynort suitable for crofts?—Plenty.

39,999. Could large crofts be made there, or fishermen's crofts?—There were men in it in my days; I was for 30 years living in it myself, and my father was in it all his days, and my grandfather and my great-grandfather, but at the time that Dr Macgillivray got that into his tack, along with Ormaclette, we were forced by law out of that, and I was sent out to the height of Inishival there: they made a new mill, and the miller was shifted up, and my small croft was put into his, and I had to move again, and then I took the road to Glasgow, and I was over 30 years before I saw this country, and when I came back I could not get rest in it at all. I was not belonging to the place at all, and I had to go to Lady Gordon Cathcart before I would get liberty to build a turf house in North Lochboisdale. I have got a letter from Edinburgh to give a statement from the north side of this island before the Royal Commission.

39,999A. It is about Loch Eynort: can you tell us anything more about Loch Eynort; is it a good place for fishing, a good harbour?—I could tell you every place; you can call them crofts or lots or whatever you like. There were 17 on Loch Eynort, and there were 32 families living in them.

40,000. It has a good harbour?—Yes, but it is very difficult to get into.

40,001. And suitable for fishermen's crofts?—Yes.

40,002. How long is it since you returned from Glasgow?—Fifteen years.

40,003. And you were 30 years in Glasgow?—Yes.

40,004. Have you got any land now?—I have got a wee bit, by the order of Lady Cathcart, to build a house on, and a wee bit round it for potatoes.

40,005. Do you pay any rent?—No.

40,006. What land is there near you that you could get for crofter holdings?—I have no call for land.

40,007. You don't want land for yourself?—No, I am quite content with the wee bit I have, till I go to my grave, for I am an old man, but there are plenty in the locality where I am that need land.

40,008. Where is the land that could be converted into crofters holdings?—There is plenty of land.

40,009. Tell us the farms?—Down from Russell to the Sound of Loch Skipport, all the north side of the country, where I have seen in my day 40 crofts in that distance: it was 54 families that lived in it in my days, about 50 years ago. Now it is only shepherds that have it.

40,010. Is there room to-day for 54 families there?—Yes, but at that time what killed them altogether and spoiled this country was when they lost all the hills.

40,011. The pasture, you mean?—Yes, all the places put for sheep and cattle and made into tacks. And the fact of the matter is that the land of this country altogether is in the hands of strangers, and those who were natives are crushed into every corner and worthless.

40,012. Can you tell us the name of the tack that these townships are in?—Milton and Ormaclette.

40,013. Do you remember the evictions from those places yourself?—I should have mind of that.

40,014. When was it now?—I could not give you the exact date.

40,015. Was it about 1846?—Indeed, it is about 35 or 36 years ago since it was put into Ormaclette.

40,016. *Mr Maccallum.*—Are there many people now on Loch Eynort?—I don't know how many are crowded on the head of the loch. I never was in the place for a long time back.

40,017. Have these got any land, do you know?—I don't know; I could say nothing about it: I have had no great knowledge of it since I left.

40,018. Then, when you remember that, there were townships, I take it, on the north side and on the south side of Loch Eynort?—Yes.

40,019. The north side is Ormaclette?—Yes.

40,020. Now, can you give us the names of the townships that you remember there?—Yes.

40,021. Name them, beginning at the head of the loch going east?—The first one at the foot of the loch they call Na Haun.

40,022. How many families were there?—Three.

40,023. And they held land, did they?—Yes.

40,024. And I suppose they prosecuted the fishing too?—Yes.

40,025. The next?—Rudha-na-Glaic.

40,026. How many families were there?—Four.

40,027. And what is the next one?—Rudha-mhuilt.

40,028. How many families?—Two.

40,029. Then the next?—Horscec.

40,030. How many families?—Only one family,—my father. I was brought up there.

40,031. Any more?—Airidh-nam-ban.

40,032. How many there?—Three.

40,033. Any more on the north side of Loch Eynort?—Rudha-na-meinn.

40,034. How many families?—Two.

40,035. Any more?—Strom-Dubh.

40,036. How many families?—One.

40,037. Next?—Calavie.

40,038. How many there?—Two.

40,039. Any more?—Ianava, at the head of the loch. That is all in the north.

40,040. And these are now in Ormaclette?—Yes.

40,041. Were there any townships on the east side of Ormaclette, not on the loch side?—I don't know how far they were down. There is Bolum.

40,042. Was that an old township?—Yes, Bolum.

40,043. How many families would be there?—Two. Then comes Cormascott.

40,044. How many were there?—One. Next is Liadle.

40,045. How many there?—Three. Hellisdale, two families. I suppose that is as far as Ormaclette goes north.

40,046. Then in the farm of Milton, on the south of Loch Eynort, can you give us the townships there?—Yes. But I suppose they don't all belong to Milton. Some of them may belong to Bornish, but I could give you them all.

40,047. On the south side of Loch Eynort then?—Kirkidale, one family; Cragavaig, one; Aird-bhuidhe, one; Freacarry, one; Unasary, one; Poltorran, one. That is all that were there in my days.

40,048. And you think that all these places are well fitted for fishermen's crofts?—They were not fishermen at that time, but they had the penny bit of outside land.

40,049. They had the hill along with it?—They could put as many sheep and cattle there as they liked. I have mind of one of the name of Macrae, who was in Askernish, who had the Frobost North and Frobost South rented, and he had crofters on them, keeping only Askernish for himself, and the hills, and had his own herds and shepherds. He was keeping 190 black cattle and 600 sheep on the hills.

40,050. Do you think that the places on Loch Eynort would be taken up by people now if they got the opportunity of getting them?—Well, I could not say: I believe so. I believe there are plenty of poor men in the country who would be glad to have it if they could get it.

40,051. Then do you remember of tenants being in Bornish?—Yes, in Upper Bornish and Lower Bornish.

40,052. How many tenants would there be in the two Bornishes?—There were 20 crofts in Upper Bornish and 17 in Lower Bornish.

40,053. Then, coming to the tack of Milton on the west side, what are the townships that were occupied there?—I could give no information about them at all south of Bornish, but it is the two branches of Ormaclette that were opposite where I was brought up, and I know how many crofts were there and all the people that were living in them.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Ronald Macdonald.

40,054. Were the tenants of the two Bornishes in comfortable circumstances when you remember?—Oh, yes.

40,055. And you think that Bornish would still support a tenantry comfortably?—Oh, yes.

40,056. Is the land in Bornish much better than any land that is held by the crofters?—It is not better than any other, but as good as any other anywhere, and there are very few places that the crofters have as good as the two Bornishes.

40,057. Then, are these the only places that you wish to speak about?—Yes, that is all: I could go no further than that.

40,058. Do you know the farm of Drimisdale?—Oh, yes, I know the place, but I don't know what way it is situated: but there are plenty here who could tell you about it.

40,059. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—You have given very fully the population on both sides of the loch. I should like to know if you could give equally fully and clearly the names of any townships that were occupied between Loch Eynort and Lochboisdale, on the east side of the island, in the neighbourhood of the coast. Were there crofters there at one time?—Yes.

40,060. How many do you know?—I have mind of Rory Steele being beside the Clachan, and I don't know what you call the other man: a man in Glen Usifal of the name of Mackechnie. There was also one in Caolas Folla; Donald Macdonald in Rudha Gate, and Dougald Macissac in Glenmore, and that is all that were between the two lochs.

Angus Campbell.

ANGUS CAMPBELL, North Lochboisdale (70).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,061. *Mr Forsyth.*—There has been a good deal of evidence about North Boisdale. Have you got anything to add to it?—We complain of the small size of the crofts, and we want to get more land.

40,062. Do you agree with what the others have said?—I, myself, complain of having too small a croft, and my children are obliged to leave the country and go to sea.

Donald Maccormick.

DONALD MACCORMICK, Crofter, North Lochboisdale (60).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,063. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

40,064. Do you agree with the evidence that has been given us, largely from North Lochboisdale, as to the want of more land?—Yes, I fully agree with all I heard as to the scarcity of land.

40,065. Would you go and take a new croft yourself if you got a better one than you have?—Yes, it is I that need that and I would be very glad to go.

40,066. Then we may take you as agreeing generally with the evidence before us?—Yes.

40,067. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—When did you get the croft that you occupy to-day?—Thirty-six years ago.

40,068. Had you a holding before then?—No.

40,069. Had your father a holding?—Not in Lochboisdale.

40,070. Had he a holding anywhere else?—He had land in Loch Eynort.

40,071. What is the name of the township where he lived?—Unasary.

40,072. What rent was he paying there?—He was paying no rent, he was a herd.

40,073. Had he a croft there?—He had no croft.

40,074. Do you remember your father leaving that township?—Yes.

40,075. How many tenants were in it?—There were none on the very spot where my father was because he was a herd.

40,076. Would a croft there be better than where your present croft is?—Yes, much better.

40,077. Who built the house in which you reside?—Myself.

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Donald Maccormick.

40,078. If you got a new holding, would you be able to build the house without any help?—Yes, I would prefer to be without the land.

Angus Maclellan.

ANGUS MACLELLAN, Loch Eynort (64).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,079. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you a house on Loch Eynort?—Yes.

40,080. Do you pay any rent for it?—No.

40,081. How do you support yourself, is it by fishing?—By fishing. I hold a croft from Mr John Ferguson: I was paying the rent to him, but his cattle were falling in upon me and spoilt me so much that I was not able to continue to pay the rent, and, therefore, Ferguson tried me harder.

40,082. Was this at Loch Eynort?—Yes.

40,083. And now you have no land and are paying no rent?—That is so. He took the croft from me and I am paying no rent now.

40,084. And you have no land?—When the Crofters Commission was here Sheriff Brand interfered with the business between me and Ferguson. They lifted £27 from me for arrears of rent.

40,085. Who took £27 from you?—John Ferguson, Bornish. Then I could not pay those who were supplying me with meal. All that I had was taken from me, and I could not pay my debts.

40,086. Do you come here to state that you are willing to take a holding if you had the chance of one?—Yes.

40,087. *Mr Maccallum.*—What is the name of the place where you reside?—Poltorran.

40,088. Is that on the farm of Bornish?—Yes.

40,089. And is it a croft house you have, or who built the house in which you live?—My own children, two years ago.

40,090. Did you get permission for building it?—I had the croft at the time the house was built, and the children built the house on it.

40,091. On your own croft?—Yes, on my own croft.

40,092. You were paying rent, were you, to the tenant of Bornish?—Yes.

40,093. As sub-tenant?—Yes.

40,094. What rent did you pay?—£4, 10s.

40,095. Did you apply to the Crofters Commission to fix a fair rent?—Yes, but the Commissioners said they would have nothing to do with me, and they were sorry for that.

40,096. And you understood the reason why they could not fix your rent was that you were a sub-tenant?—Yes.

40,097. Was it after you applied to the Crofters Commission that you were put out of the land?—Yes.

40,098. Was that shortly after you made the application?—About a year after the Commission came.

40,099. How is the croft now occupied that you had?—A neighbour of mine has it: a friend of the tacksmans.

40,100. Has the occupier of the croft a house on it?—He has a house but not on that croft.

40,101. It was added to a neighbouring croft, was it?—Yes, the one was added to the other.

40,102. Are there any more crofts in your neighbourhood?—Three crofts altogether.

40,103. How long did you occupy that croft?—I was 35 or 36 years there.

40,104. And you were paying rent during these years, I suppose?—I had the cattle before I had the croft, but when he saw that I had a small stock coming on, he then cut out a small bit for me, and made a croft of it.

40,105. Do you follow the fishing now?—Yes, I have nothing else to bring myself through but that.

40,106. Is there much land in your neighbourhood that could be utilised for crofts?—No, excepting those that are cut into crofts already.

40,107. You mean that there is suitable land on the

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Bornish tack: is there land there suitable for making new crofts?—Yes, plenty on Bornish tack for crofts: there were plenty crofts there before. Every inch of it was crofting land before.

JAMES MACLEAN, Crofter, Stoneybridge (58). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,108. *Mr Forsyth.*—How many crofters are there in Stoneybridge?—Forty crofts.

40,109. And how many crofters?—Forty also.

40,110. Are there any cottars?—Fourteen cottars.

40,111. What rent do you pay?—£1, 15s.

40,112. Have you got a whole croft in Stoneybridge?—A half croft.

40,113. Are many of the crofts in Stoneybridge half crofts?—Twelve.

40,114. Do these 14 cottars keep stock, or the most of them?—Some of them do.

40,115. Are your crofts too small?—Yes.

40,116. You cannot live on them, can you?—No, we cannot.

40,117. How do you make out a living, the croft being so small?—No way but working from place to place, at anything we can get to do.

40,118. Is there a desire among the people of Stoneybridge for larger holdings?—Yes.

40,119. Would some of them move out and go elsewhere if they could get better holdings?—They would be very glad.

40,120. Would they give up their present holdings so that they might be added to those that remained to make them larger?—Yes, they would do that.

40,121. Then that is the desire of the Stoneybridge people, is it?—Yes, so they tell me.

40,122. *Mr Maccallum.*—Where would the people like to remove to?—To the nearest land: the land that was taken from themselves. That is what they want.

40,123. What land is that?—Ormaclette.

40,124. Were they at one time removed from Ormaclette to Stoneybridge?—Yes, when Ormaclette was let to Dr Macgillivray, 15 of them were removed and sent to Stoneybridge. There were only 24 crofts before that, and it was then that the number of crofts were increased. There was no room for the people but to press them together.

40,125. So they were put there by the proprietor or the management of the estate?—Yes.

40,126. At what time was that?—About 50 or 52 years ago.

40,127. And had they to give up crofts in Ormaclette?—Yes, good crofts; the *machair* and hill ground was taken from them at the same time that the people were sent to Stoneybridge.

40,128. And to what place was the *machair* added?—To Ormaclette farm.

40,129. That was part of the most valuable land in Stoneybridge, wasn't it?—Yes.

40,130. Was your hill pasture diminished?—We lost the whole of it almost: only a small patch of mossy ground was left to us that no beast would live in.

40,131. How is Ormaclette held: who is the tenant of it?—Ranald Macdonald.

40,132. He is Commissioner for Lady Gordon-Cathcart, isn't he?—Yes.

40,133. Now, seeing that you are so very much congested, did you not think it well to make application to the Crofters Commission for an extension of your grazing and arable land?—We do not care to whom we apply: we will take it from whomsoever we get it.

40,134. Did you make application to the Crofters Commission then for an extension of holdings?—Yes.

40,135. And did you get it?—No.

40,136. Do you know on what ground it was refused to you?—I don't know.

40,137. Has the application been heard and decided?—We never heard any more about it.

40,138. Has it been made known to you that your application is not granted?—We heard last week that they might get some. Dalibrog, South Uist.

40,139. From whom did that letter come?—From the agent of the proprietrix. James Maclean.

40,140. But I want to find out from you the result of the application to the Crofters Commission?—We never heard anything about it.

40,141. Do you know whether the application was opposed, on the part of the estate for instance?—I don't know that.

40,142. When did you make the application?—When the Commission was here last.

40,143. And do you state that you have no knowledge as to whether that application was concurred in or was opposed by the estate?—I know nothing about that.

40,144. But, in your opinion, there is land in your immediate neighbourhood very suitable for additions to your holdings?—Yes, I am convinced that it is suitable for crofts.

40,145. And you have been applying for that land year after year for a long period?—Yes.

40,146. And you have been refused?—Yes.

40,147. And the land is held by the Commissioner for Lady Gordon-Cathcart?—Yes.

40,148. He has shown no readiness therefore to accommodate you or to meet your wishes?—No, I know nothing about it.

40,149. You were not aware that the finding of the Crofters Commission was that the land could not be granted because the farm was let on lease to Ranald Macdonald for a period of 19 years, from Whitsunday 1876?—We are not sure, but we were thinking if it was in the hands of any other body he would not be so hard upon us.

JOHN MACDONALD, Cottar, Stoneybridge (35). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.) John Macdonald.

40,150. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are there 14 cottars in Stoneybridge?—Yes.

40,151. And they have no land at all?—No.

40,152. Are you desirous of obtaining holdings in that neighbourhood, if they were to be got?—Yes.

40,153. Would you prefer a holding that would be a self-supporting one, or would you wish to support yourself partly by labour?—I would prefer a croft to keep me going all the year round.

40,154. What size would you require for that; or to carry what stock?—Six cows and two horses and twenty sheep.

40,155. And you think there is plenty of land in South Uist available for that if you could get it?—Yes, plenty.

PETER MACINTYRE, Howbeg (40). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.) Peter Macintyre.

40,156. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

40,157. What rent do you pay?—£1, 10s.

40,158. How many crofters are there in Howbeg?—Eighteen.

40,159. Have you got a whole croft?—The third part of a croft only.

40,160. How have these crofts got so divided?—The people being numerous and the land scarce.

40,161. They were sub-divided by sons coming into their father's crofts, were they?—Very few of them in that way: they were divided by the proprietor.

40,162. Did the proprietor sub-divide any of them?—It was the proprietor that divided them.

40,163. Do you appear on behalf of this township?—Yes, but there is another man too.

40,164. Do you people at Howbeg wish to live on self-sustaining crofts?—Yes, we cannot live as we are.

40,165. And would some of you be willing to move elsewhere to make room for the remainder?—Oh, yes: one-half of us would be willing to move to-morrow morning.

40,166. *Mr Maccallum.*—You say that the crofts

Dalibrog, South Uist.

Peter Macintyre.

were divided by the authority of the proprietor. Can you say where the people came from that got these sub-divided crofts?—There were five crofts originally: there are some living yet who saw them divided into five crofts. There are ten now; two whole ones and eight divided.

40,167. Where did the people come from who took up parts of the crofts?—One of them came from Barra, and some from other townships, but I cannot tell very well.

40,168. What is the place that you look to for relief?—Drimisdale is the most convenient.

40,169. Is there room on Drimisdale for a large number of new holdings?—Yes, it would take one-half of the crofters between this and that.

40,170. Is it a large farm?—One of the largest in Uist, there is only one larger I think.

40,171. Can you give us any idea of the stock of it?—No, I cannot, the man is newly there and I don't know what stock he has.

40,172. Is it mainly a sheep farm or a cattle farm?—Both.

40,173. Can you give any idea of the number of cattle on it for instance?—No.

40,174. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Is there old arable land in the immediate neighbourhood of Howbeg that could be added to the township?—Yes, in Drimisdale: but there is a township between us and that: we are blocked up in the middle between two townships.

40,175. So that there is no arable land bordering on you in the farm of Drimisdale that could be added to your township?—East and west, and we had it on the east coast before.

40,176. Was arable land taken from Howbeg and added to the tack of Drimisdale?—No, but there was hill ground. Usinish was once in the possession of the Howbeg people, but it is now added to Drimisdale.

40,177. Is this the fact then, that Usinish at one time was a part of Howbeg, and that they had arable land there, and that that part called Usinish is now a part of the farm of Drimisdale?—The hill ground that was taken from us up to a march dyke, that is between us.

40,178. Is there land there that could be made into arable land?—Plenty.

40,179. When was that hill taken from Howbeg?—About 50 years ago.

40,180. Has the township of Howbeg ever applied to the estate for restoration of that land?—I think they did, many a time.

40,181. Is there a fence between you and that land?—Yes, an iron fence.

40,182. When was it put up?—They are working at it to-day and for more than a year.

40,183. When did they begin to put it up?—In the beginning of June last year.

40,184. If, instead of putting up a fence there, they had given you that land, would you be able to add enough, to reclaim enough land to make your crofts large enough and your arable land sufficient if you got plenty hill along with it?—Yes, if we got the shore of Usinish, and the hill.

40,185. So that by breaking this farm and by giving you down to the sea and giving you Usinish, and restoring the old boundaries of the township, do you believe that would put your township into a comfortable condition?—Yes, and if some of us would be allowed to go out and live there.

Neil Johnston.

NEIL JOHNSTON, Cottar, Howbeg (46)—*examined.*

40,186. *Mr Forsyth.*—You have no land, have you?—No.

40,187. Have any of the cottars any stock at Howbeg?—Yes.

40,188. How many cottars are there altogether there?—Six.

40,189. Then if you have any stock it is kept upon the crofters' land?—Yes. Dalibrog, South Uist.

40,190. How do you men who have no land manage to make a living at Howbeg: is it by getting work?—Yes. Neil Johnston.

40,191. Just by such work as you can get about the country?—Yes.

40,192. Do you go away to the herring fishing?—No.

40,193. You have a pension yourself?—Yes.

40,194. You were a soldier, were you?—I was.

40,195. But some of the other cottars have no pension, and how do they manage?—Just by getting work.

40,196. And are all the cottars desirous of getting crofts, if crofts could be found for them?—Yes.

40,197. And you have come here representing them to state this before us to-day, that they all wish for land if they could get it?—Yes.

40,198. And do they wish enough land to maintain them altogether, or do they just wish small crofts?—Large crofts.

40,199. Self-sustaining crofts on which a man could live, without work elsewhere?—Yes.

40,200. *Mr Maccallum.*—What, in your own opinion, is the most suitable place for them to be placed in, the cottars of Howbeg if they were removed?—Drimisdale.

40,201. Then you agree with what the preceding witness said with regard to Drimisdale?—Yes.

40,202. And is there any other place that you would like to speak about besides the farm of Drimisdale as suitable?—Unish is also suitable, a place called Laidle, in the Drimisdale hill ground.

40,203. We have heard all that from the preceding witness, unless you would like to speak of some other large farm?—Yes, Geirinish farm.

40,204. Is that a large farm?—Yes.

40,205. Is Geirinish cultivated for the most part, or is it left on pasture?—Cultivated and grazing both.

40,206. Is there much old arable land left under pasture?—Yes, plenty.

40,207. Were there crofters in Geirinish before?—Yes, plenty.

40,208. When were they last there?—About 50 years ago.

40,209. How many tenants do you think there were in it 50 years ago?—I am not very sure, but there would be a dozen at any rate.

40,210. You heard that there was about that number of people there, did you?—Yes.

40,211. And do you think that it is fit to support that number of families comfortably now?—I think so.

Donald Macintyre.

DONALD MACINTYRE, Crofter, Snishival (63). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,212. *Mr Forsyth.*—Were you appointed a delegate from Snishival at a meeting?—Yes.

40,213. How many crofts are there there?—Twelve at first: 14½ to-day.

40,214. How did these crofts get to be divided?—Two came from Ormaclette Farm: they were removed from it and sent to Snishival.

40,215. Were they put upon your township by the estate?—It was the factor that ordered them there.

40,216. What rent do you pay?—£3, 5s.

40,217. That is for a full croft, is it?—Yes.

40,218. What stock have you?—Four cows and two horses.

40,219. Do you find yourself able to live on your croft, without doing work outside?—No.

40,220. Do you go and get work outside?—Yes, I do get work sometimes for payment.

40,221. Do you fish at all?—No.

40,222. Are the people of Snishival desirous of getting larger holdings?—Yes, every one that speaks, speaks of the scarcity of the land.

40,223. *Mr Munro.*—You say you don't live on the croft you occupy at present?—No.

40,224. If you got a larger croft, could you live upon it without any outside assistance?—I think I would.

40,225. What size of croft do you think you would require to live upon?—About 40 acres.

DONALD MACINTYRE, Cottar, Snishival (67).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,226. *Mr Forsyth.*—Were you asked to come to represent the cottars?—Yes.

40,227. How many cottars are there?—Two, along with myself.

40,228. And do the cottars there require land?—Yes.

40,229. They are all anxious to live on the land, are they?—Yes.

40,230. How are they getting a living now?—They get a little from other three townships, Howbeg, Snishival, and Stoneybridge. They live on the common ground between them.

40,231. And there is not much work to be had close by, is there?—No, I don't know of it: if there is work, we don't get it. We require land very much.

HECTOR MACINTYRE, Crofter, Howmore (77)—*examined.*

40,232. *Mr Forsyth.*—How old are you?—Seventy-seven, according to the information I got from my mother.

40,233. How many crofters are there at Howmore?—Twelve crofts, and two on each of them, except four.

40,234. How did these crofts get sub-divided so much?—The people were getting so numerous and so poor and they could not pay the rent, and part of it was given to them.

40,235. Then the crofts are altogether too small now?—Yes.

40,236. And you cannot live on them?—When my family were weak, I could not pay the rent, so I had to let part of the land go, but if I had it to-day, when my family are strong, I could pay my rent.

40,237. Then, could you undertake a fair sized holding if you got the chance of it?—Yes, wherever I would get it.

40,238. And you would move to another place to get one, would you?—Yes, anywhere.

40,239. And do you think there is land available in this island?—I know there is. There is a tack close to us and only one man with one child on it.

DONALD BEATON, Loch Skipport (56).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,240. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

40,241. A cottar?—Yes.

40,242. Are there any crofts in Loch Skipport?—Only one.

40,243. You have a house and no land?—Yes.

40,244. How do you maintain yourself?—I live at the expense of others.

40,245. You mean that you have some stock which you graze there?—I have some stock, and I am a fisherman.

40,246. Who grazes your stock for you?—Mr Ferguson, Drimisdale, gives me grazing now.

40,247. Is there any arable land on Loch Skipport available for crofts?—Yes, people lived there before.

40,248. On which side of the loch?—On the south side where I live.

40,249. Are you anxious to get a croft there if that could be arranged for?—Yes.

40,250. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is Loch Skipport side a suitable place for fishing crofts?—I think it suitable for fishing crofts; it is a good fishing place.

40,251. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Could the people who want land and who want crofts that would permit of their prosecuting the fishing industry, build the necessary houses in the event of their getting the land without Government aid?—I think so.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Crofter, Eriskay (55)—*examined.*

40,252. *Mr Forsyth.*—How many crofts are there in Eriskay?—About 62, and 90 tenants.

40,253. What kind of rent do these crofts pay, most of them?—In former times they paid pretty hard rents for them.

40,254. But since the visit of the Crofters Commission?—They got a little reduction of course: some of them pay 35s. to 40s., and on to £4 and downwards.

40,255. There is a good deal of fishing done in your island?—It is all fishing together.

40,256. It is mostly by fishing you live?—Mostly.

40,257. Do you find these holdings too small for fishermen's crofts?—Too small.

40,258. Although you prosecute the fishing, you would like more land?—Decidedly, we are all jammed together and have hardly room to walk.

40,259. Where do you think there is land available for men like yourself near you?—Across the Sound where we have been flitted from.

40,260. Glendale?—Glendale and Kilbride Farm. We have all been flitted across from that place or from Barra.

40,261. Are there many men on Eriskay who have no land at all?—There are ten cottars.

40,262. Are any of the cottars here to-day?—I am acting for them.

40,263. You represent the cottars as well as the crofters?—Yes.

40,264. And these men who have no land would like to get even a small holding if they could?—Yes, that is the one thing for them if they can get it, but they have waited a long time for it.

40,265. I suppose you would require considerably larger holdings if you could get them?—Yes.

40,266. But you don't wish to leave the sea?—No, just a small holding, with the sea and the croft both.

40,267. But still larger than you have?—Yes, larger than we have.

40,268. You Eriskay people find that fishing helps to a good living, and you would rather combine fishing and a bit of crofting?—Yes, to keep a few cattle and sheep.

40,269. And that is the mind of the people of Eriskay, is it?—Yes, fishing and land.

40,270. *Mr Munro.*—How is it that the fishing is prosecuted so successfully in Eriskay and not in Uist?—Because we were all fishermen there, since ever we were born, and following the sea always. It is not like the South Uist men at all, because we are at the seaside and have plenty of boats, big and small.

40,271. Or is it really because the people have nothing else to do but to fish?—Nothing at all but the fishing.

40,272. Is it your experience that a man can cultivate land and prosecute the fishing, and do justice to both?—Decidedly.

40,273. Because I have heard a number of people say that that could not be done?—Well, it could be done in our island whatever, and in all the seaside portion.

40,274. The whole of Eriskay is occupied by crofters?—Yes.

40,275. And you could not get additional land without coming to Uist?—Not an inch.

40,276. Would you be willing to leave Eriskay and come to Uist?—To-morrow morning.

40,277. And would you pursue the fishing after coming to Uist, the same?—Yes, exactly the same.

40,278. Where is the most suitable land for fishers?—The most suitable land for Eriskay people is to thin the people out of the island and send them across the Sound to Kilbride, where there is a place suitable for boats. Then at Bagharstava again for big boats, there is plenty room to come in. Six farmers could do there with their boats and fishing, but no more.

40,279. Supposing that a number of you were planted in Uist, do you think it would have the effect of inducing or tempting the other crofters to try their hand at fishing too? Would your example have that

Dalibrog, South Uist.

John Campbell.

influence upon them?—In our side they must do it; there is nothing else for them: they cannot get a day's work there at all.

40,280. But I wish to know what you think would be the probable effect of your leaving Eriskay and settling down in Uist as regards fishing: would that have the effect of inducing the other crofters in Uist to experiment in fishing also?—Well, I don't think that either: I don't see through that at all.

40,281. You don't think it would induce the other crofters to engage in fishing?—I don't suppose so; I don't see how that could be.

40,282. Where do you get a market for your fish?—There is a merchant there who buys it from us fresh as we catch it, and salts it and sends it to market. It is they who get the benefit of it.

40,283. *Mr Maccallum.*—The island of Eriskay is a very barren island, is it?—Yes, all rocky together.

40,284. How did the people come to be settled on this island?—The way it was settled is that they were sent away from Uist across the Sound: they were in Kilbride Farm: and some of them were down at Usinish there and others at Bagharstava, and others at the north end of Barra Island, in the islands that Eoligarry has now.

40,285. Were they removed from the old places with the view of benefiting them?—If they were moved to the old places they would have something to go and come upon.

40,286. But I am speaking of the first removal: when they were removed from Kilbride and the other places, by the proprietor I suppose, do you think it was with the view of benefiting these people that they were sent to Eriskay?—No, it cannot be.

40,287. Why were they removed then?—That is more than I am able to tell you in the meantime; I was born just about that time.

40,288. In your opinion they were sent from much more comfortable places than they have in Eriskay?—Well, some of them.

40,289. They were removed from a better place to a worse?—Yes.

40,290. All of them?—Yes.

40,291. And crowded there?—Crowded there.

40,292. In a place where they could not possibly make a living from the land?—Not at all: nothing near it. There is no land there now to make a living from: it is all away with the wind and rain, washed away altogether: nothing but rocks now.

40,293. How much do you pay for the whole island between you?—By George! that is no little. [*Mr Paterson, factor.*—£85.]

40,294. The rent as now fixed by the Crofters Commission is £85. Do you think that is as high a rent as any one farmer would give for it, if it were let as one tack?—Well, I believe it is: it is too much for it in the meantime.

40,295. You would think that any farmer who would have it at that rent would be highly rented?—I really think so.

40,296. On the island of Eriskay I understand that they are well situated for fishing?—Oh, yes, there is no mistake about that.

40,297. But if they got new places in Kilbride and South Lochboisdale, would they be quite as well situated for fishing as they are on Eriskay?—Just every bit.

40,298. *Mr Gordon.*—Where is the harbour you would use in South Lochboisdale?—Lochboisdale itself; the whole of Lochboisdale is all hollows together, both sides, that is all creeks and corners.

40,299. But not on the Sound of Eriskay?—No, there are only two places there for safety: what they call Rudha-na-mona and Saltavich, and then Bagharstavagh, again on the east side of Glendale.

40,300. *Mr P. R. Buik, W.S., representing the estate.*—Who had Eriskay before the crofters went there?—As far as I can learn, I think it was Mr Ferguson and Mr Cameron and someone else.

40,301. And do you know what rent they paid?—No I don't know.

40,302. You are not aware that it was £120?—I don't know at all.

Dalibrog, South U

John Campbe

40,303. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Your opinion is of very considerable value in this matter. You are a fisherman and a crofter?—Yes.

40,304. Do you know men in this part of the country who are fishermen but who have no land at all, who follow the fishing, and who have to make their living altogether out of the sea, say in South Uist or in the Long Island generally?—Yes, there are some there, of course.

40,305. Are there some in Eriskay, heads of families, who have no land at all?—There are ten.

40,306. Is it a great advantage to a man who has to follow the fishing in these parts to have a piece of land?—Yes, a great advantage and a great benefit to the family.

40,307. Can these men who have these crofts follow the fishing quite as well as those who have no croft at all?—Just the very same.

40,308. They are fishermen, every bit just as good as the others?—Every bit.

40,309. And there is more comfort in their families?—Yes.

40,310. And the fishermen who have no land have a strong desire to get a small croft, are you aware of that?—Yes.

40,311. And perfectly satisfied that it would be a great benefit to themselves?—Yes.

RANALD MACDONALD, Cottar, Lochboisdale. (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Ranald Macdonal

40,312. *Mr Forsyth.*—Are you a cottar at Lochboisdale here?—Yes.

40,313. You have heard to-day a great deal of evidence of all kinds: have you anything that can throw fresh light upon our inquiry here?—No, I have nothing further.

40,314. Are there many cottars at Lochboisdale itself?—Seven.

40,315. These have no land at all?—No.

40,316. How do they get their living?—They get a bit here and there, and work back and forward.

40,317. By work of all kinds wherever you can get it?—Yes.

40,318. And are you like the rest, anxious to get land to live upon?—Yes.

40,319. That is the opinion of the other cottars who have signed this petition which you have sent in just now?—Yes, undoubtedly.

40,320. Then we may take you as representing them?—Yes.

40,321. *Mr Gordon.*—Where is the land that you think you would like to get?—For nine miles, extending down the country: I don't care where it is, for there is plenty land.

40,322. It is land to cultivate that you want?—Two kinds, arable and pasture.

40,323. And you think there is plenty of land that would suit you in South Uist?—Yes, supposing there were as many more to get it.

40,324. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Is it entirely out of the sea that you make your living?—No.

40,325. Do you follow the fishing at all?—No.

40,326. If you got a holding as you wish, would you like to follow the fishing along with being a crofter?—I would not be pleased unless I was enabled to follow the fishing partly.

40,327. So that the croft you have in view is a croft that would be a home for the family, and that would permit of your following the fishing?—That is the very thing: if my wife and family had plenty of potatoes and meal, and I could follow the fishing myself.

40,328. Do you believe that the class that you represent would be able to erect the necessary buildings without any assistance from the Government?—I never heard of any of my people getting any assistance from the Government. They had houses good enough to live in, and I would do the same myself.

40,329. And have the people also this in view, that if they got the land they would pay regularly a Fair Rent for it?—We want nothing for nothing.

(The petition referred to in question 40,319 is as follows):—

LOCHBOISDALE, SOUTH UIST,
20*th June* 1894.

To the Royal Commissioners on Deer Forests.

SIRS,—We the undersigned cottars residing at Lochboisdale, respectfully submit for your consideration the following claim:—

As cottars, we are deeply interested and concerned in the objects for which the present Commission has been appointed, and, therefore, we humbly pray that our evidence may be taken in regard to such local matters as bear upon said objects. We wish, in particular, to bring before you our own case, and we feel confident that in doing so we shall be able to throw some light on such other questions as may fall to be considered by you in the course of your visit to South Uist.

We are,
Sirs,
Your obedient servants,

(Signed) 'RANALD MACDONALD,
'JOHN MACLEOD,
'ALEXANDER MACCORMICK,
'NEIL CAMPBELL,
'JOHN O'HENLY,
'DONALD MACLELLAN.'

DONALD PATERSON, Factor for South Uist (49) (recalled)—*examined.*

40,330. *Mr Forsyth.*—I understand you have some statement to lodge with us?—Yes, I put in a statement giving acreages and other particulars of the Island of Eriskay.

STATEMENT of Particulars of the Island of Eriskay.

Area:—	Acres
Land,	1778·770
Foreshore,	440·050
Loch Crakavaig,	5·230
Water,	2·750
Tidal Water,	73·170
Total Acreage,	2299·970

Particulars of Holdings.

Township.	No. of Holdings.	Extent of Holdings. Arable. Ac. Ro. Po.	Pasture. Ac. Ro. Po.	Total. Ac. Ro. Po.	Acreage of Commons.	Rent. £ s. d.
Rosinish,	4	11 3 14	53 1 8	65 – 22	504	6 6 0
Bun-a'-mhuillinn,	11	30 1 21	123 3 12	154 – 33		13 7 0
Haun,	5	10 3 1	53 2 5	64 1 6		6 12 0
Balla [Am Baile],	15	30 2 31	127 – 36	157 3 27		21 10 0
Rudha Ban,	9	15 1 25	39 1 39	54 3 24		8 4 0
Parks,	4	9 – 35	41 1 25	50 2 20	434	5 10 0
Acairseid-Mhor,	13	29 – 7	91 3 8	120 3 15		12 5 0
Coilleag,	10	16 3 38	87 1 1	104 – 39		11 7 0
	71					
Add Stack Islands common to whole Island,					44	
				772 – 26	982	85 1 0
Acreage of Commons,				982 –		
Total,				1754 – 26		

Average Rent per Holding, £1, 4s. Average Rent per Acre, 11½d.

STATEMENT showing number of holdings dealt with by Crofters Commission in Eriskay with the particulars of the decisions of the Commission, and of the arrears due on Fair Rents fixed by the Commission.

Township.	Number of Holdings dealt with.	Old Rent. £ s. d.	Fair Rent. £ s. d.	Average Reduction dealt with.	Arrears dealt with. £ s. d.	Arrears ordered to be paid. £ s. d.	Balance due as at 20th June 1894. £ s. d.	No. of Crofters in Arrear.	No. of Crofters not in Arrear.	Remarks.
Rosinish,	4	6 15 0	6 6 0	...	61 2 2	13 12 0	5 8 0	3	1	
Bun-a'-mhuillinn,	11	21 0 6	13 7 0	...	400 18 3	35 19 0	6 1 6	6	5	
Haun,	5	12 0 0	6 12 0	...	172 5 2	17 0 0	3 16 0	3	2	
Rudha Ban,	9	12 7 6	8 4 0	...	220 3 2	25 0 0	2 14 0	4	5	All dealt with
Balla [Am Baile],	15	43 15 0	21 10 0	...	564 10 11	56 5 0	7 19 6	8	7	in 1891.
Coilleag,	9	14 10 0	10 12 0	...	254 11 10	31 6 0	4 11 0	6	3	
Parks,	4	9 15 0	5 10 0	...	150 18 0	12 5 0	3 15 0	1	3	
Acairseid-Mhor,	13	17 0 0	12 5 0	...	243 7 10	28 5 0	9 2 6	9	4	
	70	137 3 0	84 6 0	33	2067 17 4	219 12 0	43 7 6	40	30	

(ADJOURNED.)

Iochdar, South Uist.

FORTY-SEVENTH SITTING.

IOCHDAR, SOUTH UIST, June 22, 1894.

Present:—

GEORGE GORDON, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*.

Alexander Og Macdonald.

ALEXANDER OG MACDONALD, Crofter, Airdnamoine (76). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,331. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

40,332. What is the size of your croft?—I am not sure of the number of acres.

40,333. Are there many crofters in your township?—Yes, but several have only half-crofts.

40,334. How many crofters are there altogether in Airdnamoine?—Seventeen. At first there were eight crofts, but now there are seventeen.

40,335. So that a good many of them are sub-divided into two or more crofts?—Yes, but they have a full share in the *machair*, and in the sea-ware.

40,336. Are there any cottars in your township?—Yes.

40,337. How many?—Six or seven.

40,338. What stock does a full croft keep?—There are four cows to the souming.

40,339. And how many cows have you?—Five. I have two crofts, or rather two half-crofts.

40,340. Your former rent, I see, was £8?—Yes.

40,341. And your present rent is £6, 2s.?—Yes.

40,342. Is there a demand in your township for larger crofts?—I believe some of them want larger crofts.

40,342A. Do you, yourself, want one?—No.

40,342B. You think your croft is sufficient?—I have plenty land, but it is detached and in too many pieces.

40,343. Are you able to live on the produce of your croft?—It would be hard enough, without assistance from somewhere else. It is the family that supports me.

40,344. Do the crofters in your township make kelp?—They used to, but few do it now. I am the only one in our township who makes it this year.

40,345. How are the other crofters and cottars in the township employed? How do they make a living?—In the same way; they are constantly buying and importing goods, with the assistance of their families.

40,346. They also are dependent on their families for the means of living?—Yes.

40,347. Do the cottars have any stock?—Yes.

40,348. How many have they?—Some have one cow and others two; some have a cow and a horse.

40,349. Do they keep their stock upon the crofters' land?—They are not coming to the crofts exactly just now, but they go on the common grazing, the hills.

40,350. And how do they winter them?—By their own labour.

40,351. Do they buy food to winter them?—They cultivate the land themselves.

40,352. But if they be cottars, they have no land?—No.

40,353. Where is the land they cultivate?—On the other tenants' holdings.

40,354. Would it be a great relief to the crofters if the cottars were removed from the township and got land somewhere else?—Certainly it would.

40,355. Do you know of any place where they could get that land?—Many a place in the country and many a tack in the country.

40,356. But you would require to be a little more specific. Can you mention any particular land?—I am fully aware that those who now prosecute the fishing would be most willing to take lands on Loch Skipport and Ben More, where there used to be plenty tenants.

40,357. You mean on the pasture land, the present hill grazings of Loch Skipport and Ben More?—Yes. Those who were not up to the fishing industry would prefer to be on the arable lands along the west coast.

40,358. Where are these lands to be got?—On the large farms; the largest farm could be given.

40,359. You mentioned incidentally that some of the people are fishermen; are there any harbours about Loch Skipport or the east side of Ben More that would be suitable for a fishing station?—I think so.

40,360. Do you believe that people would be found who would be willing to take land as fishermen on the shores of Loch Skipport?—Yes, there are some here who would.

40,361. Are there many crofter fishermen in Airdnamoine who would take land on Loch Skipport?—I think not; they are not used to a sea-faring life.

40,362. Where do those people live who you think would go to Loch Skipport?—People from Loch Carnan, and from Iochdar here.

40,363. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you remember a time when there were fewer crofters in Airdnamoine than there are now?—Yes.

40,364. When was that?—More than 40 years ago.

40,365. How many crofters were in it at that time?—Eight crofters.

40,366. How did they come to be sub-divided to their present number, 17?—Because there were too many people on the place, and two on each croft; they gave them a full share of the *machair* and a share of the sea-ware, so as to make two holdings out of one.

40,367. Were they divided by the factor, or by the estate, or was it the people themselves?—The estate gave them the places, but the tenants themselves divided the lands.

40,368. Where did they come from?—Some from the township itself, and some from other places.

40,369. When was the last division of a croft made?—Not long since. My own croft was the last one divided.

40,370. And how did that come about?—It happened all right, with the regulations of the estate.

40,371. Was it done by your desire, or only with your consent?—Our own consent; the factor put us all right.

40,372. Has there been any diminution of the land held by the township? Has any land been taken from it?—One croft was taken from us a long time.

40,373. To what was it added?—It was given to another man. The croft was taken from the outrun.

40,374. And how did the cottars come to be settled there?—Every man making a house for himself on the outrun.

40,375. You mentioned Loch Skipport as a suitable place for fishing crofts; do you remember any time when there were fishermen on Loch Skipport?—Yes, I have seen tenants there.

40,376. When was that?—Forty years ago.

40,377. Did they follow the fishing as well as cultivate the land?—Yes.

40,378. What places on Loch Skipport do you remember as having been occupied by crofters?—All those places may be mentioned.

40,379. Just give us them separately, please. What is the first place you remember where there were tenants at one time?—Caolas Liursaidh.

40,380. How many tenants do you remember there?—Only one.

40,381. How large was it?—A good-sized holding.

40,382. Can you give some idea of its size, or of the stock it carried?—I remember the man who was there; he kept eight cows.

40,383. And some sheep?—A few sheep and a horse.

40,384. What was the next place that you saw?—Camus-nam-faochag; it was but a small place.

40,385. Was it just one who was there?—Yes.

40,386. And the next place?—Manach.

40,387. Tell us about it; were there more than one there?—Only one man, in a small lot.

40,388. Any other place?—Airidh-ard.

40,389. How many were there?—One.

hdar, uth Uist.

exander Og cdonald.

40,390. And the next place?—Baile-na-birlinn.

40,391. Was there more than one there?—I only saw one.

40,392. Was that a good holding?—Very middling.

40,393. Would it be a suitable place for a fishing croft?—Very suitable, but rather far away.

40,394. Can you mention any other place?—Ceann-an-tairbeirt.

40,395. Is that on the north side, or on the south?—On the south.

40,396. All the others you mentioned are on the north side of Loch Skipport?—Yes.

40,397. Now, mention those on the south side?—Ceann-an-tairbeirt.

40,398. Tell us how many were in it?—One man.

40,399. What sort of holding was it?—A small place, just for one man.

40,400. Do you remember any other place?—Yes, Cnoc-a'-bhreacain.

40,401. Tell us about that place?—It was a small place suitable for a fisherman.

40,402. Any other place?—A' Chairidh: there were men there before.

40,403. How many families?—One family.

40,404. Is there any person there now?—Yes, there is a man there just now.

40,405. And has he a croft?—Yes.

40,406. Do you remember there having been more than one?—I never saw more than one.

40,407. Can you mention any other place that you remember as occupied?—All along the back of Ben More; but I don't know that place so well as another man here.

40,408. What is the name of the man you refer to?—Roderick Mackinnon.

40,409. These places that you mention are now in the large tacks, I suppose?—Yes.

40,410. How did the people come to be removed from Loch Skipport?—To make room for tacks.

40,411. Is there any place in your own neighbourhood that could be used for an extension to your township, either of arable or grazing land?—No, except what we have ourselves.

40,412. Can you mention any other place besides those already mentioned that would be suitable for removing the people to?—I cannot mention any place, beyond the tacks.

40,413. What tacks?—Any tack you like.

40,414. Are they all suitable?—I think they are.

40,415. What is the nearest large tack to the crofters here?—Geirinish.

40,416. Is that suitable for occupation by crofters?—Yes.

40,417. Is all the arable land on it cultivated?—Yes; there were tenants on it before, all over it.

40,418. Was there more cultivated when the crofters had it than is cultivated now?—Yes.

40,419. So in that case there must be a good deal of the old arable left out?—Yes, plenty of it was never ploughed since the old tenants left it.

40,420. When were the tenants cleared out of Geirinish?—When Mr Gordon bought the estate.

40,421. Where were they sent to?—Some went to America, and some were scattered all over the place, wherever they could get land, here and there.

40,422. Were some of them planted in the crofting townships?—Yes, I was in Geirinish myself.

40,423. And were you removed from that place?—Yes, I was in a place called Gearraidh-fliuch.

40,424. Was that at the time the others were put out of Geirinish?—Yes.

40,425. Were they fairly comfortable in Geirinish?—Yes.

40,426. Better than they are now?—Yes.

40,427. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did those who were removed from the tacks and who were settled down on crofting townships get any assistance from the estate for building houses?—They did not.

40,428. And yet were they able to build houses themselves as comfortable as the houses of the crofters who were there before them?—Yes.

40,429. Were the people who lived in the old crofting townships more comfortable, in the matter of food and clothing, than the crofters of to-day?—Indeed, they were; their food was better, but the clothing is pretty good yet. Iochdar, South Uist. Alexander Og Macdonald.

40,430. The ancestral pride has not died out?—No, it has not.

40,431. Was money more plentiful? Were the crofters in these townships in command of more money than those of to-day?—Yes.

40,432. Do you remember when the Roman Catholic Chapel and Manse of Bornish were built?—Yes, and the township too.

40,433. Are you aware that there was a large number of tenants round about that Manse at that time?—Yes, plenty.

40,434. How near to it?—All round, north and south of it was full of tenants.

40,435. Is it a fact that those crofter tenants subscribed between £30 and £5 per family for the erection of those buildings at that time?—I know some could give £20, and I know that several did give £5.

40,436. Is it a fact that there are no crofter tenants within miles of that Manse to-day?—The nearest crofter is several miles away.

40,437. Now, supposing the minister left Bornish because there were no people there, and took it into his head to get a manse and a chapel built where the people are, would the crofters of to-day be able to give £5 and £10 per family to assist in the building?—I know they could not: they have enough to do to pay their rent.

40,438. And is the reason for that a change for the worse, that the people were removed from the good lands where they had plenty of it to the poorer lands where they had not enough of it?—That is quite true.

40,439. And are you satisfied, as an old man who has seen the former condition of things and who has had a long experience of the new condition of things, that if the people were removed to the *machair* lands of the tack, the Highlanders would pull up and be able to pay their way and live in comfort?—Certainly, a man in that place is better of than a man in a bad place.

40,440. Do the people of this quarter look to Government for money to assist them in building houses? Or, if they got new land, would they be able to build new houses without Government assistance?—Yes, they could if they got the lands.

40,441. *Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the church and priest's house at Bornish, do you think these buildings were put up by the tenants principally; was it their subscription chiefly that went to the building of the church?—I know that is a fact that I heard.

ANGUS CAMPBELL, Crofter, Stilligarry (73). Angus Campbell.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,442. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at Stilligarry?—Yes, but I have only half a croft.

40,443. Do you appear on behalf of the township, or do you speak for yourself?—For myself.

40,444. Were you appointed at a public meeting to come here and give evidence?—Yes, they told me and others too.

40,445. How many crofters are there in your township?—Ten crofts; one man has got four of them and another man two, and there are three other crofts with six crofters on them.

40,446. That leaves still one to be accounted for?—One has a croft and a half.

40,447. Is there a desire among the smaller crofters for more land?—Yes, how can they live without more land, after being fenced in with an iron fence all round.

40,448. Have you any stock?—We have stock, but we do not keep it on our own lands: we have to pay others to keep it on their land.

40,449. On whose land do you keep the stock?—Those who have plenty lands on the crofts keep their stock there, and that gives an opportunity of sending more stock to the hillpasture.

Iochdar, South Uist.

Angus Campbell.

40,450. The smaller crofter gets the hill grazing?—Yes.

40,451. How did Duncan Maceachan come to have four crofts?—He got them. He had one croft at first, then the Rev. Roderick Macdonald left Grogarry and went to Drimisdale, and he got other two crofts from the factor, Mr Birnie.

40,452. Then he got the crofts from the estate, and not by succession?—Yes, from the estate.

40,453. Now, are there not cottars on your township?—Not many; two.

40,454. And do they keep stock?—They have no stock except perhaps one beast.

40,455. Is there any land near you that could be got for an extension of the crofts, or for new holdings?—Yes, plenty. There is plenty in Drimisdale, land that I was cultivating before, and paying for.

40,456. Were you a crofter in Drimisdale?—No, but in Stilligarry.

40,457. Did you see crofters in Drimisdale?—Yes, I saw crofters there.

40,458. In what part of it?—In every bit of it.

40,459. Are there any old townships in the hill pasture of Drimisdale?—Yes, there were.

40,460. Where?—Every bit of Drimisdale that is cultivated now: upon the home farm. They had some hill pasture along with that.

40,461. Have there been any holdings in your lifetime on the farm of Drimisdale,—any crofts?—Yes, the place belonged to the minister there, who was taking the lands from the proprietor there, and sub-letting them to the people.

40,462. *Mr Maccallum.*—Was there any diminution of the township of Stilligarry?—No, I am not aware.

40,463. You understand that Stilligarry is just the same size of arable and pasture as it was when you first remember?—No, a good piece of the *machair* was taken off, and also a piece of the hill pasture.

40,464. Was there much of the *machair* taken from Stilligarry?—Yes.

40,465. On which side,—the north or the south?—The south.

40,466. When was that?—About 48 years ago.

40,467. Were they removed from Stilligarry altogether when the addition was made to Drimisdale?—No, they were heaped together.

40,468. And did they get a reduction of rent?—I am not aware that they did.

40,469. You said that some of the common pasture also was taken from the township and added to Drimisdale; do I understand you aright?—Yes.

40,470. Do you know why that was done?—The proprietor or the factor wanted to make the farm large.

40,471. For whom was the tack of Drimisdale enlarged in that way?—For John Maceachan, who held it for two years.

40,472. You also said that you remember crofters being in Drimisdale. Can you tell us when they were removed?—About 60 years ago.

40,473. Were they sub-tenants of the tacksman of Drimisdale?—Yes, Maceachan had no tenants then.

40,474. The crofters were removed from Drimisdale before the addition was made to it from Stilligarry?—Yes.

40,475. Can you mention any other place besides Drimisdale that would suit for settling crofters on?—Many a place.

40,476. Just give us the names, please.—I saw tenants in Gearraidh-fliuch, where I myself was born.

40,477. In what tack is that?—Drimore.

40,478. Can you tell us when there were old townships in Drimore?—There were several,—Gearraidh-fliuch, Kilvanan, Geirinish, and Drimore itself.

40,479. Was Drimore cleared of the tenantry all at one time?—Yes, from the four townships at the same time.

40,480. In order to form a large farm, I suppose?—Yes, to make large farms.

40,481. Had the people good crofts on Drimore? Were they larger than the crofts they have now?—Yes, they were both good crofts, and larger.

40,482. And were the people able to make a comfortable living in those days?—A very good living, both in food and clothing, sheep and cattle.

40,483. Did they pay as high a rent for the land as is now paid by the tacksmen?—Yes, and more: they have it to-day for nothing.

40,484. *Mr P. R. Buik, W.S., Agent for Lady Gordon Cathcart.*—Do you remember a time when a part was taken off Drimisdale and added to Stilligarry?—It was taken from Stilligarry and given to Drimisdale.

40,485. But do you not remember when some ground was taken off Drimisdale and added to Stilligarry?—No, I do not; I don't think any such addition was ever made.

40,486. What rent have you paid before the Crofters Commission came here?—£3, 12s. 6d.

40,487. For how long did you pay that rent?—For 53 years.

40,488. Think again; was it not £7, 5s. from 1866 to 1871?—Yes, when I had the full croft.

40,489. And did you at one time pay a rent of £6, 10s.?—Yes.

40,490. And do you say that you got no increase of land when your rent was raised from £6, 10s. to £7, 5s. in 1866?—I will tell you how that happened. The rent was raised because there was a piece of hill pasture added to the township lands.

40,491. And some of your neighbours were in the same position; they got some hill pasture also?—Yes, the whole of the township got it.

40,492. Now, before you got that hill pasture, who had it?—It was a kind of outrun between Grogarry and Drimore.

40,493. Do you know what rents the crofters paid when they were in Drimore?—Yes, £5 each croft.

40,494. How many crofts were there?—Ten crofts in each township.

40,495. And how many townships were there?—Four; Geirinish, Kilvanan, Gearraidh-fliuch, and Drimore, all now in the possession of one man.

40,496. But they were not all in Drimore?—The traces of them can still be seen, although they are now fenced off.

40,497. Between 1866 and 1871 your rent was raised by 15s.; now, did you, at that time, get a valuable addition to your holding?—Nothing at all.

40,498. You acknowledge that you got some hill grazing?—Yes, we did.

40,499. Was it, in your opinion, worth the additional rent?—It was dear enough: if we had not got it we could not turn a beast outside.

40,500. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I understood you to say that the township of Stilligarry was deprived of *machair* land and of hill grazing, which was added to the big farm?—Yes, I have witnesses enough to prove it.

40,501. Did the estate reduce the rent of the township when they deprived the township of those lands?—I did not notice any reduction; I did not get any.

40,502. How many years is it since the land you refer to was taken off the township?—I believe about 48 years ago.*

40,503. Was the rent changed at that time?—We never felt any change.

40,504. Did you ever hear the township complain of being deprived of that land?—Every day.

40,505. Did you ever hear the township complain of not getting the rent reduced when they were deprived of that land?—Yes.

40,506. How many years is it since the estate gave this man Maceachan the other two lots?—I am not very sure when he got these two, but I am certain it was when Mr Roderick [Rev. Roderick Macdonald] left Grogarry,—I daresay about 30 years ago.

* In August 1894, Campbell wrote to the Commission:—'The rent may have been slightly reduced, but nothing to speak 'of. I experienced no reduction whatever. I have only to add 'that, 24 years ago, two of the township crofters were removed 'from their holdings, and one-half of my croft was given to one 'of them. Formerly I had the whole croft.'

Iochdar, South Uist. Angus Campbell.

40,507. Is it because he was the poorest tenant in the township that he got the two crofts added?—He was not the poorest; he was the wealthiest.

40,508. So that, in fact, it was not to benefit the township that the land was given to him, but to benefit the man who needed benefit least?—Just as you say; that is quite the case.

40,509. Did the township make any representation to the estate that those crofts should be divided among the tenants so as to benefit them all?—Yes, and I for one, but we could not get it.

John Macinnes.

JOHN MACINNES, Crofter, Stilligarry (50).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,510. *Mr Gordon.*—Did you hear the evidence of the last witness?—Yes.

40,511. Do you agree with his evidence?—Yes.

40,512. Have you anything to add to what he said?—Not much.

40,513. Then, perhaps we may hold you as concurring in his evidence?—I concur, but I am myself a man of very small holding, and I want more land.

40,514. But otherwise you concur in what Mr Campbell stated?—Yes, that is quite correct.

Hector Maceachan.

HECTOR MACEACHAN, Cottar, Geirinish (38)—*examined.*

40,515. *Mr Gordon.*—You are a cottar in Geirinish?—Yes.

40,516. Have you any land at all?—No.

40,517. Do you get a cow's keep on the farm?—No.

40,518. What is your occupation?—Breaking metal on the road side, but I get a cow kept by the neighbouring farmer, Mr Ferguson, Drimore.

40,519. You are a roadman, but would like to get a croft?—Yes.

40,520. And do you think there is land in your neighbourhood where land could be had?—Yes, in Geirinish where I live,—plenty.

40,521. Did you sign a list of cottars who wish land in the district of Iochdar?—Yes.

40,522. Do you know the rest of the men who signed the list?—Yes.

40,523. And they all want land like yourself?—Yes.

40,524. Did they appoint you as their delegate to represent them to-day?—Yes.

40,525. What size of crofts would the cottars aim at getting?—About 30 acres, with a share in common hill pasture and *machair* pasture.

40,525A. Thirty acres exclusive of the *machair*?—No, inclusive of the *machair*.

40,526. And what number of stock do you think that extent could keep?—I think it would keep four cows and two horses, in good condition, I mean.

40,527. Would they get work for their horses on anything except their crofts?—I don't think so.

40,528. Do you not think you keep rather many horses for the good of the cattle?—I don't think so: I could keep a filly or a young beast.

40,529. You would keep them for brood mares?—Yes.

40,530. Is there any land in your neighbourhood that could be got except in your own township?—Yes.

40,531. Where?—The other townships which the last delegate here mentioned,—Geirinish, Kilvanan, Gearraidh-fliuch, and Drimore, all in the two farms of Geirinish and Drimore. The townships of Geirinish and Kilvanan are in Geirinish Farm, and those of Gearraidh-fliuch and Drimore are in Drimore.

40,532. Do you think if the people got the land their condition would be improved?—Oh, yes.

40,533. And that they would be able to stock the crofts themselves?—Yes.

40,534. And build the houses?—Some of them.

40,535. Without any assistance?—Some would require assistance.

40,536. If you got a croft would you be able to provide the houses?—Yes.

40,537. And stock it?—Yes.

Iochdar, South Uist. Hector Maceachan.

40,538. *Mr Maccallum.*—Are the 33 names on this list heads of families?—I think they are heads of families: there may be one or two exceptions, but I cannot remember any.

40,539. Are all these desirous of getting land?—Yes, and they need it too.

40,540. You appear on behalf of the 33 whose names are in the list?—Yes.

Angus Macdonald.

ANGUS MACDONALD, Viewfield, Griminish, Benbecula (65)—*examined.*

40,541. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

40,542. Have you a statement to submit to us?—Yes.

40,543. You are a delegate for the island of Benbecula?—Yes.

40,544. Were you appointed at a public meeting?—Yes.

40,545. I understand you are County Councillor for Benbecula?—Yes, that is so.

40,546. Kindly read your statement to us.—The only lands available in Benbecula for cottars are the hill pasture of Nunton Farm, viz.:—Hacklett, Minish, Scarloid, and Rosinish. There are about 30 landless cottars in the island. This hill pasture of Nunton was formerly in the possesion of well-to-do crofters. The lands are bordering round Loch Uiskavagh, where the crofters could plant plenty of potatoes and catch fish, which are plentiful round the coast. The cottars say they are worse off since the passing of the Crofters Act. Formerly they were getting small rigs of ground from generous crofters who could afford to do so, for planting potatoes, but they are now afraid to supply these poor people, as sub-letting is prohibited under the Act,—believing the same means sub-letting and that they would thereby forfeit their lands.

The island of Benbecula is in a congested state. After the Crofters Commission have given fair rent, I think the most part of the crofters are now paying from £5 downwards to 15s. Could any decent living be expected from such poor crofts? I do not think so: it is an impossibility even should they have their lands for nothing. If these poor people were settled on the east side of Benbecula and South Uist they could learn the sea industry and prosecute the fishing which abounds on our coast. The expectation of getting a quick transit by steamers and railway from the Outer Hebrides to the southern markets would encourage them to follow the fishing with advantage and make a respectable living and pay their rents equally with the tacksmen. It is lamentable to see the fine straths and glens in the Highlands converted into large sheep farms, together with sporting and hunting grounds, to gratify the desire of amusement of a few capitalists, while thousands of our brave race are landless, suffering poverty and misery, who, in times of emergency, proved to be the bravest soldiers, ever standing at the front of the enemy. It is surely high time Parliament should interfere without any loss of time, and restore the land to every son and daughter born upon it, thus fulfilling the end for which God created the earth.

(Signed) ANGUS MACDONALD, C.C.

40,547. You appear for the crofters and for the cottars also?—Yes.

40,548. Now, the only land that you have pointed to as being suitable for cultivation by crofters is the hill pasture of the farm of Nunton?—Yes.

40,549. Do you mean the hill pasture of the farm in connection with the arable land, or the hill pasture of the farm in the separate grazing on the east coast, or both?—Both; any place that is available.

40,550. Now, how many people do you think could be accommodated upon the hill pasture of Nunton?—I think a good many: I believe even the number that I mentioned there could be accommodated, not with very large crofts.

Iochdar, South Uist.

Angus Macdonald.

40,551. You mention 30 cottars, but you do not mention the number of crofters?—I refer to the cottars.

40,552. And you think that land might be found for these 30 on the hill grazings of Nunton?—I think so.

40,553. Were there crofter townships on the farm of Nunton within your memory, or have you ever heard of any?—I am not sure of that.

40,554. You do not allege that there were any crofters ever turned out of the farm of Nunton?—I am not sure, but perhaps at one time there were a few. I think there were some removed from Aird in order to enlarge Nunton.

40,555. From its appearance the farm of Nunton would seem to have been the home farm and in the proprietor's hands for years?—Yes.

40,556. Is it now in the proprietor's hands?—Yes.

40,557. Do you think that the crofters and cottars of the island get any benefit from that farm?—Oh, sometimes; it was very useful for selling grain.

40,558. You get some grain off the farm?—Yes.

40,559. Do the islanders of Benbecula not get some benefit from the farm in the way of a superior class of bulls being raised on it?—Oh, I think so.

40,560. And you, as representing the island, would not propose to do away with the farm of Nunton altogether, would you?—I don't think so.

40,561. You would only propose to take the hill grazings?—Yes.

40,562. But you would leave some arable land still on the farm, and some pasture land, on which grain and cattle could be raised?—That is so.

40,563. And, in your opinion, is that the best thing for the island?—I suppose so.

40,564. There is no other land on the island that you think could be utilised?—Very little that I know.

40,565. *Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the hill pasture of Nunton, were there ever crofters on it?—Yes.

40,566. Where you propose that these should be settled?—Yes, there were crofters on it formerly.

40,567. And do you think that those who may be settled there, should prosecute the fishing?—Certainly, and they would not require much capital to start with.

40,568. It is on the east coast that the pasture is?—Yes.

40,569. How many separate parts are there of Nunton; it is not all contiguous?—The four places I have mentioned are connected, although they are separately named. They are in one piece, round the loch.

40,570. Are there not some islands?—I think there are a few.

40,571. How is the island of Wiay held?—It is held by a tenant.

40,572. But it is not on the farm of Nunton?—No.

40,573. Were there crofters on that island?—I believe there were at one time. One tenant has it now.

40,574. Is there a farmhouse and steading on it?—He built a house on it.

40,575. Do you remember, or did you hear of its ever being crofters' holdings?—Yes, I was told it was held by two or three crofters at one time.

40,576. And do you think it is a place that would suit for fishermen's crofts?—It would do very well; it is on the east coast, and it has good anchorage and a good harbour.

40,577. Do you know whether there used to be sub-tenants on the farm of Nunton?—I heard that there were crofts taken from Torlum and Griminish once.

40,578. Did the tacksman of Nunton have any sub-tenants, do you know?—I never heard of any.

40,579. I think you were saying that something was added to the farm of Nunton?—Yes.

40,580. Were considerable additions made to the farm of Nunton from the crofting townships?—There were a good many, at one time.

40,581. What were the townships from which these additions were made to Nunton?—First of all Griminish.

40,582. Is that township of Griminish pretty congested just now?—Yes, they have got an addition.

40,583. Are there good large crofts there?—Some of them.

40,584. Are there cottars on it?—Yes, there are about four cottars on the farm.

40,585. Without any land?—Without any land.

40,586. Now, mention some other township from which an addition was made to Nunton?—I heard of Torlum, that some of the land there was added to Nunton.

40,587. Are there cottars in Torlum?—Yes, a few. All the townships have cottars.

40,588. Is there any other township from which land was taken?—No.

40,589. Did you hear of Aird suffering any diminution?—I am not very sure: there are others here who can say.

40,590. On Balivanich?—I don't know of that.

40,591. Do you think it would be for the advantage of these people that they should get back the additions that were made to Nunton, for re-occupation?—I think it would be only just and right.

40,592. And do you think also it would be advantageous?—Oh, certainly.

40,593. How is the farm of Nunton held just now; is there a tenant in it?—It is held by the proprietrix at present.

40,594. Do you think it would be for the advantage of the other townships I have mentioned,—Aird and Balivanich—to get land from Nunton?—They are always complaining.

40,595. Do you think they would occupy it to as great profit as the present occupation?—Oh, yes, they would be very glad to get possession of it.

40,596. And would it be to their great profit?—No doubt of it.

40,597. Do you think now that it is really an advantageous thing for this island, that is so much congested, to have a large holding like Nunton on it?—It would benefit the people in one sense.

40,598. It is for the benefit of the island that this valuable farm should be held by the proprietrix and not by the people?—I think if the people got it, it would be more profitable to them.

40,599. More profitable than any benefit they get from it just now?—Oh yes.

40,600. That is your decided opinion?—Yes, my decided opinion, if there were respectable crofters on it.

40,601. Do the present crofters of Benbecula live principally by the land?—Yes.

40,602. And don't you think it would be a great advantage for them to have more land that they could cultivate?—Certainly, that is my opinion.

40,603. Do you think that this is what they need more than anything else,—to get the land? Would that be the best way to benefit them?—Yes, to get the land; no doubt of it.

40,604. You say they derive some benefit from the farm of Nunton being held as one tack. Can you tell us what these special benefits are that they presently derive?—Just what I referred to before,—raising grain and stock.

40,605. First of all they buy grain,—that is one benefit?—Yes.

40,606. Do they get grain there cheaper than they would from the south?—I believe they get it just at current prices.

40,607. Do you think they get it much cheaper there than they would from the south?—They get grain to suit them, such as bere and seed.

40,608. Could they not get that from elsewhere?—Not very easily.

40,609. Would not change of seed be for their advantage, rather?—The seed taken from Nunton is itself a change.

40,610. It is not a very great change, is it?—Oh, I think so.

40,611. What is the distance between the two places?—Not very much.

40,612. Is it not the same soil and the same climate?—Yes.

40,613. Don't you think now that it would be better

for them to get the seed from elsewhere?—If they could get it.

40,614. Is there any other benefit?—The rearing of stock. The tenants used to buy stock from the farm.

40,615. And is it from the farm that they usually get their bulls?—Yes, always from there.

40,616. But if the tenants had these lands themselves, is there any reason why they should not be able to rear as good stock as is presently reared on it?—I daresay if they had good pieces of it, and were good well-to-do tenants, they would be able to raise good stock: but the land is better.

40,617. But if the crofters had it in fairly large holdings, would they not be able to keep up as good a stock as is on that land just now?—I believe they would.

40,618. So that they could get over that difficulty about the stock rearing perfectly well if they got the land?—Oh, yes.

40,619. Then, is there anything else that occurs to you as a benefit derived from Nunton?—I do not remember anything else.

40,620. Do you give it then, as your decided opinion, that it would be better to have this land divided into self-sustaining holdings?—There is no doubt of that. I believe the scarcity of land has greatly contributed to the increase of pauperism among us; and if they got the land I don't think there would be so much pauperism.

40,621. *Mr Munro.*—You mentioned, I think, that you were indebted to the large farms for an occasional change of seed?—Yes.

40,622. Now, supposing that the large farms were not there to give you the necessary change, where could you procure it?—We would get it elsewhere,—from the south.

40,623. Take the seed called bere,—where could you get that in the south?—I believe about Tiree, and on the mainland.

40,624. Could you get it as cheaply from Tiree as from the neighbouring big farms?—I think about the same.

40,625. Would the change from Tiree be better for you than a change from the neighbouring large farm?—Probably it would; it would be much better.

40,626. A change of bere from a distance is not quite so necessary, I understand, as a change of oats from a distance?—I daresay it is; they would have an equal effect. A change of bere would be just as necessary, I think.

40,627. Could you get a change of oats also from the island of Tiree?—I never heard of it being taken from Tiree.

40,628. Now, as a matter of fact, did you, or any of the other crofters, ever get a change of seed from Tiree?—Oh, yes, I have seen barley coming from it, and it turned out very profitably.

40,629. Did it give a better return than the change you got from the neighbouring farms?—Yes, indeed.

40,630. So that it would be to your advantage rather to get a change of seed from Tiree in preference to one of the neighbouring farms?—I daresay it would.

40,631. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—As a matter of fact, when the crofters in Benbecula need a change of seed, is it to the farm of Nunton they go, or do they go outside the island for it?—Sometimes: Nunton is where they always used to go.

40,632. Have they gone to Nunton for the last ten years?—I believe not so much since the Macdonalds left it.

40,633. Is that the old Clanranald family?—No; the last farmer.

40,634. How many years is it since he left?—Six or seven.

40,635. Then for the last six or seven years they have not gone to Nunton for seed?—Oh, yes, they go just now.

40,636. But not, as a rule?—There is not so much bought. They used to come from North Uist then; but at that time more grain was raised.

40,637. In the opinion of your constituents, how does the grain they get from the outside compare with the grain grown in Nunton; is it better or worse?—They get it good enough outside, and in Nunton too.

40,638. What is the opinion of your constituents,—is it that the grain they get from the outside is better or worse?—I believe their opinion would be that it is better from the south.

40,639. Now in regard to bulls. How many crofter townships are in Benbecula?—Six or seven.

40,640. How many of these get their bulls from Nunton?—They are not getting bulls just now.

40,641. Where do they get the bulls from just now?—I believe from North Uist partly.

40,642. So that the cattle would breed immensely well, and do as well if Nunton were sunk beneath the sea?—Yes.

40,643. That would not stop the multiplication of stock?—Perhaps not.

40,644. And, as a matter of fact, with the view of improving the quality, they go to South Uist for their bulls, do they?—Oh yes.

40,645. Is there a strong desire among your constituents for land?—Yes.

40,646. Is it a fact that six applications for enlargement of crofter townships were lodged with the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

40,647. To be taken from the farm of Nunton?—Yes.

40,648. Did those six applications represent six crofting townships?—Yes.

40,649. And altogether there are how many townships?—Seven.

40,650. Of the seven, six have lodged with the Crofters Commission applications for an extension of their townships at the expense of Nunton Farm?—Four, at least, have done so.

40,651. Now, did not two of these townships get an enlargement from the Crofters Commission?—Yes, two.

40,652. Name them?—Eilean Flodday and Griminish.

40,653. Was it Sheriff Brand and his Assessors who heard these applications?—Yes.

40,654. And these two were granted after a considerable amount of evidence?—Yes.

40,655. Did not he also grant a considerable extension of holding to the township of Aird?—Yes.

40,656. In every one of these applications did the estate put in an appearance and lodge objections?—Yes.

40,657. And in spite of the estate these two townships you mentioned got a considerable extension?—Yes.

40,658. And Aird also?—Yes.

40,659. Is it a fact that after Sheriff Brand had heard the case very fully, and had given an extension to Aird, the estate appealed against Sheriff Brand's decision?—Yes.

40,660. And the Commissioners, Hosack and Macintyre, came, and the Court sat in full?—Yes.

40,661. And the Crofters Commission, as a whole, upset the decision arrived at by Sheriff Brand, after a full investigation into the circumstances of the people?—Yes, that is so.

40,662. Does not all that prove to your mind that the people have their heart set upon the land of Nunton, with the view of breaking it down?—Yes.

40,663. And do you believe that the breaking down of the farm of Nunton, until the remainder of it was simply a small holding, would put the island of Benbecula on a perfectly satisfactory footing, so far as land is concerned?—It would go a good bit to help them.

40,664. Now, after you get all that, would there be a great disadvantage to the people living in Benbecula, from the fact that there are no harbours or piers? Has anything been done in the way of opening up the country to the world?—We are in the way of getting a pier now.

40,665. Have you got a pier?—No, we expect to get one.

40,666. Expectation is poor food for a hungry crofter?—Yes.

Iochdar, South Uist. Angus Macdonald.

40,667. Has any pier been built?—No, none.

40,668. Have you in view a pier to which trading steamers would come?—Oh, yes.

40,669. Do you believe that it would be an absolute necessity?—Most certainly.

40,670. For making the people tolerably comfortable?—Nothing could surpass that.

40,671. And regular steamer communication?—Yes.

40,672. And the extension of the railway to the west coast,—is your heart set on that?—A great deal.

40,673. How often do you get mails delivered from the mainland in Benbecula by steamer?—We do not get them by steamer at all; the mails come from North and South Uist.

40,674. Do the steamers pass you every day?—Yes, up and down.

40,675. And a pier would enable these steamers to call every day with letters to and from the place?—Certainly.

40,676. *Mr Gordon.*—I am sorry to interrupt you, but our inquiry does not relate to piers.

40,677. *Mr Munro.*—How does the price you pay for seed grown from Nunton compare with similar seed obtained from the south?—I think the price is about the same.

40,678. Supposing you were getting a quarter of bere from the south to-day, would it cost you more or less than a similar article from Nunton?—It would be dearer on account of the carriage.

40,679. So that there is some advantage in having a big farm near you?—Yes.

40,680. And perhaps they do not always insist on immediate payment?—That is generally the case.

40,681. They give a little credit?—Yes.

40,682. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is it a fact that Nunton is not so much cultivated since it fell into the hands of the proprietrix as it was under a tenant?—Yes, it is less cultivated.

40,683. *Mr P. R. Buik, W.S., Edinburgh, Agent for Lady Gordon-Cathcart.*—I want to ask you about the comparative size of Nunton Farm now with what it was in the days of Clanranald. Is it bigger now than it was then?—I think so.

40,684. Would you be surprised to learn that it is about 2000 acres less?—I don't know indeed; about the time of the Napier Commission, I saw an old book of Clanranald,—it was handed to me and I showed it to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie and Professor Mackinnon. They looked up about Nunton proper and saw a great piece of land taken from Torlum and Griminish and added to it. That was shown by a very old map of the time of Clanranald. Sir Kenneth saw the map and said it was very good, and he was glad to see it, and that is why I said there were additions made to Nunton,—I saw it so clearly on the map.

40,685. But was there not a lot of land formerly on the farm, but now occupied by crofters, *e.g.* Uskavagh and Rarnish?—I daresay that might be.

40,686. Was not the southern part of what is now the general commonty of Benbecula, part of Nunton in the old days?—I cannot say.

40,687. Do you know how Nunton used to run? Are you acquainted with its configuration in the Clanranald days? It is now a square on the one side and a hill at the east, but do you know how it used to run in the olden days?—No.

40,688. Do you know the present area of Nunton?—No.

40,689. I believe it is slightly over 3100 acres. Now, I see in the Minutes of Evidence taken by the Napier Commission a statement was made, which was not contradicted, that in the days of Clanranald, Nunton had a total area of 5200 imperial acres. If that was the case in 1836, it follows that Nunton was then considerably larger than it is now? (*No answer.*)

40,690. You said that Wiay was once occupied by crofters?—So I was told.

40,691. But you don't know yourself?—I never saw it.

40,692. What do you, as a practical man, consider the proper size for a croft?—To make a decent living I think a crofter should have £10 worth of land,—at a fair rent, I mean.

Iochdar, South Uist. Angus Macdonald.

40,693. Tell me what would you consider should be £10 worth in extent,—how many acres arable should he have?—I would say 20 acres at any rate.

40,694. And how many of pasture?—I suppose there would be a commonty.

40,695. But what would be the relative number of acres of hill grazing?—I cannot tell you the number of such acres as we have here in Benbecula: we have a long hill there.

40,696. Can you tell me how many crofts with 20 acres arable you could make out of Nunton?—I cannot say, but you could not take many of that size out of it.

40,697. Would you be surprised to know that you could only take 15, at the outside?—Well, I daresay just about that.

40,698. Then, it is not a great place for the over-population. Now you said to Mr Gordon that you thought that there should be a farm in Benbecula, and you said to Mr Maccallum that it was your firm opinion that the farm should be broken up. Will you kindly reconcile these two statements?—I said it was very necessary to have seed in the place; but what I meant was that the people would much rather have the lands; they would have them in preference even to the benefit they would derive from the farm in any other way.

40,699. But that scarcely reconciles the two statements. Is that all the answer you can give?—I don't think I can give any further answer. They would take it in preference.

40,700. You also said that Wiay would be a good place for crofters to settle. How would their children get to school?—It would be very difficult; but I think they would take the chance. They might send their children down to the schools.

40,701. Where?—Among friends.

40,702. The children in that case would need to live away from home?—Yes, they would have to do that.

40,703. You know, as a matter of fact, that that has always been a complaint of the present tenant, that he cannot get education on the island for his children?—Yes, he, himself, is dead, poor man, but his children are with friends.

40,704. So Wiay would not, after all, be very suitable for crofters?—Cottars would be very glad to get hold of it.

40,705. *Mr Gordon.*—With regard to the part of the farm of Nunton for which application was made by the crofting townships on the north side of the farm [*Mr Buik.*—Aird township], was it a portion of the arable lands or a portion of the pasture lands which Sheriff Brand agreed to give them as an extension?—A portion of the pasture lands.

40,706. That is what they applied for?—Yes.

John Gordon Macintyre.

JOHN GORDON MACINTYRE, crofter, Griminish, Benbecula (53)—*examined.*

40,707. *Mr Gordon.*—You are a crofter at Griminish?—Yes.

40,708. Did you hear the evidence given by Mr Macdonald, the County Councillor for Benbecula?—Yes.

40,709. Do you agree with what he said generally?—I agree with what he read in the paper he produced, but I did not hear the remainder of his evidence well.

40,710. Do you agree that there is a general demand for land in your township?—Yes.

40,711. And do you think that land can be got in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

40,712. Where?—On Nunton.

40,713. Did you hear what Mr Macdonald said with regard to the advantage of maintaining Nunton as a farm,—that the crofters got a supply of seed grain from it, and also that they got regularly or occasionally a supply of good stock bulls from it? Is that so?—It is a long time since they got a bull for breeding,—I think not since Lady Cathcart took the farm into her own hands.

Iochdar, South Uist. John Gordon Macintyre.

40,714. Then, the advantage, whatever it is, is confined to their getting some seed grain?—They are not getting much seed grain at present, but they used to get it from Mr Macdonald, late of Nunton.

40,715. Do they not get some from the present manager?—A little, but not much at all, as far as I am aware.

40,716. Why don't they get it from him at present?—They are getting it among themselves, and some from Glasgow.

40,717. Does the seed grain that you get grown in the island do better with you than when you bring it from a distance?—It would grow a great deal better from a distance.

40,718. If you get fresh seed?—Of course; a great deal better.

40,719. And do you pay more or less for it, when you buy it locally here?—Nearly about the same.

40,720. It is not much dearer when you have to pay the carriage of it?—Not much.

40,721. From whom do you get it in the south, from a dealer or from a farm?—From a dealer.

40,722. Did you, yourself, ever take any grain from the south?—No.

40,723. Do you ever buy any locally here?—Yes, often.

40,724. You did not get any from the south?—Oh yes, but I never sent for it myself.

40,725. Did you ever get any from Nunton?—Yes, at different times, but not since Lady Cathcart took it into her own hands. Before that I used to get it.

40,726. Would it, in your opinion, be beneficial to the island of Benbecula, that the farm of Nunton should be broken up into crofts?—I think it would be a great deal better for the crofters, and for the landlord also, because good crofters would pay very well if they had a sufficient amount of land.

40,727. Do you think the crofters would pay as much rent as the profit the proprietrix is making off the farm now?—I am quite sure they would.

40,728. Therefore, it would be a benefit both to the tenants and to the owner?—Yes, that is my opinion at any rate.

40,729. *Mr Maccallum.*—You say that if those poor people were settled on the east side of Benbecula, they could learn the sea industry, and prosecute the fishing which abounds on the coast?—Oh yes, they would.

40,730. What places on the east of Benbecula do you point to there?—Scarilode, Rossinish and Meanish.

40,731. How is Scarilode occupied; is it part of the farm of Nunton?—Yes, it is part of the farm of Nunton now.

40,732. And do you think it is a suitable place for putting fishing crofts?—Yes, very suitable indeed.

40,733. Do you know if there were ever people there?—Oh, there were.

40,734. Was there a considerable population there, do you think?—There was not much population.

40,735. Is there anybody there now?—None at all.

40,736. Any other place you mentioned as suitable for fishing crofts?—The whole hill pasture on the east side is suitable.

40,737. You have already said, that it is your decided opinion that it would be an advantage both for the people and for the proprietrix to have Nunton broken up into good crofts?—Yes.

40,738. Are the crofters of Benbecula paying their rents to the proprietrix just now?—They must, or else take to the high road in the course of two years. They run the risk of being made bankrupt, as was the case with one or more already.

40,739. You wish to convey that they do pay their rents now?—I think so, as far as I can make out.

40,740. Are they deriving any advantage from the security of tenure which they have got? Have they built better houses in consequence?—They have.

40,741. Has the improvement in the houses been going on to any considerable extent?—Yes, as much as possible, but they were impoverished by the arrears that were left upon them, and they are hardly clear of them yet, but their intention is to build neat houses when they get an opportunity.

Iochdar, South Uist. John Gordon Macintyre.

40,742. You think they have not felt the benefit of the 'fair rent', on account of the arrears of rack rent left upon them by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

40,743. But can you tell me that even under these disadvantages they have improved their houses?—They are doing their best. A great number of the houses are better.

40,744. Do they cultivate their lands better than they used to?—Yes, they pay more heed to it now, because they expect to stay in their crofts, and not be removed as they used to be formerly.

40,745. Is it your testimony, then, that there is a decided improvement in their mode of cultivating their crofts?—Yes, they take greater care and cultivate them better.

40,746. Now, can you give us any information as to the price charged at Nunton, and the price which the people have to pay for grain which they get from the south? Do they get it cheaper at Nunton than they can from the south?—I think it is just about the same in the case of barley or bere. That is the only seed we used to get, with rye and small oats. We do not get small oats from the mainland, but only white oats. It used to be 4s. per bushel for the bere seed at Nunton.

40,747. And the fact is that a great number do purchase from the south?—They are purchasing meal and corn from the south always.

40,748. And bere seed?—Very few of them purchase bere seed from the south; but some are getting a little from Tiree.

40,749. Do you think they would take it from Tiree if they could get it cheaper at Nunton?—They would prefer to have it at Nunton if it was to be got at Nunton.

40,750. Then they cannot get it at Nunton?—Not at all.

40,751. Then, with regard to the additions that were made to Nunton, do you know whether the farm of Nunton was added to from the neighbouring townships, or did you ever hear of that being the case?—I heard that there were some parts added to Nunton Farm at different times from the crofter townships.

40,752. Very valuable land, was it?—Very valuable in parts, but others only grazing.

40,753. Do you say that a good deal of arable land was taken from crofting townships and added to Nunton in olden times?—There was not much arable land at all added to Nunton, so far as I know, but there was some grazing. There was only one park,—the park we got was added to Nunton, and another park,—two parks of *machair* were added to Nunton on the south side.

40,754. From whom were these parks taken?—One from Griminish and the other from Torlum.

40,755. Is not that valuable for pasture?—Not for pasture altogether, but for arable land.

40,756. Have you any doubt at all in your own mind as to the desires of the people with regard to getting the land of Nunton, is that their wish?—They are very fond of getting the land if they can; but they cannot get it. They are refused by the Crofters Commission, and although they would lodge an application it would be of no avail.

40,757. They have tried all they could to get land, and have failed?—Yes.

40,758. The estate on every occasion objecting?—Yes.

40,759. Do you say that the cottars are worse off since the passing of the Crofters Act, because they cannot get potato ground from the crofters?—Indeed, that is so; they are very miserable, poor beings; they will not get a bit here nor there. They cannot get as much land as would keep one cow.

40,760. Under the Act, the crofters have no power to sub-let their land?—No.

40,761. Has the estate been discouraging the crofters from giving potato ground to the cottars, do you know? Have they been threatening the crofters with proceed-

Iochdar, South Uist.

John Gordon Macintyre.

ings of any kind if they give land to the cottars?—Oh, not at all; I never noticed anything of the kind.

40,762. But the difficulty is that under the Act the crofters cannot give them land?—Yes, and they have too little land themselves.

40,763. And has the estate done anything for the relief of the cottars?—Nothing at all, but refusing their petitions.

Donald Paterson.

DONALD PATERSON, Factor for South Uist (49) —*examined.*

40,764. *Mr Gordon.*—Is there anything you wish to submit to us?—Yes, I would like to put in various statements which I have here. The first is a statement giving particulars of the Crofters Commission decisions in Benbecula, for the use of the Royal Commission (see App. A., page 979); the second a similar statement for South Uist (see App. B., page 980); the third is a statement giving particulars of crofters' holdings in Benbecula (see App. C., page 981); the fourth a similar statement for South Uist (see App. D., page 982); and the fifth a report upon the farms in Benbecula and South Uist (see after question 40,809, page 977).

40,765. Does this contain the area of the different farms in South Uist?—Yes.

40,766. I think you also lodge a statement with reference to the kelp industry in the years 1892 and 1893, showing the amount of kelp received, and how it is disposed of and accounted for to the crofters?—Yes. (See App. E., page 983.)

40,767. It appears from these that there was shipped by the 'Dunborve' of Wick, 114 tons 9 cwt., and by the s.s. 'Ballydoon' of Glasgow, 87 tons 5 cwts., the total quantity shipped being 201 tons 14¾ cwts., and the value thereof at 55s. per ton, £554, 15s. 6d. Now, you say here that you paid the crofters in the south district for 114 tons at 55s., first cargo, £314, 14 9, those in the northern district, second cargo, 58, 19 9, in the middle district, second cargo, . 164, 15 2, and in the south district, . . . 16, 5 10. There does not appear to be any charge here for commission?—No.

40,768. How did you fix the rate at 55s. per ton?—It was fixed by the Chemical Company. I put in a letter giving the particulars. It is dated 15th September 1892. 'I find from correspondence with Captain 'Grindlay and J. Maynord, that the s.s. "Ballydoon" 'will be able to overtake the tangle without assistance; 'please let me know if you have any doubt of this. With 'regard to the cutting up of the roads, we think a new 'traffic should be encouraged for the general benefit, 'but if you will let me know what amount you wish us 'to contribute, I will do all I can to get the matter 'fairly considered. I do not think we should object 'to a small payment if necessary. The kelp has all 'now arrived, and although made late in the year it is 'better than the average of last year, and I propose to 'allow 55s. per ton for it all over. Will you, therefore, 'send me an account of it, and it shall be paid at once. —I am, Yours truly, EDW. C. C. STAMFORD.'

40,768A. It would thus appear that your correspondent fixed the rate?—Yes.

40,769. In other words, he allowed the crofters what he thought was the value of the subject?—Yes, it was fixed after an analysis.

40,770. Has he any commission upon the transaction? He would not work for nothing, although Lady Cathcart or her factor might. How did he fix this rate of payment?—He was the buyer.

40,771. But the produce must have had a value over and above the 55s., because there would be a considerable amount of expense?—They paid the freight.

40,772. He paid the freight?—Yes.

40,773. Then, perhaps we may take it that the market value at that date was £3 or £3, 5s. per ton, in order to leave a margin for cost of transit and marketing?—Quite possible. I submit a bill of lading showing the weight.

40,774. But there was no money retained by Lady Cathcart,—she pocketed no part of the price?—No.

40,775. You handed over on her behalf all the money you got from the buyer?—Yes.

40,776. Without any deduction?—Yes, on that weight.

40,777. And this weight here represents the weight that was delivered?—There is a pay-bill put in showing the weight each man delivered.

40,778. And they correspond, do they?—Yes.

40,779. Then in 1893, only 32 tons 1 cwt. 2 qrs. seem to have been made?—Yes, that was owing to the scarcity of weed.

40,780. And the price seems to be correspondingly low?—Very low indeed.

40,781. Only 20s. as against 55s.?—That is all, and I think there is a letter dealing with that. I went to Glasgow personally in order to get as much as possible; but the buyer first of all said it was not worth the freight. However, I induced him to stretch a point, and allow something for the produce, so as to encourage the men to work another year.

40,782. The price seems to be very variable. Is there any doubt in your own mind as to the price coming back to a rate such as would pay the men?—Well, I can only account for the low price last year but by the weed being of such inferior quality. It was not what they call 'wrack' for making kelp; it was just rubbish that was thrown up on the shore; but the men were so anxious to make it that they collected an inferior article, hence the reduction in the price.

40,783. It has no doubt been extremely disappointing to the men in two ways, both as to the quantity they could get to make into kelp, and also the price they got for it when it was made; and the probability is that if they did not get any more than that price this year, the kelp industry would cease?—I had a meeting with the directors, and they said it was not worth the freight. I said if they were not to give some little price the possibility was that the industry might be stopped, and they ultimately agreed to give £1 a ton. But the quantity was very small, and the quality very poor.

40,784. *Mr Munro.*—I understand that you are anxious to have this matter of the kelp traffic thoroughly sifted, as it has been raised before the Commission?—I am quite willing to explain it as far as I can.

40,785. What is the chief object of the estate management in insisting upon the kelp industry being conducted through the estate office?—I don't know; it was done before my time, and I simply took up the duties of my predecessor. I got instructions to do so.

40,786. Is it possible to do full justice to the kelp industry by allowing each crofter to manage and dispose of his own produce?—I do not know.

40,787. You could not answer that question?—No.

40,788. In sending this kelp to the British Chemical Company, I notice in the letter that they themselves arbitrarily fixed the value attaching to the kelp?—Yes.

40,789. Is there any other outlet you could get for kelp if you wished?—That is the only company I know of that buys kelp. There was another company, but I believe it is now extinct.

40,790. Do you make a bargain with them before you ship the kelp, or do you leave it entirely to themselves to fix the price?—Leave it to themselves altogether.

40,790A. And you can trust them to deal fairly with you?—Well, that has been the habit and has been the rule.

40,791. But you never tried to get an outlet for it elsewhere?—No.

40,792. I observe that they fix a price all over per ton for it?—Yes.

40,793. Does not that operate disadvantageously to the crofter who produces a better kind of kelp than his neighbour with an inferior specimen?—There is no doubt of that, but the difficulty is when you ship the kelp of perhaps 40 or 50 men in one ship in bulk, you

cannot tell one man's from another. I believe the stuff is sampled as it comes out, and the samples analysed.

40,794. So that the man who ships a good article is put to some slight loss in shipping it with inferior articles?—That is quite possible.

40,795. That is quite apparent to anybody. The mode you adopt in dealing with the crofter is, I think, this—when he delivers the kelp to you, you hand him a receipt signed by the ground officer, containing a memorandum of the exact quantity?—The officer weighs it himself, fills in the receipt, signs it, and gives it to the crofter.

40,796. Then the crofter delivers this receipt up when you account to him for the value?—Yes, he lays that receipt down as his delivery note.

40,797. Supposing that a crofter delivers kelp to you, say at this date, about what time may he look for a settlement?—At this date it would not be possible to deliver kelp, but say perhaps the end of July. He might then look for a settlement in October or November.

40,798. And do you hand him over the proceeds without any deduction whatever?—Yes. As a rule, he comes up to pay his rent, and he says "Keep what I am due you for rent and hand me the balance." You will observe that there is a small charge for grass in some of these lists.

40,799. That is just what I was going to ask you about.—It arises in this way. When a crofter makes kelp on a tack, he arranges with the farmer to pay for the grass used by the horse during the time the kelp is being made, and he asks that this charge should be retained and handed over to the tenant of the farm. The charge is so much per week.

40,800. As an example of your method of dealing with this matter, here is a case of a man who delivers two tons of kelp, which yields £5, 10s., and you deduct from him 7s., being the value of grass for 28 days?—Yes.

40,801. Who fixes the value of the grass?—It is an arrangement between the crofter and the tacksman.

40,802. And is the crofter satisfied with that arrangement?—I think the invariable rule is that they are very anxious to get their horses on to the tacksman's ground so as to get a good bite of grass. The work is not hard, the kelp spreading ground not being far off, and the horses are, I may say, about two-thirds of the time idle.

40,803. Do you not think it would be best, in the interests of all concerned, to allow the crofter perfect freedom of action in the gathering of kelp and the disposing of it?—Well, I have no opinion in the matter. I have been simply carrying out instructions to continue the old system.

40,804. Supposing the present estate arrangements were to cease, can you form any opinion whatever, that would be to the benefit of the crofter or otherwise?—I really could not say.

40,805. But the estate has no personal gain whatever in the matter of the management?—Oh, no. I may say that in Benbecula or in Barra we do not make a pound of kelp. It is a very uncertain industry.

40,806. *Mr Gordon.*—There is a report upon the farms in Benbecula and South Uist put in by you?—Yes.

40,807. It is a lengthy paper, and as we are a little short of time on account of the tide at the ford here, we propose to take it as lodged by you, with a note upon it that it was not read nor an opportunity given for cross-examination upon it?—Very well.

40,808–9. You have no objections to that?—None at all.

LADY CATHCART'S LONG ISLAND ESTATES.

Report on Farms in Benbecula and South Uist.

1. *Nunton*, Island of Benbecula.

This farm is in two portions. The low ground portion lies on the west side of the island, is bounded by the Atlantic on the west, and by crofters' land on the north, east and south. It extends roughly to 290 acres arable and machair, and 800 acres rough pasture. The hill portion at the east side of the island extends to about 2000 acres, and is bounded on the north and east by the Minch, and on the south and west by crofters' land. The farm is at present occupied by the proprietrix.

In 1887, the best agricultural part of this farm called Pennyloddan was let by Lady Cathcart to one of the crofters of Balivanich, and Island Wiay, also part of the farm which carried about 200 sheep and some cattle, was let to another crofter. Since then the farm has been further curtailed by the Crofters Commission, who assigned about 15 acres arable and 31 acres meadow pasture to the crofters of Griminish, and 96 acres of hill ground to the crofters of Island Flodday.

This farm has always been considered one of the best on her ladyship's property, as affording a good change of mixed pasture, and also for agricultural purposes.

The farm carries about 40 cows (Highland), with their followers, and about 600 sheep; about 100 cross lambs are reared annually on the low portion of the farm. The house and steading are in excess of the requirements of the farm. There are resident on the farm, including manager, servants, &c., 38.

2. *Drimisdale*, South Uist.

This farm, which was recently let to Mr John Ferguson, extends roughly to 650 acres arable, machair and green pasture, and about 9730 acres hill ground, and is bounded on the north by Stilligary township and Loch Drudibeg, on the south by part of Ormiclate Farm and by crofters, and on the west by the Atlantic. The proprietrix has erected a wire fence, at a large outlay, between the crofters and this farm.

There is no land on the hill ground of this farm suitable for profitable cultivation, and the proportion of arable and machair land is at present too little for wintering the hoggs the hill will produce, and also providing wintering for the number of cattle the farm will summer. From a look at the farm on the ground, it will at once be seen that the west side, where the arable and machair lands are, is already too narrow, and could not be conveniently worked without wire-fencing. Should any part of the arable and machair land be cut off this farm, the wintering of the hoggs would be spoiled, and a portion of them would require to be sent elsewhere, and would materially reduce the letting value of the farm. The dwelling-house and steading are good and sufficient for the farm as at present let. The marches as fenced are good and convenient. The farm carries about 16 Highland cows, 20 young cattle, 7 horses, and slightly over 2000 black-faced sheep of ewe and wedder stock. There are resident on the farm, including tenant, his household, servants, &c., 57.

3. *Milton.*

This farm is bounded on the north by Bornish and Loch Eynort, on the east by the Minch, on the south by the farm of Askernish partly and by crofters' land, on the west by the Atlantic, and extends to about 1500 acres arable, machair and green pasture, and 12,960 acres of hill pasture, and has been in possession of the present tenant for the past 23 years, and carries a stock of about 230 head of Highland cattle, consisting of cows and their followers and 2000 black-faced sheep, ewe and wedder stock. The part of this farm lying west of the public road and between it and the sea is composed of good grazing land and machair, but the portion lying to the east of the road and between it and the Minch is black hill grazing, no part of which is suitable for profitable cultivation, being considerably broken up by peat bogs. The marches at present are very suitable, being partly water boundaries. The dwelling-house and offices are good and suitable for the requirements of the farm.

This farm, like the farm of Drimisdale, will summer

Iochdar, South Uist. Donald Paterson.

more cattle and sheep than the arable and machair will produce wintering for. All the hoggs are wintered on the low ground. There are resident on the farm, including the tenant, his household, servants, &c., 69.

4. *Askernish.*

This farm extends to about 1360 acres of rocky pasture, arable and machair land, and 500 acres of hill grazing, and is bounded on the north by Milton, on the east by Milton, and on the south by crofters, and on the west by the Atlantic. There is an exceptionally good dwelling-house and steading upon the farm, which are in good preservation and very suitable for the size of the grazing, which is neither too large nor too small, but just the size of farm that is at present being looked upon as likely to pay. The stock is principally cattle, and all the arable land is necessary for producing sufficient wintering; any curtailment of the arable land or machair would necessitate a reduction of the stock, and would consequently spoil the letting value of the farm, and throw part of the steading useless. Any cultivable land that could be cut off the farm is machair, which, in a wet season, yields fair crops of potatoes, black oats, rye, and bere, but in a dry, hot summer yields very little, being light, sandy soil, easily scorched, and on this particular farm very liable to sand drift. The farm carries about 45 Highland cows and 90 young cattle, 12 horses, 140 black-faced ewes, off which cross lambs are reared. There are resident on the farm, including grieve, household and servants, &c., 38.

5. *Ormiclate.*

This farm is bounded on the west by the Atlantic, on the north by crofts and the hill ground of Drimisdale, on the east by the Minch, and on the south by the farm of Bornish and Loch Eynort, and extends to about 1300 acres of rocky green pasture, machar, and arable, and 8510 acres hill ground.

The farm has a superior steading built about 15 years ago, and in every way suitable for the requirements of the farm as at present occupied.

A portion of the farm marching with Stoneybridge crofters is well fenced off by a substantial stone dyke running from the Atlantic in an easterly direction. The arable at present is well proportioned to the machair land and to the hill pasture. The marches are good, and the farm at present is convenient for working. The machair, if kept clean at the proper season of the year, viz.,—shortly after the beginning of August, is sufficient to winter the hoggs, but should any portion of it be cut off, some of the hoggs would require to be sent away to wintering. No part of the hill grazing on this farm is capable of cultivation to a profit, taking into consideration the distance of the hill from the sea-ware. The farm carries about 30 Highland cows and 176 young cattle and 1800 sheep, black-faced, of a ewe and wedder stock. There are resident on the farm, including manager, his household, servants, &c., 38.

6. *Kilbride.*

This farm marches with crofters on two sides, the farm of Glendale on the east, and the Sound of Barra on the remaining side, and extends to about 400 acres of green pasture and arable, and 930 acres hill pasture. The farm carries a stock of Highland cattle and some sheep.

The present farm dwelling-house is large and commodious, but rather too large for a farm of this size. The steading is good and suitable for the accommodation of the stock which the farm carries. The cropping ground, upon the whole, is fairly good, and just about sufficient to produce enough of wintering for the stock grazed upon the farm, according to its present marches. The farm is compact and easily worked, the arable land being convenient to the steading, which is placed about the middle and is also very convenient for seaweed. This farm, for the size of it, is one of the most desirable small grazings in South Uist.

Iochdar, South Uist. Donald Paterson.

The farm carries 29 cows and about 90 young cattle and over 100 sheep.

It also winters 300 to 400 hoggs. There are resident on the farm, including tenant, his household, and servants, &c., 22.

General Note.

The machair land attached to the various farms above mentioned forms the greatest inducement in those times of agricultural depression for tenants to offer a reasonable rent for them, because being dry and affording a good bed for sheep, with bent, green all the year round, the machair land proves to be good wintering ground and saves the tenants an outlay of from 5s. to 8s. per hogg for wintering. Were the farms deprived of the machair, their letting value would not only be very much reduced but they would practically be unlettable altogether, except as cattle grazings, and they are unsuitable even as such. In the islands a mixed stock of sheep and cattle is looked upon as the safest and best. The machairs do not stand cultivation to any great extent, and not in any case continual cultivation, the danger of drifting sand being so great.

The extent of green land, arable and machair, and hill pasture, on the various farms, is at present well proportioned.

(Signed) DONALD PATERSON.

Askernish, South Uist,
22nd June 1894.

40,810. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Who is the man that weighs the kelp at the pier?—There are three of them,—the ground officer for each district, south, middle, and north.

40,811. All estate officials?—Ground officers.

40,812. Is there anything done by the estate to satisfy the people that there is no error in the matter of weighing?—Well, they see it weighed; they are present at the weighing, and it is weighed in the ordinary way.

40,813. Have they as good an opportunity of seeing it weighed as the ground officer has?—It is done on the public road at the piers.

40,814. Would you now tell us, so far as you know, all that is kept off by the estate management,—discounts or other charges,—before the price is fixed to be paid to the crofters? Give a summary of all the charges made against the industry before the price is fixed for the crofter?—Nothing but grass: the company pays the freight.

40,815. Is not there a shilling per £ taken off?—What for?

40,816. You mentioned at Dalibrog two days ago, that there was 1s. per £ kept off; either 1s. for the ton of kelp or 1s. per £ sterling?—No, nothing at all.

40,817. What was the 1s. you spoke about?—For tangle.

40,818. A shilling per ton?—Yes.

40,819. Is it 1s. per ton of weight or 1s. per £ of money for the tangle?—The value of the tangle is £1 a ton, so it comes to the same thing either way.

40,820. Then is it a fact that there is a charge also of so much to the estate clerk for entering the weight in the books?—Not that I know of.

40,821. Are you aware that that is the practice anywhere else?—It is quite possible, but not on Lady Cathcart's estate.

40,822. And you don't know of the practice anywhere else?—No.

40,823. In giving credit to the people for the kelp, and in settling with them, do you give them every opportunity of seeing with their own eyes the price,—that is to say, the letter you get from Glasgow stating the price?—I read it and I gave it to the ground officer to read to them.

40,824. And the letter is produced to them?—Yes.

APPENDIX A.—STATEMENT showing number of Holdings dealt with by Crofters Commission in Benbecula, with the particulars of the Decisions of the Commission, and of the Arrears due on 'Fair Rents' fixed by the Commission.

Township.	Number of Holdings dealt with.	Old Rent. £ s. d.	Fair Rent. £ s. d.	Average Reduction per cent.	Arrears dealt with. £ s. d.	Arrears ordered to be paid. £ s. d.	Balance due as at 22nd June 1894. £ s. d.	Number of Crofters in Arrear.	Number of Crofters *not* in Arrear.	Remarks.
Aird,	30	154 11 0	106 16 0	...	1142 6 11	200 1 0	19 5 3	9	21	
Balivanich,	20	121 0 0	87 16 0	...	836 5 5	197 8 0	9 0 0	5	15	
Dunganachy,	7	80 0 0	69 6 0	...	398 14 7	174 10 8	33 5 0	1	6	
Uachdar,	18	111 8 0	74 5 0	...	640 7 9½	165 10 0	1 13 0	2	16	
Gramisdale,	8	41 10 0	26 3 0	...	218 19 5½	51 4 0	1 2 6	1	7	
Caolas Flodday,	5	12 10 0	9 10 0	...	98 5 0	27 19 0	1 2 6	1	4	
Island Flodday,	6	34 10 0	23 10 0	...	283 9 3	89 16 0	4 0 0	1	5	
Griminish,	20	99 2 0	76 2 0	...	884 7 0	198 5 10	20 16 0	3	17	All (with two exceptions) dealt with in 1890.
Torlum,	20	125 6 0	85 16 0	...	1061 14 8	249 6 0	19 6 0	4	16	
Liniclate, Ruadh-bhruach, and Creagorry,	29	169 9 6	121 2 0	...	1005 15 9	380 3 0	19 13 10	11	18	
Hacklet and Creagorry,	23	72 11 0	41 14 0	...	688 2 5	96 7 0	13 0 0	9	14	
Grimsay Island,	6	14 10 0	9 1 0	...	89 4 6	22 17 0	2 12 0	3	3	
Kilerivagh,	3	4 15 0	3 3 0	...	37 16 6	7 15 0	...	...	3	
Ardchumhang,	9	9 5 0	5 15 0	...	64 2 0	10 10 0	2 7 6	6	3	
Carnan Ard Wiay,	1	14 0 0	10 15 0	...	21 7 0	10 15 0	...	...	1	
Craigastrome,	1	20 0 0	16 10 0	...	40 0 0	24 0 0	...	...	1	
Tomluachrach, Uskivagh, and Rarnish,	6	31 5 0	22 2 0	...	319 15 11	60 9 0	2 0 0	2	4	
Total,	212	1115 12 6	789 11 0	29·24	7830 14 6	1966 16 6	149 3 7	58	154	

ASKERNISH, 22*nd June* 1894.

DOND. PATERSON.

Iochdar, South Uist. Donald Paterson.

APPENDIX B.—STATEMENT showing number of Holdings dealt with by the Crofters Commission in South Uist, with the particulars of the Decisions of the Commission, and of the Arrears due on 'Fair Rents' fixed by the Commission.

Township.	Number of Holdings dealt with.	Old Rent.	Fair Rent.	Average Reduction per cent.	Arrears dealt with.	Arrears ordered to be paid.	Balance due as at 20th June 1894.	Number of Crofters in Arrear.	Number of Crofters *not* in Arrear.	Remarks.
I. South District.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.			
Garrahellie,	12	32 5 0	27 2 0	...	147 9 7	52 17 1	6 3 9	4	8	Dealt with in 1887.
Dalibrog,	34	151 16 1	95 5 6	...	477 2 4	118 1 3	42 5 5	19	15	Do.
North Lochboisdale,	47	102 11 6	75 7 6	...	554 10 3	172 7 0	47 7 6	19	28	Do.
Kilphedar,	37	211 10 6	142 7 6	...	725 1 5	216 14 5	32 3 3	21	16	Do.
North Boisdale,	32	212 7 4	156 13 0	...	691 2 8	274 11 11	31 10 4	10	22	Do.
South Lochboisdale,	18	38 14 0	35 5 0	...	107 3 9	60 11 1	9 2 11	7	11	Do.
Garrynamonie,	24	90 19 0	73 17 0	...	347 2 1	145 19 1	25 14 3	12	12	Do.
South Boisdale,	24	115 14 0	78 15 0	...	625 5 8	152 0 0	35 2 1	11	13	Do.
Smerclate,	16	74 10 0	58 3 0	...	385 11 9	91 0 0	32 11 7	12	4	Do.
II. Middle District.										
Snishival,	15	38 14 10	39 0 0	...	163 6 2	52 18 6	25 0 0	6	9	Do.
Howbeg,	17	47 15 4	43 9 0	...	168 16 11	55 13 11	16 18 6	11	6	Do.
Stoneybridge,	38	139 8 6	118 2 6	...	794 7 10	184 4 11	51 12 9	14	24	Do.
Stilligary,	7	55 5 0	56 6 0	...	110 18 3	78 15 0	29 5 0	3	4	Do.
Howmore,	17	69 3 0	41 6 0	...	452 17 9	103 6 0	30 10 11	11	6	Dealt with in 1891.
Lochskipport,	1	6 0 0	3 0 0	...	58 15 11	9 0 0	–	–	1	Do.
III. North District.										
Ardivacher,	8	59 3 0	37 19 0	...	284 10 5	105 10 0	32 3 8	6	2	Do.
Kilaulay,	2	13 5 0	9 7 0	...	42 12 1	18 2 0	–	–	2	Do.
Linique,	5	33 5 0	19 18 0	...	293 5 11	36 12 0	11 19 0	3	2	Do.
Balgarva,	9	54 0 0	31 6 0	...	580 16 6	106 19 0	33 6 5	7	2	Do.
Clachan,	4	24 7 6	13 6 0	...	213 7 4	44 12 0	24 6 0	4	–	Do.
Buailuachdrach,	4	23 10 0	12 7 0	...	210 12 5	53 0 0	7 6 0	4	–	Do.
Ardnamonie,	14	70 6 6	48 3 0	...	618 12 5	138 14 0	51 3 4	11	3	Do.
Garganachy,	1	18 0 0	13 6 0	...	74 11 11	34 0 0	–	–	1	Do.
Buailedubh,	13	74 10 0	40 14 0	...	594 16 5	135 10 0	32 16 9	9	4	Do.
Carnan,	10	57 10 3	39 4 3	...	389 19 5	122 2 0	23 14 4	6	4	Do.
Ardmore,	9	21 11 0	12 14 0	...	190 1 6	36 0 0	7 17 6	3	6	Do.
Lochcarnan,	9	20 8 0	14 1 0	...	223 18 6	61 3 9	5 17 6	2	7	Do.
Sandwick,	3	6 0 0	4 13 0	...	58 7 9	18 0 0	–	–	3	Do.
Rhugashnish,	15	23 15 0	17 13 0	...	181 14 10	59 3 2	5 8 0	5	10	Do.
Calternish,	4	18 10 0	11 19 0	...	101 15 4	29 0 0	2 12 0	1	3	Do.
Total,	449	1904 15 4	1370 9 3	28	9868 15 1	2766 8 1	653 18 9	221	228	

ASKERNISH, 22*nd June* 1894.

DOND. PATERSON.

APPENDIX C.—STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS of Crofter Holdings in Benbecula.

Township.	Number of Holdings.	Areas.			Extent of Commonties.	Rents.
		Arable.	Pasture.	Total.		
		Ac. Ro. Po.	Ac. Ro. Po.	Ac. Ro. Po.	Acres.	£ s. d.
Aird,	30	424 1 16	169 – 15	593 1 31	775	106 16 0
Balivanich,	24	365 3 20	78 – 16	443 3 36	171	98 6 0
Dunganachy,	7	196 1 29	28 2 38	225 – 27	165	69 6 0
Uachdar,	19	378 3 8	124 1 –	503 – 8	90	81 15 0
Gramisdale,	8	145 1 25	89 2 10	234 3 35	...	26 3 0
Caolas Flodday,	5	50 3 30	158 – –	208 3 30	70	9 10 0
Island Flodday,	6	110 3 33	55 1 14	166 1 7	76	23 10 0
Griminish,	26	397 – 7	348 3 17	745 3 24	154	115 0 0
Torlum,	21	293 – 28	245 – 3	538 – 31	98	90 2 0
Liniclate, Ruadh-bhruach, and Creagorry,	35	543 2 14	266 – 3	809 2 17	80	143 0 0
Hacklet and Creagorry,	28	318 3 12	229 – 34	548 – 6	...	51 18 0
Grimsay Island,	6	55 1 9	139 3 13	195 – 22	...	9 1 0
Kilerivagh,	5	26 0 32	104 1 14	130 2 6	...	4 18 0
Ardchumhang,	9	30 1 20	136 1 22	166 3 2	...	5 15 0
Carnan and Ard-Wiay,	1	57 3 24	126 2 12	184 1 36	...	10 15 0
Craigastrome,	1	21 – –	629 – –	650 – –	...	16 10 0
Tomluachrach, Uskivagh, and Rarnish,	7	122 – 4	452 – 24	574 – 28	405	24 17 0
Penny Flodden,	1	34 – 35	1 3 35	36 – 30	...	10 10 0
Ledistrome,	1	41 1 8	489 – –	530 1 8	...	15 0 0
Add General Hill Commonty	...	...	...	...	3700	...
	240	3613 2 34	3871 1 30	7485 0 24	5784	912 12 0
			Acreage of Commons	5784 – –		
			Total Acreage	13,269 – 24		

Average Rent per Holding, £3, 16s. 0½d. Average Rent per Acre, 1s. 4d.

Askernish, 22*nd June* 1894. Dond. Paterson.

Iochdar, South Uist.

Donald Paterson.

APPENDIX D.—STATEMENT OF PARTICULARS of Crofter Holdings in South Uist.

Township.	Number of Holdings.	Areas. Arable.	Areas. Pasture.	Areas. Total.	Extent of Commonties.	Rent
		Ac. Ro. Po.	Ac. Ro. Po.	Ac. Ro. Po.	Acres.	£ s. d.
I. Southern District.						
Garriehellie,	13	53 3 9	110 1 6	164 – 15	176	28 2 0
Dalibrog,	38	253 2 31	185 2 12	439 1 3	522	109 8 3
North Lochboisdale,	50	349 2 5	159 2 30	509 – 35	...	85 12 6
Kilphedar,	37	528 3 7	176 – 28	704 3 35	324	142 7 6
North Boisdale,	33	498 3 27	191 – 32	690 – 19	496	161 13 0
South Lochboisdale,	18	150 – 35	113 – 37	263 1 32	...	35 5 0
Garrynamonie,	24	286 – 36	96 – 21	382 1 17	91	73 17 0
South Boisdale,	24	199 1 1.	109 – 35	308 1 36	254	78 15 0
Smerclate,	16	177 2 20	58 1 18	235 3 38	147	58 3 0
Add Commonty for Garrahellie, Dalibrog, and North Lochboisdale,	...	...	...	...	629	...
Do. for Kilphedar, North Boisdale, South Lochboisdale, Garrynamonie, South Boisdale and Smerclate,	...	...	...	...	1326	...
II. Middle District.						
Snishival,	16	143 1 8	75 2 7	218 3 15	170	44 10 0
Howbeg,	18	135 – 14	94 – 28	229 1 2	175	45 14 0
Stoneybridge,	38	383 – 6	167 2 16	550 2 22	462	118 2 6
Stilligary,	8	161 1 22	27 2 27	189 – 9	1027	70 16 0
Howmore,	18	149 3 25	121 2 21	271 2 6	230	43 8 6
Lochskipport,	1	7 – 32	12 3 24	20 – 16	...	3 0 0
Add Hill Commonty for Snishival, Howbeg, Stoneybridge, and Stilligary,	...	...	...	...	1306	...
III. Northern District.						
Ardivacher,	8	92 – 27	11 – 5	103 – 32	1177	37 19 0
Kilaulay,	3	123 3 16	131 – 27	255 – 3		37 7 0
Linique,	6	123 – 26	45 – 1	168 – 27		35 18 0
Balgarva,	9	68 2 13	28 2 21	97 – 34		31 6 0
Clachan,	4	44 – 34	25 – 5	69 – 39		13 6 0
Buailuachdrach,	4	39 – 8	10 2 10	49 2 18		12 7 0
Ardnamoine,	14	109 2 4	208 – 9	317 2 13		48 3 0
Garganachy,	1	33 1 10	8 3 17	42 – 27		13 6 0
Buailedubh,	13	158 3 18	57 2 34	216 2 12		40 14 0
Carnan,	10	183 – 11	42 3 15	225 3 26		39 4 3
Ardmore,	9	127 – 5	34 1 8	161 1 13	...	12 14 0
Lochcarnan,	9	116 – 10	127 2 29	243 2 39	...	14 1 0
Sandwick,	3	28 1 14	74 1 6	102 2 20	...	4 13 0
Rhugashnish,	15	109 1 35	223 2 35	333 – 30	91	17 13 0
Calternish,	4	17 3 –	236 3 8	254 2 8	211	11 19 0
Add Iochdar General Hill Commonty,	...	...	...	...	2366	...
	464	4852 1 29	2965 – 12	7817 2 1	11,180	1469 4 6
			Acreage of Commons	11,180 – –		
			Total Acreage	18,997 2 1		

Average Rent per Holding, £3, 3s. 4d. Rent per Acre, 1s. 6d.

Askernish, 22*nd June* 1894. Dond. Paterson.

APPENDIX E.—STATEMENT showing Kelp Manufactured and Shipped at South Uist during 1892 and 1893, and the Amount paid to Crofters for same.

	Charge.		Rate.			*Discharge.*		Rate.	
	Season 1892.	Tons cwts. qrs.		£ s. d.			Tons cwts. qrs.		£ s. d.
1892. Aug. 9	Shipped per "Dunborve" of Wick, . . .	114 9 0	55/	314 14 9	1892	Paid Crofters in South District per Pay-Bill, . .	114 9 0	55/	314 14 9
Aug. 17	Shipped per s.s. "Rachel" of Glasgow, . . .	87 5 3	55/	240 0 9		Paid Crofters in North District per Pay-Bill, . .	21 9 0		
						Paid Crofters in Middle District per Pay-Bill, .	59 18 1		
						Paid Crofters in South District per Pay-Bill, . .	5 18 2		
							87 5 3	55/	240 0 9
		201 14 3		554 15 6			201 14 3		554 15 6
	Season 1893.								
1893. Sept. 1	Shipped per s.s. "Ballydoon" of Glasgow, .	32 1 2	20/	32 1 6	1893	Paid Crofters in North District per Pay-Bill, . .	2 1 2		
						Paid Crofters in Middle District per Pay-Bill, .	23 4 2		
						Paid Crofters in South District per Pay-Bill, . .	6 15 2		
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ASKERNISH, 22*nd June* 1894.

DOND. PATERSON.

Iochdar, South Uist. — Donald Paterson.

Iochdar, South Uist.

Catherine Morrison or Maclellan.

MRS CATHERINE MORRISON or MACLELLAN, Milton, South Uist.

(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,825. *Mr Gordon.*—I am informed that you are desirous of being heard. What is it you would like to say to the Commission?—I want to tell the Commissioners that my husband cannot turn a sod with a spade in South Uist.

40,826. Why not?—The factor took an ill-will against him.

40,827. Is he a cottar on the farm of Milton?—He was a miller until four years ago.

40,828. And he is now a cottar there?—Yes.

40,829. What does he work at?—He had to leave the country; he could not get a turn of work. I am left in the house with a weak family.

40,830. Do you allege that there was any undue interference on the part of the estate officials to prevent his getting work in the country?—They had a spite against him, but he gained his case both at Lochmaddy Sheriff Court, and also in the Court of Session.

40,831. I hope the estate officials and your husband may become better friends, and I would strongly recommend that.—Never; they sent the ground officer five times to evict me.

40,832. *Mr Maccallum.*—What was the cause of the dispute?—When we went to the mill, first of all, it was understood that the factor was to keep up the mill and keep the waters in order. But when the present factor came, he would not do any of these improvements, and he threw up the mill.

40,833. He did not keep to the arrangement made by the former factor to keep up the place?—No, he did not. Then my husband offered to give up the mill when it was not being kept up, but the factor would not take it.

40,834. *Mr Gordon.*—Did the factor sue him for the rent?—Yes, the factor sued him, but he put in a counter-claim for all the work he had done in repairing the mill.

40,835. What rent was paid for the mill?—£15.

40,836. And how much land went with it?—There were no lands attached to the mill; we paid for grazing to Mr Maclean, Milton. My husband had a croft for nine years at Dalibrog. He was not one penny in arrears.

40,837. And paid £15 for the buildings?—Yes.

40,838. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is the mill in working order just now?—It was closed when he commenced litigation, and the tenants did not get a chance to grind any more.

40,839. Are the people put to inconvenience through the mill ceasing to work?—Yes, they are, and willing enough to keep him there.

40,840. *Mr P. R. Buik, W.S., Law Agent for Lady Gordon-Cathcart.*—When were you last charged rent?—Four years ago.

40,841. And since then you have been charged no rent?—No, but evicted from the country altogether. One day last winter, the ground officer or the sheriff officer was there to remove me from my bed, and put me outside the house: there was a foot of snow on the ground at the time.

40,842. Why did not he do it?—The factor went for the doctor, and the doctor, when he came, would not allow them to interfere.

40,843. Does not the landlord hold a decree of removing against you?—I don't know.

40,844. Are you aware that the landlord also holds a decree for payment of arrears of rent?—He has not a penny against me: my husband gave the factor £10 three months before he was summoned.

40,845. Are you not aware also that your husband was several years in the mill without paying any rent to speak of? [*Mr Gordon.*—The witness has already said as much: she stated that the cost of keeping the mill in repair was equal to the rent.]

40,846. Are you aware that when your husband took the mill he undertook to keep it up?—Not at all.

40,847. *Mr Gordon.*—Was there a lease? [*Mr Buik.*—There was an offer made, in which he undertook to keep the mill up, but he neither did that nor paid rent.] Iochdar South Uist. Catherine Morrison or Maclellan.

40,848. Did you lose the case at the Sheriff Court, Lochmaddy? [*Mr Buik.*—We got decree for payment of rent, and decree of removing.]

40,849. Did the lease come to an end? [*Mr Buik.*—The lease was a yearly one; at all events, they had sat there for the last four years without paying rent.]

40,850. But the wheels have never gone round? [*Mr Buik.*—No, the wheels have never gone round; but all the same, they have prevented us from letting the mill to any other person.]

40,851. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I beg to give notice that I shall ask questions with regard to this mill at the next sitting of the Commission at Lochmaddy, seeing that this inquiry is being adjourned. We can produce evidence to show that the statements made on behalf of the estate with regard to this mill are not strictly accurate. These statements are now on the records of the Royal Commission, and I intend to examine Mr Thomas Wilson, Solicitor, in order to speak to the facts at Lochmaddy. [*Mr Buik.*—I need only remark that I speak from memory about an occurrence which took place three or four years ago].

40,852. *Mr Gordon.*—I am afraid we are going a little beyond the scope of our inquiry in hearing anything at all about this case. It seems to be a mere dispute between the landlord and the tenant as to the effect of an agreement or lease. [*Mr Buik.*— It is quite irrelevant, I submit.] I trust, however, that no harm will come out of the good woman's explanation of her case.

[ADJOURNED.]

FORTY-EIGHTH SITTING.

LOCHMADDY, NORTH UIST, June 26, 1894. Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Present:—

GEORGE GORDON, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
Rev. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*.

DONALD MACKINNON, Cottar, Baleshare, North Uist (74). Donald Mackinnon.

(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,853. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—I have been a cottar for the last ten years.

40,854. Were you a crofter formerly?—Yes, and my father and grandfather before me.

40,855. How many crofters are there in the township of Baleshare?—Twenty-three crofters, and one herd who occupies a croft.

40,856. Are these full crofts?—Yes; there are two of them sub-divided.

40,857. Is the township in a very congested condition,—thickly peopled?—Yes.

40,858. Are there any cottars in it?—Yes.

40,859. How many?—About a dozen.

40,860. What is the general size of the crofts?—Averaging 12 acres each.

40,861. Have they outrun to the south end of the island?—Yes, *machair* land, five or six miles.

40,862. What stock do the crofters have?—Four cows and two horses, and some have twenty sheep, others only four or five.

40,863. What is the average rent?—Between £5 and £6. [*The Secretary.*—I find from the Crofters Com-

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mission Report that the Commissioners fixed the rents of 20 holdings in Baleshare at a total of £103, 5s.]

40,864. Have the cottars any stock?—One beast each.

40,865. Have they any land at all?—No.

40,866. Do they keep their stock on the crofters' land then?—Yes, on the outrun. The crofters are not allowed by the proprietor to give them land. After they have manured the land with sea-ware the cottars dare not turn it.

40,867. Do the cottars derive their main living from the land, or are they fishermen?—They live partly by the produce of the land, and some of them are in the militia or the reserve, and others at work elsewhere.

40,868. Is there a general desire in the township for land?—Yes.

40,869. Can you tell us where any land could be got convenient for an addition to the present holdings?—The lands belonging to the two Lees, and the land adjoining on the south, at Eaval.

40,870. Would any of the crofters of the township be willing to remove to new ground?—Yes, I think so.

40,871. How many full-sized crofts do you think could be formed or left on Baleshare?—If one-third were taken and two-thirds left, it would be a just division.

40,872. A third of the crofters, and the whole of the cottars?—Yes, the whole of the cottars.

40,873. Is there any other land you can point out to the Commission except the hill of Ben Lee?—Yes, there is Chees-bay (Bagh-a'-chais) and Loch Portan on this side of Lochmaddy: there were 29 crofters there within my recollection. I was in their houses after I was grown up.

40,874. Were there townships formerly on the north side of Loch Efort?—Yes.

40,875. Where was that side of the loch occupied by crofters?—At Cainish.

40,876. How many crofters were there?—There were seven at Cainish; the late Dr Macleod had the other part of the land, and he had a shepherd at Breinish, who was at that time attached to the farm of Balelone on the west side.

40,877. When were the crofters removed from Cainish?—Fully 55 years ago. I distinctly remember them being there.

40,878. Can you point to any other ground suitable for crofters' holdings?—Yes, the Caolas Berneray: I was there when it was tenanted by crofters; also Newton or Baile-Mhic-Phail, Baile-Mhic-Conain, Trumisgarry and Clachan.

40,879. On what holding is Caolas Berneray?—On Newton Farm.

40,880. Do you say you remember crofters being there?—Yes, I was 16 years of age at the time.

40,881. Can you say what number of crofters there were?—There were seven crofters in Caolas Berneray, and I visited their houses.

40,882. Do you remember any crofters on any other part of the farm of Newton?—No, I do not remember the crofters being removed from the farm of Newton, but there were crofters on the portion of the farm called Cnocthaibhisgearaidh.

40,883. Do you remember seeing crofters on any other part of the farm?—Yes, I remember them on Trumisgarry and Oronsay. The latter is an island, but it does not belong to Newton Farm.

40,884. It belongs to Trumisgarry?—Yes.

40,885. Do you remember crofters being anywhere else?—I remember crofters being in Oronsay, in Athmhor, and in Trumisgarry. I was born in the island of Oronsay myself. I was 27 years of age before the crofters were removed from Granetote.

40,886. Do you remember how many crofters were there?—I believe about a score.

40,887. Was the whole farm of Granetote then under crofters?—Yes, every part of it.

40,888. Do you remember anything about Sollas?—Yes.

40,889. Did you see it occupied by crofters?—Yes.

40,890. Now, going back to the island of Berneray, do you remember when it was a crofting township?—Yes, I was in the crofters' houses there. There are delegates present from the island. Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Donald Mackinnon.

40,891. Can you tell us anything about the islands of Vallay and Griminish?—There were no crofters on the island of Vallay, but there were crofters in Griminish.

40,892. Was the farm of Griminish occupied wholly by crofters in your time?—Yes, it was wholly under crofters. They were evicted from Griminish, and the lands given to Captain Maclean of Hosta.

40,893. Can you tell us when that took place?—I believe it is about 60 years since Griminish was cleared.

40,894. Was there more than one township in Griminish?—Griminish was one township, and Airidh-Mhic-Guairidh adjoining it was another.

40,895. Which side is that upon?—On the east side.

40,896. Following round the coast, can you tell us about the estate of Balranald?—There were no crofters on Balranald, but there were in Paiblesgarry to the east of Balranald. I saw the tenantry there, and I knew some of the people who were removed.

40,897. It has been a part of the farm since you remember?—Yes.

40,898. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you remember when there were fewer crofters in Baleshare than there are now?—No, I don't remember; when I first went to Baleshare it was divided into the same number of crofts as it is now.

40,899. Had they a right to common pasture which they have not now?—Yes, they had Ronay Island and Cnoc-Chuithein at first.

40,900. How did they lose that pasture?—It was taken from them by bad factors.

40,901. When was that?—Between 70 and 80 years ago.

40,902. And how is that grazing occupied now?—Captain Macdonald of Waternish owns Ronay, and Cnoc-Chuithein is leased to Roderick Macaulay, Tighary.

40,903. Would these places suit for an addition to the township pasture again?—Yes, very well indeed.

40,904. You mentioned the two Lees, I think, as land that would be suitable for pasture. How are these two hills occupied just now?—They are in the hands of the proprietor.

40,905. And are they under sheep?—Yes, under sheep.

40,906. Had the crofters on the island ever a right to these lands of Lee?—They were occupied by crofters in the olden times: there were 14 crofters on South Ben Lee.

40,907. When was that?—About 50 years ago. I used to visit their houses there.

40,908. Were these crofters cleared in order to form a sheep run?—Yes.

40,909. Were they in comfortable circumstances there?—Yes, very.

40,910. And where did they go after leaving these places?—They were driven like sheep to the landing place, and sent away to Australia and America. The steamers used to be guarded so that none could escape.

40,911. Did any of them remain in the island?—Yes, a few who managed to escape.

40,912. And where did these find shelter?—In various parts of the island; at Stromban and elsewhere.

40,913. Did you propose that there should be new settlements on the north side of Loch Efort, or that the lands there should be used in connection with the present townships?—I should think it would be settled on crofters.

40,914. And would they have arable land there?—Yes.

40,915. How many crofters do you think could be settled on the north of Loch Efort?—About a score, keeping in view the extent of land they formerly occupied.

40,916. Is that a convenient place for fishing?—Yes, very convenient.

40,917. Did those who were there before prosecute the fishing?—Yes, they used to fish sometimes.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
Donald Mackinnon.

40,918. In your earliest recollection how was the south side of Loch Efort occupied?—When I first recollect, there were only four crofters there, and most of the land was left untilled. It is now occupied by 34 crofters.

40,919. Is it a suitable place for crofters?—Yes, very suitable.

40,920. But it is fully occupied now, is it not?—Yes, there are quite enough.

40,921. How did the number of tenants increase from 4 to 34?—They came from Sollas after the evictions there.

40,922. Are they as well off on Loch Efort side as they were in Sollas?—Yes, perhaps a little better.

40,923. How is that?—They were paying too much rent in Sollas. Now they pay less rent and are getting on better. Then they are used to work at kelp-making, which is now a bygone industry.

40,924. Is not the land in Sollas very much superior to the land on Loch Efort side?—Yes, twice as good.

40,925. They were removed from Sollas, you think, because they were unable to pay the rack rent?—No, that was not the reason. The factor and the tenants had a cast out, and he would not give them work.

40,926. Were they in arrears?—Yes.

40,927. And was that made the ostensible reason for removing them?—Yes, that was the reason given for evicting them.

40,928. Do you think they were paying a higher rent than is now paid for the farm?—They were paying double or three times what is charged now.

40,929. And they were compelled to leave Sollas, I suppose, very much against their will?—Yes; their houses were pulled down about their heads. Fifteen police constables were taken specially from Inverness to evict them.

40,930. Did they get a place prepared for them on Loch Efort side?—No. There was a steamer-load sent from Lochmaddy to Australia, but the half of them were buried in Ireland.

40,931. How did that come about?—Fever broke out on board ship, and many of them died.

40,932. How did those succeed who arrived safely in the colonies?—Some got on well, and others the reverse.

40,933. Have any of them ever returned to visit the place?—One of them returned two years ago, but he went back again.

40,934. I suppose he succeeded abroad?—Yes, he did well.

40,935. Do you know of any other who succeeded?—I never saw any other returning with anything.

40,936. Did those who remained in the island go direct to Loch Efort side?—Yes, every one of them.

40,937. Have they comfortable houses there now?—Yes, through time they built good houses for themselves.

40,938. Have these houses been put up wholly at their own expense?—Wholly at their own expense; they lived first of all in mud huts, and then made dry stone houses.

40,939. Did they themselves improve the land which they now cultivate?—Yes, they improved the lands; they are fit for tillage now, but at first they were only moorland, never cultivated.

40,940. In your opinion, are the houses at Loch Efort side more comfortable than the houses they had at Sollas?—Yes, they are better than any houses I ever saw in Sollas.

40,941. And they got no compensation for the houses they left?—No, they never got a shilling for them.

40,942. When they went to that waste and uncultivated piece of land at Loch Efort side, was rent charged on them immediately?—Yes, they were charged a small rent, but when the present proprietor came in, he charged them five times the original rent. The crofts which originally paid only 15s. now pay £2, 10s.

40,943. *Mr Munro.*—Do you remember the condition of the crofters before the evictions took place throughout the island? Can you tell us generally how they lived at that time?—They were quite comfortable, speaking generally.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
Donald Mackinnon.

40,944. How did the condition of comfort then compare with their present condition?—I think they were much more comfortable then than they are now.

40,945. They were comfortable and contented, I suppose?—Yes.

40,946. Now, is it your opinion that if the crofters were restored to the lands from which they were evicted, they would attain a similar condition of comfort and prosperity to that which they formerly enjoyed?—Yes, I think so.

40,947. And if these lands were opened up to crofters, they would be readily taken?—Yes.

40,948. I think you stated that when crofters were moved on previous occasions, they built houses at their own expense. Could they do that to-day?—Yes, they would do the same to-day.

40,949. You are an old man, Mr Mackinnon, and I presume I may take it that you are appearing here to-day more in the interests of the younger generation than your own?—Yes.

40,950. At your time of life, of course, you cannot expect much benefit from any change that may take place in this matter?—No, not much, but I should like that the younger generation should have the benefit.

40,951. Now I suppose you could tell us something about the relations which at present exist between Sir John Orde as a landlord and his tenants, particularly the crofters?—They are very much dissatisfied; who but would be dissatisfied with Sir John? If the Almighty or the people do not prevent him he is likely to starve us altogether.

40,952. Does he take no interest in the welfare of the people?—No; he won't accept the rent from them if it is one penny short.

40,953. He is utterly indifferent to their prosperity and wellbeing, provided he gets his rent?—Yes, he fully appears to be that.

40,954. Now, supposing that the crofters combined to ask restoration of the lands from which they have been evicted, have you any reasonable expectation that Sir John would accede to their request?—No, he would not: he would not give even a boll of meal, small as that is, far less give them these lands.

40,955. Then, I presume, your only expectation, and that of those in this part of the islands, is of the legislature stepping in and making some arrangements by which Sir John might be compelled to give them access to the land?—Unless the legislature does it, crofters and cottars will go without the lands.

40,956. There is a strong desire, I suppose, on the part of the crofters, that some arrangement of that sort should be made?—Yes, they are very eager that it should be done.

40,957. Is there sufficient land in the island to satisfy the desires of all the crofters for reasonably-sized crofts?—Yes, and more.

40,958. *Mr Gordon.*—You have no land yourself?—No.

40,959. You do not appear here on behalf of the crofters?—No; I appear for myself and for the cottars.

40,960. But you have no authority to speak in the name of the crofters?—No, I have no special authority.

40,961. Is there any person here representing the estate? [*Mr Wilson, Solicitor.*—Mr Orde is here.] [*Mr Orde.*—I have no authority.]

40,962. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—You have stated that you are here with a mandate from the cottars to speak on their behalf and for yourself. I should like to ask whether you are aware that it was stated in the public prints, within the last few days, in a report of evidence given by the proprietor of this island before a Committee of the House of Commons, that there are about 380 crofters and 200 cottar families in the island, and whether you believe these are about the numbers?—I did not know that he was examined.

40,963. Do you believe the figures are tolerably correct?—I cannot say.

40,964. Now, I should like you to tell us whether it is a fact that these 200 cottar families have all along

been living on the crofters, so to speak,—getting bits of land from the crofters and growing potatoes on them?—Yes.

40,965. And is it also a fact that before the passing of the Crofters Act, they were paying Sir John Orde a rack rent for the crofts and keeping up these 200 cottars upon their crofter lands?—Yes, they were in some cases paying double rents and also supporting the cottars.

40,966. And since the passing of the Crofters Act and the fixing of the rents, has Sir John Orde issued public notices threatening to evict under the Act any crofter that gave an inch of his land to a cottar for potato ground?—Yes, that is the truth. They came where I was myself, and they had Sir John's letter with them, and they told me not to till the ground although I got it and although I had manured it.

40,967. So that now the cottars of North Uist are in a worse position than ever?—Yes, doubly worse.

40,968. Would you be surprised to hear that Sir John Orde, before a Committee of the House of Commons, stated that about half the island is in the occupation of a few large farmers?—Yes, indeed, much more than half the island is occupied by tacksmen.

40,969. Are you prepared to state from your own personal knowledge that that half contains the fattest portions of the island?—Yes, it does, and it has always been the best part of the land. Three or four tacksmen now occupy lands which formerly supported a thousand souls.

40,970. Do you believe that that land would prove sufficient to make comfortable holdings for the 200 landless cottars in the island?—Yes, I believe so.

40,971. And would such a scheme of migration prove an immense boon to the crofters as well?—Yes, to be sure it would.

40,972. Would you be surprised to know that in the county of Argyll one of the largest tacksmen came before this Royal Commission, and stated that the people of the Highlands did not want land at all; that they were taught that they could get it for nothing, but that they did not really want it, and had no intention of using it, but that their intention was, if they got it, to go and sell it?—They would not sell it. Nobody who ever got lands parted with them willingly. That is not the custom here.

40,973. Did he misrepresent the feeling of the people in Uist when he said the people did not want it at all?—I think he was perfectly wrong; he misrepresented us as much as he could.

40,974. Did it ever come into the heads of the cottars of North Uist that they would get land for nothing?—No, they never thought so.

40,975. Were they always prepared to pay an equitable rent if they got land?—Yes, and they are now willing to pay it year by year.

40,976. Whether would they prefer Sir John Orde or the Crofters Commission to fix the rent?—They would rather it should be fixed by the Commission; or else Sir John will have to turn better than he is.

40,977. And if they got the land on fair terms, are they prepared to-day to take the land and to build the necessary houses without Government assistance?—They would pay every penny to-day if they only got it.

ANGUS CAMERON, cottar, Claddach Kyles, North Uist (67).

(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

40,978. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—I am a cottar.

40,979. Did you hear the evidence given by the previous witness?—Yes.

40,980. Do you agree generally with what he said?—Yes.

40,981. May we take you then as corroborating his evidence?—Yes, I quite corroborate what he said.

40,982. *Mr Macallum.*—Have you anything of your own to add to what Mr Mackinnon stated?—Yes.

40,983. State as shortly as you can what you wish to say?—I was evicted from my house by the proprietor.

40,984. Of course, you know that what we want to get at is evidence as to lands that would be suitable for occupation by crofters and cottars: have you anything bearing on that?—I know of plenty lands that would be suitable for cottars. There are four crofts vacant in Claddach Kirkibost.

40,985. How are these four crofts now taken up?—They are in the hands of the proprietor.

40,986. Are they cultivated?—There is one small spot of them cultivated by Roderick Macaulay.

40,987–8. How did the crofts become vacant? How did they fall into the proprietor's hands?—Some of those who possessed them left long ago, and they were for some time in the hands of the local medical practitioner.

40,989. When did he cease to occupy them?—About 14 years ago. I refer not to the present medical man, but one of his predecessors.

40,990. And have they been for 14 years in the proprietor's own hands?—One of them was attached to the island of Kirkibost, and the tenant of Kirkibost buys the grazing of the other.

40,991. Is there any other person who can speak with greater definiteness with regard to these vacant crofts, besides yourself?—They cannot know more about them than I do, because I was born there, and my people had one of them.

40,992. And were you put out of that croft against your will?—Yes, against our will.

40,993. Were they offered land elsewhere?—No.

40,994. Did they get compensation for the houses they left?—No.

40,995. Were they offered houses elsewhere, or how did they get houses?—They were not offered anything.

40,996. Then, did they build houses for themselves?—Yes, they built houses for themselves on the same land.

40,997. On the lands they had held before?—Yes.

40,998. And how are these people occupied now?—There are only two alive now, myself and another man.

40,999. Have you ever applied to get back the land, or are you willing to take back the land?—Yes, we are quite willing to take the lands, but we could not get them if we asked them; we would not even be allowed to remain in the houses.

41,000. And that house was built by yourself, I suppose?—Yes.

41,001. Did you get permission from the proprietor to build that house?—Yes, we got the permission of the then factor.

41,002. And do you think the proprietor gets a better return from these crofts that are left vacant, than from those that are occupied by crofters?—He has no return from them except the payment for the grazing.

41,003. What became of the old houses that were on the crofts?—They were tumbling to ruins.

41,004. What happens when a croft becomes vacant in this island? If a tenant gives up a croft, or if it becomes vacant in any way, what is usually done with it?—Unless the tenant leaves it to one of his family or somebody else, if it falls into the hands of the proprietor nobody gets it.

41,005. It is never added to existing crofts in order to increase the size?—No, never.

41,006. Then, with regard to Balranald farm, has it always been occupied as it is at present?—It has always been a farm.

41,007. Has any part been added to it from crofters' lands?—Not a foot except Ard-runary.

41,008. Is that a large place?—Yes.

41,009. How many crofters would have been there?—It was not tenanted by crofters, it was attached to the adjoining farm of Houghary.

41,010. When was it taken from that farm?—About 70 years ago.

41,011. Do you remember a larger extent of Balranald being cultivated than now?—I remember its

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Angus Cameron.

producing more grain, but I never saw so much straw as it yields now.

41,012. But is it not the case that there is a large extent of land that was formerly under cultivation, which is not now being cultivated by the tenant?—That was done by the crofters in Paiblesgarry over a hundred years ago. Paiblesgarry is now part of the Farm of Balranald.

41,013. Did they cultivate it for the tenant of Balranald?—Paiblesgarry was occupied by sub-tenants. The farm was rented by one man, and that part of Paiblesgarry was sub-let to the others.

41,014. Is there a great extent of arable land in Balranald that is not presently cultivated by the tenant?—Yes, there is hill pasture.

41,015. But is there land suitable for cultivation if the crofters got it, which is not being cultivated just now?—Yes, but it is rather too far away from the manure, from the sea-weed.

41,016. And do you think that if Balranald were made available, crofters would not take crofts there because of that objection?—I cannot say: I don't know.

41,017. Do you mean distinctly to say that you don't know whether the crofters would or would not take the land in Balranald that was once cultivated but is now lying out of cultivation below the road?—I know it would make good land, but it is far from manure. I have no doubt, however, it would be occupied if it were cut up.

41,018. Is the land there quite as good as the land occupied by crofters elsewhere in this island?—Some of it is better than most crofts, and some of it worse.

41,019. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—When a croft falls vacant into the hands of the landlord, is it usual with the cottars to make application for that croft?—What is the use of that when they know they won't get it?

41,020. Did any cottar ask the proprietor for any croft that was vacant,—say for any of the four crofts you have referred to?—They asked them, but they did not get them.

41,021. Who asked them?—Roderick Macaulay asked it last year, but he did not get it. He is a crofter in Tighary.

41,022. He is not a cottar?—A cottar would not even be allowed to look at the lands.

41,023. Can you give the name of any cottar that asked the proprietor for any croft?—I asked lands myself, but did not get them. He was charging a guinea of rent for the house stance.

41,024. And you asked him for a croft?—I asked him for the guinea's worth.

41,025. Had he crofts vacant on his land at the time?—He had the common at that time, and he could do what he liked with it.

41,026. Had he a croft on his hands at that time?—No, and neither did he promise to give me one, supposing there were.

41,027. Can you give me the name of any cottar who asked a croft that was at the time in the hands of the landlord?—No, I cannot, they were afraid to ask it.

Alexander Maccuish.

ALEXANDER MACCUISH, cottar, Claddach Kirkibost (55). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,028. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—No, a cottar.

41,029. Did you hear the evidence given by the last two witnesses?—Yes.

41,030. Do you agree with what they stated?—Yes, it was all right.

41,031. And have you anything to add to what they said?—No, I have nothing to add.

Archibald Macdonald.

ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, Kyles Paible (36). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,032. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—No, I am a cottar.

41,033. Did you hear the evidence of the previous witnesses?—Yes.

41,034. Do you agree generally with what they said?—Yes.

41,035. Have you anything else you would like to add to it?—I have only to say that all the cottars were willing to take lands if they could get them. There are four cottars in the township and they all want land.

41,036. What size of croft would you like?—About £3 worth of land.

41,037. Are you a fisherman?—No.

41,038. How do you get your living in the meantime?—I sometimes act as herd for the township, and I work here and there when I can get work.

41,039. Would you be able to stock a croft if you got one?—I have a little stock.

41,040. Do you graze your stock upon the crofting township?—Yes, on the township grazing.

41,041. Have the other three cottars any stock?—Yes, they all have a little stock. The four of us keep one horse each and a cow and a few sheep.

41,042. Which are all grazed upon the township lands?—Yes; one of us has no horse.

ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, Claddach Kirkibost (57)—*examined.*

41,043. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—No, a cottar.

41,044. Did you hear the evidence given by the last witness?—Yes.

41,045. Do you agree with it?—Quite, so far as my recollection goes.

41,046. Do you know these crofts that were mentioned, which are situated on each side of you?—Yes.

41,047. The westmost of them is vacant in Claddach Illeray?—Yes, there are two there and two at Claddach Kirkibost.

41,048. They are vacant at present?—Yes.

41,049. Would they make suitable holdings for a crofter?—Quite suitable.

41,050. They are all under grass, I think?—They are in Sir John's hand, and are at present under grass.

41,051. *Mr Maccallum.*—Have you any particular statement of your own to make, with regard to the township of Claddach Kirkibost, which you represent?—Well, nothing in particular; I have nothing to say beyond what the former delegates have stated.

41,052. Are there many cottars there?—Yes, there are a good few.

41,053. About how many are there, do you think?—I believe between two miles by road there are upwards of 20 cottars.

41,054. Have any of these made application for the vacant crofts, do you know?—I am not aware if they did.

41,055. How do you account for that, seeing they are so anxious to get land?—I believe, myself, that the reason is that although they would ask, they would not get them. For some time past the proprietor has refused to give land to cottars on any account.

41,056. You think they have fully made up their minds that it would be useless to apply to Sir John?—Quite so.

41,057. And are you aware that he is threatening the crofters who were formerly giving potato ground to the cottars with eviction if they continue to do so?—Yes, that is quite correct.

41,058. Has he, himself, offered to do anything for these cottars?—Yes. He was charging rent upon these cottars all along: some paid this rent and others refused; and for those who are still paying rent I believe he was doing something, but nothing for those who refused to pay.

41,059. He was charging rent on some?—Yes.

41,060. What rent did he usually charge?—From 10s. to £1, generally £1.

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41,061. Was that for the stance of the house?—Yes, and for the peat stance attached.

41,062. Was the house built on township lands, or on Sir John's lands?—Generally on the township or the crofts. Most of the cottars have their houses on the crofts, except a few who are on the common.

41,063. The whole of the cottars' houses are built either on the crofts or on the common belonging to the township?—Yes.

41,064. When did Sir John begin to charge the cottars rent?—It was long ago, but now he has given it up for some years past because he could not get it. There is no rent asked now.

41,065. What is done for those who pay him rent for the house and the privilege of peat?—He was giving some of them a piece of land near to their houses: I know one or two that got it.

41,066. In whose occupation was the land before he gave it to the cottars?—There was a piece of land at Cnoc-an-lin, and one James Macleod got leave to build a house there. There was a bit of land attached to his house and I believe he was paying a rent of £1.

41,067. To whom?—To Sir John, I understand.

41,068. Was the land that he got taken off the township common?—So I believe.

41,069. And yet the rent was not paid to the township but to the proprietor?—I am not positive about it.

41,070. Are you aware of his giving land to any cottar out of any of the large tacks?—I am not aware.

41,071. So that if he has done anything at all, it has only been from township lands?—Yes, that is so.

41,072. Does he refuse to give stances for houses, or has there been any demand for stances?—Yes, there is a demand for stances, and he refuses.

41,073. Who are the people who have been applying for stances for building houses?—I myself applied. My house is not situated in a very good place, and for some years past,—I think it was 18 or 19 years ago that I first applied to Sir John for a stance for which I was willing to pay a reasonable rent. He promised one then. I have asked him and his late factor at different times since, but I never got it.

41,074. What sort of house was it in your view to build?—An ordinary house; I would have built a house with two or three rooms and a kitchen.

41,075. You were prepared to build such a house, and applied for a site and were refused?—That is so.

41,076. You were willing to pay a reasonable sum for the stance, I suppose?—Yes, at the same time.

41,077. And could you get it on any terms whatever?—I was never offered any place. I applied to have the place where I now live put in better order, but I was not allowed.

41,078. Do you think that if stances were freely given, some fishermen would put up houses for themselves?—A great many.

41,079. And you think that this refusal on the part of the proprietor to grant stances works very much against the fishing industry?—Yes, quite contrary to it.

41,080. Where do you think is the place that is best suited for building up a fishing industry?—Generally speaking, I believe those places that were mentioned by the former delegates are all fishing places, but the island of Heisker is a very suitable place if there was a proper harbour built there. It is a good bit out of the channel, and boats would go into it.

41,081. What do you say as to the place where we are just now, Lochmaddy?—Lochmaddy was once a great place for fishing. I have seen a good fleet of boats here getting capital fish.

41,082. You think it is quite impossible for the fishing industry to prosper here so long as Sir John maintains his present attitude of refusing stances?—Yes.

41,083. Do you know whether natives of this island who prospered elsewhere, and have come back willing to spend their days here, have been applying for stances for houses?—Yes, I know some young men that were in Australia came back and applied for houses. They made money in Australia and came to set up on this island of Heisker, but were refused.

41,084. Do you think that to allow such men to put up houses here would benefit the place a great deal,—I mean such people as those who have done well elsewhere? If they were settled down in this island do you think it would be for the benefit of the crofters and their neighbours generally?—I think so, seeing they would spend their money on the island. Lochmaddy, North Uist. Archibald Macdonald.

41,085. And do you think there is a considerable number of such people, who would build houses in Uist, if they could get sites?—No doubt, if there was a start made.

41,086. How do you account for the complete refusal of the proprietor to give sites here? Would it not benefit him also?—I consider it would benefit him at the same time.

41,087. If these men got sites and built suitable houses, would he have a perfectly good security for receiving the rent they promised?—He would.

41,088. Can you tell us what place the cottars of your township look to as the most suitable for themselves to be settled on? We have gone over a great deal of the island already: can you tell us whether they have fixed upon any place near themselves as being suitable for settling on, if the land were available?—No, I am quite sure they would be quite satisfied to be settled down with all the rest of the cottars, whatever place might be chosen.

41,089. And if the cottars were settled on some or other of these farms, do you think they would be able to pay to the proprietor as good a rent as he gets from the tacksman just now?—I believe they would, if they got it at the same rate that the tacksmen are charged.

41,090. You think they would pay that and be much more comfortable than they are at present?—Yes, that is so.

41,091. Do the crofters and cottars of Uist derive any special benefit from the large tacks?—Not that I am aware of, but sometimes they get ground for potatoes: the crofters and cottars that work on these farms get a piece of land from the tacksman for potatoes.

41,092. But do you think that the people would suffer in any material degree by these tacks being converted into small holdings?—No, I am not aware that they would.

41,093. Are the tenants of these large farms all resident on the island? Do they remain on the farms the whole year?—No, they go to the east coast fishing, to the Militia, to the Reserve, and to lobster fishing and other occupations.

41,094. (*Question repeated*). — Balranald does not reside at Balranald; Vallay does not reside at Vallay; and Captain Macdonald, Ronay Island, does not reside there.

41,095. Then, is there any large resident tenant at all? There is the farm of Newton?—Yes, Mr Orde has it.

41,096. How is it occupied?—He resides there.

41,097. Is he the proprietor's son?—Yes.

41,098. So that, with the exception of the proprietor's son, there is no large resident tenant at all in the island?—There is another,—Mr Maclean, Sollas, and Mr Macaulay, Trumisgarry.

41,099. Do you agree with what has been said already, that these large tacks include the greater or the better half of the island?—I do; they occupy the largest and the fattest portions.

41,100. *Mr Munro.*—You have told us that Sir John threatened the crofters who should give any land to the cottars?—Correct.

41,101. Could you tell us any instance of a crofter having been threatened for offering potato land to cottars?—I believe there was a notice sent to the crofters, prohibiting them from giving land to cottars, or grazing for their cattle.

41,102. What is Sir John's object in doing that, do you know?—I believe, myself, that he was getting no rent from the cottars, and Sir John knew well that most of them had cattle.

41,103. I suppose he wanted to discourage their remaining on the land at all?—Quite so.

41,104. Now, about these two vacant crofts,—it never occurred to you, I suppose, to make a personal applica-

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Archibald Macdonald.

tion to Sir John for either of these vacant crofts?—No.

41,105. Are you perfectly certain that Sir John would not give you one of the crofts if you applied for it?—Oh, I am not quite positive about that. I never asked him for a croft; I asked for a stance for a house. I don't know what he would say as to a croft, but he would not give me a stance.

41,106. Is the impression general among the cottars that they would not get land if they applied for it?—Yes.

41,107. What is the reason, in your opinion, why Sir John wants to discourage the settlement of crofters or cottars upon the island?—To cut it up and make farms.

41,108. Does he get more rent from the big farms than from the crofters?—I don't think so: if it were cut up into ordinary lots I myself believe that it would pay him better.

41,109. Do the crofters, as a rule, pay their rents punctually?—They do: of late years they pay at the July markets, those who don't pay at Martinmas.

41,110. In your opinion, does Sir John's management of his estate hinder generally the prosperity of the island?—To a certain extent it does.

41,111. He refuses sites for the building of cottages, and he discourages crofters and cottars in every way he can,—is that correct?—Quite correct. He also discouraged fishing, for I know myself, that not very long ago there were some fishermen who built huts very close to the shore near Lochmaddy here, and their huts were hurled down about their ears.

41,112. Do you know within what distance of high water mark they built the huts?—I cannot say.

41,113. But fishing at one time was pursued at Lochmaddy?—Yes, to a great extent. I have seen a great fishing done at Lochmaddy here, and many people getting plenty work among the fishing.

41,114. And has Sir John's refusal to grant sites for fishermen's houses anything to do with the cessation of fishing?—I believe it was the chief cause of the fishermen keeping away.

41,115. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton:*—Is fishing the only local industry in this part of the country?—Generally it is.

41,116. Where are the fishermen whose huts were pulled down?—Not far from here: I cannot recollect the very place.

41,117. Where were their homes?—I believe they came from Harris.

41,118. They came here in a boat to fish?—Yes.

41,119. Was it for herring?—No, lobster fishing.

41,120. And for what period of the year would they remain in this part of the country?—These Harris people come generally in winter.

41,121. And stay for how long?—For some weeks, and in spring they come to fish.

41,122. The huts were simply temporary residences for a few weeks?—That is all.

41,123. Would they be within 100 yards of high water mark?—I cannot say what was the distance.

41,124. Who pulled them down?—I believe Sir John was there and his ground officer and others.

41,125. Is it a fact that Sir John pulled them down with his own hands?—Oh, I cannot say.

41,126. But the huts were pulled down?—Yes, the huts were pulled down.

41,127. You are a sheriff-officer, I think?—Yes.

41,128. Were you asked to serve eviction summonses upon fishermen in this part of the country who had houses in the neighbourhood of Lochmaddy here?—Yes.

41,129. How many?—I cannot say how many.

41,130. Where did they live?—On Loch Portan, on the opposite side of the loch there. I believe there were one or two there.

41,131. Had they land there?—No, I am not positive that the two had land.

41,132. Had they wives and families?—Yes, they had.

41,133. And comfortable houses?—Their houses were not extra comfortable, you know.

41,134. Were they as good as the average £3 crofter's house?—Just about the average.

41,135. At whose expense were the eviction summonses against them issued?—At the expense of Sir John.

41,136. By what did these families live?—They were fishing, and I believe they were occasionally in the employment of young Mr Orde. It was on his land.

41,137. But did they live mainly by the fishing?—Yes, they were working at it, going to the west coast and working at home again.

41,138. Had they a boat of their own?—I believe they had a small boat.

41,139. And had they herring nets?—I think they had.

41,140. Is it within your knowledge that they were making a fairly comfortable living?—They were doing as well as their neighbours, I know.

41,141. Do you know why they were evicted?—I cannot say what was the very cause.

41,142. But so far as you know, Sir John has by his actions been discouraging the prosecution of the fishing industry here?—Yes.

41,143. Has he gone the length of refusing a house to the Procurator-Fiscal? (*Question disallowed.*)

41,144. I bow to your decision. (*To witness.*) Do you know every crofting township in the island?—I know most of them.

41,145. How long have you been in the island?—Since I was born.

41,145A. Have the crofting townships been settled with a view that the crofters should have an opportunity of prosecuting the fishing industry? Have several of the crofting townships been put into a suitable place for following the fishing, or are the crofting townships in places that are not so suitable?—Most of the crofters are situated in places where they cannot get fish, the outlets are so difficult to get at.

41,146. The places of refuge for the protection of boats?—Yes.

41,147. Do you know the west end of Berneray?—Yes, very well.

41,148. Would that be a very suitable place for crofting fishing?—Yes, it would be a good station. Heisker again would be a good station.

41,149. Supposing the land that is in the tacksmen's hands were made available, would you propose to have it all divided into large crofts, or would you have it mostly divided with the view of giving a comfortable home to crofter fishermen?—I would approve of it being cut up into pieces suitable for those fishermen who could be placed near the shore, not large crofts.

41,150. You would put a large croft only in a place that was not convenient for the fishing?—Yes, and small crofts in a place from which fishing could be prosecuted.

41,151. And do you believe that the 200 cottars in the island, or the bulk of them, would be able to take up such holdings and to erect the buildings without any Government assistance,—that is to say, if they got the holdings on fair and equitable terms?—I believe they would: most of these crofters have cows, and many of them have a horse and cart, a cow, and some sheep.

41,152. *Mr Gordon:*—You mentioned once or twice in your evidence the island of Heisker?—Yes.

41,153. Is it not the case that that island is already peopled with crofters?—Oh, yes, but I mean for a fishing station.

41,154. Do the present inhabitants of Heisker not fish?—For lobsters, and do very well.

41,155. But you would not suggest that more people should be put on that small island?—No, unless they would get a site for houses.

41,156. You would suggest that Heisker should be made a fishing island?—Yes, along with Berneray and Lochmaddy.

41,157. It is the south end of the island of Berneray that you refer to?—Yes.

41,158. How is that south end at present occupied?—It is in the hands of a tenant just now.

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41,159. There is at present a fishing village or township on the north-east side of Berneray?—Yes.

41,160. You consider that to the west side of Berneray, and the island of Heisker and Lochmaddy, are the three best fishing stations of North Uist?—Yes, Loch Efort might turn out to be a very good station too, because there is good water,—boats could come in at low tide as well as high tide.

41,161. It is a harbour that can be approached at any state of the tide?—Yes.

41,162. How are the people doing who are on the south side there?—Ordinarily: some are better off than others.

41,163. But they are fairly successful as fishermen?—Yes.

41,164. *Mr Munro.*—You spoke of temporary huts erected by fishermen. Were these huts used for the purpose of drying nets, or storing the implements of their calling; or were they used as more permanent dwellings?—Dwellings over night.

41,165. Not intended to remain permanently?—No, but only for a certain time,—six or eight weeks. Perhaps the men would go home over Sunday.

41,166. The erections were quite of a temporary character?—Yes.

41,167. And used chiefly for drying nets and keeping-sails, &c.?—Yes.

41,168. Did you ever hear it stated, as a matter of law, that a fisherman was entitled to erect any temporary structure for the purposes you have specified on any unoccupied or uncultivated land within a distance of 100 yards from high water mark?—I think I heard of it.

41,169. Might I suggest to you that you should make the inquiry in the proper quarter to satisfy yourself.

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DONALD MACDONALD, Crofter, Illeray, North Uist (62).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,170. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

41,171. How many crofts are there in the township of Illeray?—Sixteen.

41,172. And how many crofters?—There are three vacant crofts.

41,173. Are any of the crofts divided?—No.

41,174. Are there any cottars in the township?—Yes, four or five.

41,175. Have they any stock?—Some of them have.

41,176. Do they keep their stock on the crofts?—Yes.

41,177. What size of a croft have you?—I am not sure.

41,178. What stock have you?—One cow, two horses, and a stirk.

41,179. Any sheep?—About a dozen sheep.

41,180. What rent do you pay for that?—£4, 5s.

41,181. Is your croft about an average in the township?—Yes.

41,182. Is there a general desire for larger holdings among the crofters of Illeray?—Yes, they would require that; the tide has swept away a great part of the land.

41,183. What occupation do they follow for a livelihood, besides working on their crofts?—Some members of the family go south,—the young men go to the militia and elsewhere.

41,184. How do you employ your time?—I work on the high roads, and at odd jobs, when I am not engaged on the croft.

41,185. What size of a croft would you like?—I would require two such as I have, for it is bad land.

41,186. Do you think that if half the crofters were removed from the township of Illeray, the other half would have sufficient land?—They would be very much better off than they are.

41,187. Would they be willing to move to other crofts if they got them?—Yes, quite willing if they got better crofts.

41,188. Is there any land in your neighbourhood that you would consider suitable for new holdings?—Yes. Lochmaddy, North Uist.

41,189. Where?—There are three crofts in the township. Donald Macdonald.

41,190. In whose occupation are they at present?—In the hands of the proprietor.

41,191. How do they come to be vacant?—One of the tenants went to America, and the other died.

41,192. And what became of the third?—One of them had two crofts.

41,193. Are there buildings on these crofts?—Yes.

41,194. And are they also vacant?—They have fallen into ruins.

41,195. Is there any other land that you can suggest as suitable?—Not near us; we are surrounded by crofting townships.

41,196. Do you know the four crofts that were spoken of by the previous witness, two in Illeray and two in Kirkibost?—Yes, I know them. They are about two miles from us.

41,197. Do you think they would make good holdings?—As good as any other crofts that I know.

41,198. Has anybody applied for these vacant crofts to your knowledge?—I have heard that they were applied for, but I cannot say with certainty. But there is one croft in Illeray that was applied for and refused.

41,199. Who applied for it?—Donald Macdonald, Illeray, and he could not get it from the proprietor. Five other tenants of Illeray also applied to the Commission for it, but have not got it yet.

41,200. Was any reason given by the proprietor for refusing to give it to Donald Macdonald?—I am not aware.

41,201. And there is no other land in your neighbourhood suitable for crofting?—No.

41,202. What sort of land is the island of Kirkibost?—Good land, sandy soil; *machair* land.

41,203. How is it occupied at present?—By Roderick Macaulay, Tighary.

41,204. Does he live upon it?—No, he lives in Tighary.

41,205. Would that island be suitable for crofter holdings?—Yes, very good.

41,206. Is there water upon it?—Yes.

41,207. There is another small island there?—Yes, the island of Vorogay: that is the croft of which I spoke, for which five crofters applied.

41,208. And you think both these islands would make suitable ground for these holdings?—Yes, very good; very much better than those we occupy.

41,209. Do you know the land of Paiblesgarry?—Yes.

41,210. Does it form at present a part of the farm of Balranald?—Yes.

41,211. Would it be suitable for new holdings?—They were the best crofts in the island, when it was cut up into crofts.

41,212. Is the land at present under crop?—Yes.

41,213. It is laboured as part of the farm?—Yes.

DONALD MACCORQUODALE, Cottar, Illeray, North Uist (57). Donald Maccorquodale.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,214. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a cottar?—Yes.

41,215. Did you hear the evidence given by the preceding witnesses?—Yes.

41,216. Do you agree with it?—Yes.

41,217. Have you anything further to add from your own knowledge?—Perhaps I might, if it had not been that time is so limited.

41,218. Let us hear what you have got to say?—I have only to speak about the way in which we cottars have been kept so low for such a length of time. We were not allowed anything at all except what we worked for.

41,219. Have you any stock?—Yes.

41,220. How many?—I keep two cows and a horse and a few sheep.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Donald Maccorquodale.

41,221. Do you keep them on the crofters' land?—Yes.

41,222. How do you occupy yourself and your horse?—I do some tillage.

41,223. To whom?—For myself.

41,224. On whose land do you do the tillage if you have no land?—I get small pieces from the crofters here and there through the township.

41,225. Do you pay them anything for it?—No, they don't take anything for what they give me.

41,226. What special complaint have you, then, if you get land from other people?—I would rather have some land for which I could pay, so that I might call it my own.

41,227. You would like to get a croft?—Yes.

41,228. What size of croft would you like?—I would be content with very little, and I would take a good deal, as much as I could possibly work, so long as the Lord gives me health.

41,229. Could you build a house on a croft if you got one?—We would have built houses long before now had we been permitted. It is a great disgrace to a Christian country such as we are, to think that any one possessed of a horse or cow should be obliged to house them in the same house with himself. We were prohibited from erecting any accommodation in the shape of sheds or outhouses of any description.

41,230. *Mr Munro.*—Do I understand you to say that you were obliged to house your horse and cow with yourself, because you were prevented by the landlord from erecting suitable outhouses?—Because we were not allowed to erect suitable buildings. I was prevented by Sir John, and others acting for him.

41,231. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Are you aware that Sir John Orde has interdicted even a crofter widow from building a byre for her stock?—Yes, I know it very well.

41,232. And she had to appear in the Sheriff Court to fight for her rights?—Yes.

41,233. Is it a fact that he put this widow, who was a crofter, to the expense of employing a law agent and leading evidence in the Sheriff Court to fight out her right to build a byre in order to house her cattle outside her own dwelling-house?—Yes, that is a fact.

41,234. Is it a fact that this widow had a son and a daughter living in the house, and that she was obliged previously to house the cattle in a room 16 feet long by 12 feet wide, in which the whole family lived, and that she had to tether the horse to the end of the bed?—We heard that said.

41,235. Do you know a woman in Cnoc-an-torrain who was a cottar and who ventured to marry a man of the name of Sergeant Macdonald?—Yes.

41,236. Did Sir John institute eviction proceedings against this cottar immediately on her marrying the old sergeant?—It was a young woman whom the sergeant married, and, whenever he did marry, Sir John took steps to get the house cleared. He summoned the sergeant to leave the house; he got a charge eight days after the summons was given, and the sergeant thought at the expiry of eight days that people would come to evict him out of the house. Macdonald saw many more strange faces and fiercer faces than were possible to be seen in North Uist, and he was quite prepared for them.

41,237. Had he to defend his young wife that day with the old sword of Balaclava?—I believe it was the fear of the sword that kept them back.

41,238. And is it a fact that Sergeant Macdonald, after fighting for his country for 30 years, was refused a site in his native land by Sir John?—I believe he was refused.

41,239. After going through the whole Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny?—Yes, he pays £1 of rent for the house stance.

41,240. He was one of the "Thin Red Line," was he not?—He was for three years buying horses in the artillery.

41,241. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You have been telling us of the proprietor interdicting a crofter from building a byre?—He would not allow any of them to erect a byre without his own permission.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Donald Maccorquodale.

41,242. You told us that he tried to interdict by process of law a crofter widow from building a byre?—Yes.

41,243. Do you know on what grounds he thought of interdicting her?—I don't know, unless it was that his permission was not asked.

41,244. Do you know whether it was that the proposed house was too good for the holding?—I don't know: perhaps Sir John may not have known of it till the latter end.

41,245. But he did take proceedings against her for trying to build a byre separate from the dwelling-house?—Yes, he did; but the byre was eventually built. When Sir John came to the island and saw the house he gave her permission to build it.

41,246. Was it Sir John who give her permission to build it?—Yes, latterly, I think.

41,247. Did Sir John fight the case in Court to the end?—I believe those representing him were fighting the case in the Court.

41,248. Then you are not accurate in saying it was the estate who gave her permission. Did she not get the permission from the Sheriff?—I think she first got permission from the Sheriff.

41,249. Do you think the Sheriff's permission would not be sufficient?—I think that if the law of the land would not allow it the Sheriff would not permit it to be done.

41,250. And after the law of the land gave her permission, do you think it was necessary that she should get permission from the proprietor?—It seems that is the case.

41,251. Is that the opinion in Uist,—that Sir John is above the law of the land?—I cannot say, but perhaps in some instances his word may be above the law of the land, though known to the generality of people.

ALEXANDER MACLEAN, Cottar, Claddach Carinish (62). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Alexander Maclean.

41,252. *Mr Gordon.*—Have you any land along with your house?—No.

41,253. Have you any stock?—I have got one cow, a stirk, and a few sheep.

41,254. Are there more cottars besides yourself in the township?—Four others.

41,255. Have the others any stock?—Yes.

41,256. Do you graze your stock on the lands of the township?—Yes.

41,257. Do you pay any rent to the crofters for the grazing?—No.

41,258. Would you like to get a croft?—Yes.

41,259. Did you hear the evidence given by the previous witnesses?—Yes.

41,260. Do you agree with what they said?—I have nothing to say against anything I heard.

41,261. You concur with all you have heard?—Yes, there is one vacant place that I did not hear mentioned.

41,262. What is the name of it?—Kallin.

41,263. Is it near your township?—Yes, quite near.

41,264. Is it an old crofting township?—There were crofters in Liernish, but there was only a herd in Kallin, together with a few fishermen.

41,265. Kallin is on the island of Grimsay?—Yes.

41,266. How many crofters do you remember being at Liernish?—There were five originally, but I remember only three.

41,267. Do you remember seeing them there?—Yes.

41,268. But you never saw crofters in Kallin?—No.

41,269. Do you think these places would make suitable new holdings for crofters?—Yes, they are some of the best places in the island, because they are near the fishing ground.

41,270. How is the land at Liernish at present occupied?—Balranald has it; it is attached to the hill of Eaval.

41,271. How is the old township of Kallin in

Grimsay Island occupied?—Kallin is occupied by Captain Macdonald of Waternish, Skye.

41,272. Who occupies the island of Grimsay; is it not a crofter township?—It is all occupied by crofters.

41,273. Is Kallin upon an island then?—On the east of Grimsay: it is the port of Grimsay, where the steamer calls.

41,274. What extent of land does Captain Macdonald, Waternish, occupy there?—He has the whole of Ronay Island, and he pays a rent of £48, I believe, for what he has in Grimsay at Kallin. [*The Secretary.*—£42 is the figure in the Valuation Roll.]

41,275. Does the steamer call at Kallin?—Yes.

41,276. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Had the Grimsay crofters ever possession of Kallin?—I am not aware; not since I recollect.

41,277. Is there a farm-house on it?—Not now, there was a house there.

41,278. When did it fall into the occupation of Captain Macdonald?—About 12 years ago.

41,279. Did the crofters apply for it, or think of applying for it then?—I don't know what they thought, but, at all events, they did not apply for it.

41,280. Is it your opinion that they would be willing to take it now?—That they would.

41,281. Ben Eaval is tenanted by Balranald, I think?—Yes, and Burrival adjacent to it. There were people in Burrival also.

41,282. That is on the south side of Loch Efort?—Yes.

41,283. When did they leave Burrival?—Over 40 years ago.

41,284. Is that a suitable place for a settlement, do you think?—Yes, for a small settlement it would be as good as any place on the island.

41,285. Is there a farm-house on the farm of Eaval?—Only a shepherd's house.

41,286. Is there arable land at the house?—Yes.

41,287. Was that ever tenanted by crofters?—There were crofters there long, long ago; two or three, I think.

WIDOW MARGARET ROBERTSON or MACDONALD, MRS MARGARET MORRISON or MACDONALD, and MISS MARGARET FRASER, Cottars, Claddach Illeray, North Uist.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,288. *Mr Gordon.*—I understand you wish to give evidence? [*Widow Macdonald*].—Yes, if you please. It is a piece of land that I would like.

41,289. Are you the widow of Archibald Macdonald?—Yes.

41,290. Was he a crofter?—No, a cottar.

41,291. In what township did he live?—In Claddach Illeray.

41,292. Do you still occupy the house there?—Yes.

41,293. How many cottars are in Claddach Illeray?—Seven, altogether.

41,294. Are your two companions the wives of other cottars?—Yes; Margaret Fraser is not a cottar's wife. She is the guardian of a family, and is considered a cottar.

41,295. And do you all wish to get crofts?—Yes.

41,296. Were you in the Court during the forenoon? [*Mrs Macdonald*].—Yes.

41,297. Did you hear the evidence given by the other witnesses?—Yes, but we did not hear any word about ourselves, and I think our names were omitted from the paper that was sent in.

41,298. There may not be much harm done to you after all, because we have no power to assign land to any person: the purpose of this inquiry is to ascertain if there is a demand for land, and whether there is any land that can be got in this neighbourhood. Now, we have heard a great deal of evidence to-day regarding the desire on the part of the crofters and cottars to get new or enlarged holdings, and they also told us where, in North Uist, they thought new holdings could be got. If you have anything further to tell us we shall be very glad to hear you.—There are two crofts beside us which we are willing to take if we can get them. Lochmaddy, North Uist.

41,299. We may tell whether we think they are suitable places for new holdings, but you understand that we cannot give the crofts: we have not even the same power of enlarging holdings that the Crofters Commission has. We have simply to report to Her Majesty whether there is any available land in this part of the country suitable for crofters and cottars?—We would be very glad to get a piece somewhere near to our houses. Indeed, we would be glad to get a piece from one acre and upwards in any part of Inverness-shire. Widow Margaret Robertson or Macdonald, Mrs Margaret Morrison or Macdonald, and Miss Margaret Fraser.

41,300. There is land in your township which is now unoccupied, and which you think would be suitable for crofts? [*Widow Macdonald*].—Yes, there is suitable land near us.

41,301. We heard of two crofts at the west of Claddach Illeray, and other two or three crofts formerly occupied by the late doctor at Kirkibost. Now, is there any other land in your neighbourhood besides these two places that you consider suitable for crofts?—We know of none but these three vacant crofts, except a croft at Clachan-a'-ghenip, now in the hands of the proprietor.

41,302. We also heard that there was the island of Kirkibost occupied by Mr Roderick Macaulay?—Yes.

41,303. Is there any other place that you know of in that quarter? [*Mrs Macdonald*].—The outrun belonging to the crofters could be cut up.

41,304. We are not allowed to touch that: we are distinctly prohibited from interfering with crofters' lands. Have any of you ladies applied to the estate for these vacant crofts you speak of?—No, we did not, because we thought there was no use doing that.

JOHN CAMERON, Claddach Kirkibost, North Uist (60). John Cameron.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,305. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter or a cottar?—A cottar.

41,306. Did you hear the evidence given by the other witnesses?—Yes.

41,307. Do you concur in what they stated?—Yes.

41,308. Have you anything further to add for yourself?—I was made to leave the house I occupied last year.

41,309. Are you not still residing in Kirkibost?—Yes, I still live at Claddach Kirkibost.

41,310. But not in the house you formerly occupied?—No, in another house.

41,311. Why were you obliged to leave your house?—So as to clear the croft for Roderick Macaulay. My people always lived on that croft.

41,312. Which of the crofts was it you occupied?—The croft beside the doctor's place.

41,313. Is that croft at present vacant?—Yes. It was fenced all round, so that I could not bring peats or water to the house, and I had to leave it. I lived in the house for 60 years.

41,314. Were you warned out of the house?—Yes, by the sheriff-officer. I was only given 14 days to clear from the house, or else it would be pulled down about my head.

41,315. Was there any reason given for putting you out?—To clear the croft for Macaulay. I offered them any rent they liked to ask for a house and a bit of land, but I could not get it.

41,316. Did you apply for the croft from which you had been turned out?—I applied for it several times, but never got it.

41,317. To whom did you apply?—I applied for it to Sir John direct and to his factor; and not only that croft, but any other place, or the stance for a house, offering to pay for it, but I could not get it.

41,318. *Mr Donald Macrae, Balallan Cottage, Plockton.*—Do you know an old neighbour of yours of the name of Angus Macinnes?—Yes.

41,319. Had he land at one time?—His father had land.

41,320. Did the family lose the land?—Yes.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
John Cameron.

41,321. How was that?—I cannot say for certain, it was so long ago.

41,322. Has that man been a long time a cottar like yourself?—Since I have known him.

41,323. Was he paying rent for the house stance?—I am not aware.

41,324. How did the estate deal with him?—They put him out of the house.

41,325. By an eviction process?—I think it was by a summary process.

41,326. The man was turned out of the house?—Yes.

41,327. Where did he go to thereafter?—He built a small bothy outside the marsh, on the moorland: nobody ever saw the like of it.

41,328. Had he a family with him?—Yes.

41,329. Did they live in that bothy?—Yes, and still live there.

41,330. Was there an attempt made to evict you out of there?—Yes, several times.

41,331. You have not an inch of land?—No.

Archibald Macdonald.

ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, Cottar, Carinish (about 60).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,332. *Mr Gordon.*—Have you a written statement?—Yes.

CARINISH, NORTH UIST.
25th *June* 1894.

My Lords, I, Archibald Macdonald, cottar, Carinish, have been chosen by the cottars of Carinish to speak as one of the witnesses for them.

As I cannot speak English very well, I have written down on this paper what I have to say concerning myself and the other cottars, and beg to lay it before my Lords.

I beg to tell you how I, myself, have been treated by Carinish crofters for the last two years, and I think if Providence has sent me any help that I am needing it.

In the first place, I beg to inform you that I have been residing here for 35 years, and had some cattle, and paid for them for grazing on the hill pasture during summer and autumn, and I fed them in the byre in spring and winter. I had even to pay for a lamb to feed out in the hills. During the last two years the crofters would not take payment, but told me to lift them away. I never refused to pay if they would take it, but they would not. At last they took further steps, and summoned me to a court, a thing which was never done in the Highlands. They wanted me to send them away. Where was I to send them? I did not know, unless they meant me to go and drown them. The prices were low, and the cattle were not worth selling. I think, my Lords, since you are out for administering justice, that the poor cottars will get it as they are needing it, for they are nearly starved, without a place to plant potatoes or corn.

About five years ago, the proprietor gave the cottars a piece of the common ground to plant potatoes in. They did plant some for two years, but the third year the crofters would not allow them to plant any. So that is the way how the poor cottars were treated. Some of the cottars have no cattle, but one of them had a sheep, to get its milk, because he had not a cow, so they sent the sheep to the hills for fear it would be grazing on the common ground.

I hope, my Lords, since you have come, that you will give land to those who are wanting and able to keep it, as soon as possible, for no person knows what the cottars are suffering. There is plenty of land at Carinish, such as the common ground, on which rent was paid before, as crofts. There are three like crofts now, not used at all, and these three would do for some of the 12 cottars of Carinish. But, my Lords, we will take land wherever we get it.

My Lords, I, on my own part, will take one of these crofts, if my Lords would see it suitable, as I have some cattle and could work at it in the house where I am staying.

The other cottars agree to this, and are quite as needful as I, although I did this paper by their order. Any questions that you want to ask, My Lords, I am able to answer them in my own language.—I, am, Lords, Yours truly, (Signed) ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, Cottar, Carinish.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
Archibald Macdonald.

41,333. What stock have you?—Three cows, a horse, and two sheep.

41,334. Where do you keep these animals?—Sometimes on the hill, and sometimes on the common.

41,335. You keep them on the crofters' ground?—Yes.

41,336. What rent do you pay?—I used to pay for the grazing of the cattle till within the last two years, and now they won't take payment.

41,337. To whom did you pay for the grazing?—To my father-in-law at first, but he died, and after that I just got grazing here and there.

41,338. Are you aware that crofters are prohibited from giving the grazings, not only by the estate regulations but by the law of the country?—I did not know that.

41,339. But you seem to fare fully as well as the crofters, if you can graze all that stock upon their land and pay no rent?—I was paying it till within the last two years, and since then they would not take anything, because crofters would not give grazing. They wanted all the cottars in the township to remove the cattle altogether.

41,340. And very naturally so. There is no doubt your case is plain evidence of the overcrowding in the township by other animals than those belonging to the crofters themselves. You would like to get a croft for yourself?—Yes, I would be very thankful to get one.

41,341. Did you hear the evidence given by the other witnesses?—Yes.

41,342. Do you agree with it?—Yes.

41,343. Is there any other place that you would suggest as being suitable for new holdings than those mentioned by the previous witnesses?—There are no fresh places that I am aware of. There is Cnoc-cuithein that has not been mentioned yet. I would be grateful to get lands anywhere.

41,344. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—How many in Carinish are in the same position as yourself?—Twelve.

41,345. Before the passing of the Crofters Act the crofters were quite willing to give you land?—No, they were not.

41,346. But you got land from them for grazing, did you not?—Yes, except within the last two years.

41,347. And you keep the cattle there still?—Yes, the cattle are there still.

41,348. You stated in the paper that about two years ago the proprietor gave the cottars a piece of the common ground to plant potatoes in?—Yes, he did that; he sent the ground officer to point it out to us.

41,349. Are you aware of his having any right to do that?—I don't know.

41,350. Are you not aware that the common belonged to the crofters, and that they were paying for it?—We were not sure; some said it belonged to the crofters, and others said it belonged to Sir John.

41,351. How did they imagine it was Sir John's when the crofters were paying rent for it?—It was said at the time the Crofters Commission inspected it that it did not belong to the crofters; that it was outside the limit of their crofts.

41,352. But it was not outside the common? They had common as well as arable land?—It was part of the outrun.

41,353. For which they undoubtedly paid rent?—It is likely.

41,354. Are you not aware that it is quite impossible for the crofters to sub-let land, to take money from you for land let to you?—Whoever is in want of anything has only to ask for it to see if he can get it.

41,355. That is not an answer to my question. Are you aware that it is illegal for the crofters to sub-let their land?—I did not know that.

41,356. Are you aware that Sir John circulated notices to the effect that if the crofters did give potato

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land or sub-let their lands in any way they would be evicted themselves?—They said so themselves.

41,357. You heard it stated here to-day, did not you?—Yes.

41,358. Have you any doubt about it?—I cannot say.

41,359. Now, when he sent and allotted part of the common ground belonging to the crofters, were the cottars to pay any rent for that?—He did not ask rent from them.

41,360. And has he been asking rent for the house stances?—No.

41,361. Then, is it your opinion that the condition of the cottars is very much worse than that of the crofters?—It is well known that it is.

41,362. Would they be very much the better of getting crofts of their own? Would they be able to make a very much better living?—Yes, they would indeed.

41,363. And the crofters also would be much relieved by the cottars being removed from their ground?—The crofters would have far less trouble.

41,364. And do you think there is sufficient land then in the island to satisfy the needs of all the cottars?—Yes, I think so.

41,365. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—When Sir John put those cottars on the common grazing of this crofter township, did he exact rent at first?—No, he did not ask rent.

41,366. Did the cottars of your quarter look to getting new holdings out of the common grazing of crofting townships, or did they look rather to the tacks, the big farms?—If it would not hurt the crofters much we think we might have some of the lands, but if it would hurt the crofters we would not like that; we would prefer to take it from the farms. It would hurt the farmer less than the crofter.

41,367. Are you aware that the proprietor did put cottars on the common grazings of crofter townships already, and that he made crofters of them?—No, I am not aware of that.

41,368. Are you satisfied that the creation of new crofts on the common grazing of crofting townships would act very prejudicially upon the present crofters?—I believe they would be very much the worse of it, and we would not like that.

41,369. And that being so, is it to the large farms that you look for new holdings?—There is none less to spare.

41,370. Which farm in North Uist would you yourself prefer to see a colony of cottars emigrated to; yourself one of them?—The farm of Griminish, and Airidh-Mhic-Guairidh, and part of the farm of Vallay.

41,371. It is in the north that your hope lies?—Yes, but I would take lands anywhere.

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ALEXANDER MACLELLAN, Loch Efort, North Uist (55).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,372. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a sub-tenant at Loch Efort?—I live on my mother's croft.

41,373. Have you a house upon it?—Yes.

41,374. Have you part of her land?—Yes.

41,375. What is the size of her croft?—I don't know the extent of the croft.

41,376. What rent does your mother pay?—Two pounds sterling.

41,377. How much stock does she keep upon her croft?—Two cows, six sheep, and two stirks.

41,378. And what stock have you upon your part?—One cow, one calf, and four sheep.

41,379. Has your mother a horse?—No.

41,380. What rent do you pay for your share?—I pay £1 of rent.

41,381. How many crofts are there on Loch Efort?—Thirty-four.

41,382. Are any of the crofts divided except your mother's?—Yes.

41,383. How many?—Four.

41,384. Then there are 34 crofts and 38 crofters?—Yes.

41,385. Are there many cottars in Loch Efort?—Yes. Lochmaddy, North Uist.

41,386. How many?—Six.

41,387. Is your mother's croft of an average size in Loch Efort township?—There are some larger and some smaller. Alexander Maclellan.

41,388. How many crofters would have to be removed from Loch Efort before the crofts would be of a sufficient size?—If the third of them were removed, the rest would be comfortable.

41,389. Would there be room for 24 crofters, do you think?—No, I don't think there would: there were only three originally.

41,390. And the remainder were put there at what time?—When they were evicted from Sollas.

41,391. Do you remember that?—Yes, I was at the battle.

41,392. There was some evidence given to-day in regard to the land immediately opposite the township of Loch Efort, *i.e.* on the north side of Loch Efort. One witness said there was an old crofting township at Breinish, and also one at Cainish. Do you know that land?—Yes, I know these lands well; they were promised to us when we were sent to Loch Efort.

41,393. Do you consider these lands suitable for new holdings for crofters?—Yes, very suitable.

41,394. How many crofters could you set down there comfortably?—About ten.

41,395. Now, can you tell us anything about the fishing at Loch Efort? Do the present crofters carry on the business of fishing there?—Yes.

41,396. Are most of the crofters fishermen?—Those who remain at home fish, but the younger people are obliged to go away to earn wages elsewhere.

41,397. Do they go to the mainland?—Yes.

41,398. Are they fishermen?—They sometimes go to the fishing, and sometimes to the sea, or work as general labourers in the south.

41,399. Do the steamers come in to Loch Efort at all?—Yes.

41,400. How far do they come in?—More than half the length of the harbour. They used to come in to the pier.

41,401. Where was the pier?—At the head of the Loch.

41,402. On the north side or the south side?—On the south side.

41,403. Do you know the farm of Lee?—Yes.

41,404. Is there any land on that farm suitable for new holdings,—I mean on the Loch Efort side?—There is only room for one or two tenants.

41,405. On the shores of the Loch?—On the south side of Ben Lee, but there is plenty, I suppose, on the north side.

41,406. Do you know the farm of Eaval?—Yes.

41,407. Is there any land suitable for crofters in the south shore of Loch Efort, on the farm of Eaval?—Yes, the whole of Burrival.

41,408. Is there any low land there that would be suitable for cultivation?—Yes, it was cultivated before.

41,409. Near the sea-shore?—Yes.

41,410. That farm is, I think, at present tenanted by Mr Macdonald of Balranald?—Yes.

41,411. And the farm of Lee is in the proprietor's own hands?—Yes.

41,412. What size of crofts would you suggest should be made on the north shore of Loch Efort; would they be fishermen's crofts?—Partly.

41,413. And partly of a size that would keep the tenant working throughout the year?—It is very wild land, and would take a long time to bring under cultivation.

41,414. It is not very suitable for cultivation?—It is suitable enough for cultivation, only it would take some time to reclaim it.

41,415. Now, take the north side of Ben Lee. Is there land on the shores of Lochmaddy here that would be suitable?—Yes.

41,416. Is the land on the north side of Ben Lee better than the land on the south side?—Yes, it is better. The land on the south side is very bold and

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Alexander Maclellan.

steep and craggy, but that on the north is better adapted for cultivation.

41,417. You think the north side is the best side?—Yes.

41,418. Are you a fisherman yourself?—I fish sometimes.

41,419. Do you know the different harbours here, Lochmaddy and Loch Efort?—Yes.

41,420. How can you account for there not being any fishing at Lochmaddy?—I believe it is for want of material.

41,421. Is it a good harbour?—Yes, I believe it is the best harbour in the island.

41,422. And do you think that if encouragement were given by the proprietor, in the matter of giving stances for fishermen's holdings on the shores of the inlets about Lochmaddy, the fishing industry would be revived?—I should think so, because they have nowhere to live.

41,423. Do you think, if the proprietor were to give off stances there, they would be taken up?—I think so; that is what they say at any rate.

41,424. Can you tell us anything about the land at Liernish?—Yes, I know it. I don't know it very well, but I do know it.

41,425. Is that land let along with the hill of Eaval?—It belongs to the farm of Eaval.

41,426. How far down does the crofters' grazing extend towards Liernish?—There is a chain of lakes, and the march is between these lakes.

41,427. Do you know the west march of Liernish?—Yes.

41,428. Do you know the old township of Cnoc-Chuithein?—Yes.

41,429. Is that on the farm of Liernish?—No.

41,430. Who is tenant of Cnoc-Chuithein?—Roderick Macaulay, Tighary.

41,431. Do you know a place called Clett-feora?—Yes, beside Cnoc-Chuithein; that is a crofting township.

41,432. Then Roderick Macaulay occupies the land lying between the crofting township of Clett-feora and the grazing lands of Liernish?—Claddach Carinish intervenes between Liernish and Cnoc-Chuithein.

41,433. Do you think that Cnoc-Chuithein and Liernish would be suitable for new holdings?—Yes.

41,434. Do you know the island of Ronay?—Yes, I have been there.

41,435. How is it occupied?—By Captain Macdonald of Waternish.

41,436. Are there any people living on the island?—A shepherd.

41,437. Is there any land on that island suitable for new holdings?—It was all divided into crofts at one time.

41,438. Have you any idea when the crofters were cleared out of it?—No, I have no idea. I was on the south side of the island, and I don't remember much about that part.

41,439. You do not remember seeing crofters in it?—No, but I remember seeing people who had been crofters there.

41,440. There is another place mentioned called Kallin: do you know it?—Yes: I was at service there for a number of years.

41,441. Is that place suitable for crofters' holdings?—Yes, very good.

41,442. How is that place occupied at present?—By Captain Macdonald of Waternish.

41,443. Is that place upon the island of Grimsay?—Yes.

41,444. Do you know the march of the township of Grimsay?—Yes.

41,445. There is a place called Bagh-Mor: is that nearer the march?—Very near it.

41,446. Does the march follow the line of lakes lying between Bagh-Mor and Kenare?—Yes.

41,447. Is Kenare upon the Kallin tack, or is it on the Grimsay township?—It is outside Kallin march.

41,448. It is on the township of Grimsay?—Yes.

41,449. Now, could the fishing industry be followed by crofters living at Kallin and Liernish and the south shores of Ben Eaval?—Yes.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Alexander Maclellan.

41,450. Are the harbours there pretty good?—Yes.

41,451. Are the harbours of Island Ronay safe harbours?—Yes.

41,452. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I think you said that you remember the Sollas evictions?—Yes, I remember the people being thrown down and bruised and battered by the police.

41,453. How long ago is that?—About 42 years ago.

41,454. Do you know what the reason of these evictions was?—It was understood at the time that the place was to be cleared for one Cooper; and the factor took away some cattle and sold them for arrears.

41,455. Would there be any truth in the pretext that the place was not suitable for people?—It is just as suitable as it was before.

41,456. Were the crofters of Sollas in comfortable circumstances when they were there?—Yes.

41,457. Did they pay their rents regularly until the time of the potato failure?—Yes, between the kelp and the other work.

41,458. And do you think their rent was increased during the time of the kelp industry?—Yes, I think it was: the rents were higher then.

41,459. And when the kelp industry failed, and also the potato blight came, did they get any reduction of rent?—No.

41,460. Was it in any way to better their condition that they were removed from Sollas?—No, it was not: they knew very well it was not.

41,461. Were they removed to better land, and did they get larger holdings elsewhere?—No; the houses were pulled down about their ears, and they were dragged out of them and sent away to languish. They were left for a time in mud huts, where they were for a time kept busy in reclaiming the land and sowing it with seed.

41,462. Was that place to which they were sent at all suitable for crofter occupation?—No. They were not left there anyhow; they were sent to Loch Efort.

41,463. Did they reclaim the land at Loch Efort also?—Yes.

41,464. And have they improved very much the land they have now?—Yes, it is very greatly improved: in some places a depth of four peats or moss were taken off, and that land is cultivated now. When I went there there was nothing but houses.

41,465. What sort of houses did they build for themselves on Loch Efort side? What houses have they now?—They first lived in mud houses, but they gradually made stone ones. The original houses were so leaky that many a night they were obliged to be all night baling out the water.

41,466. But have they now fairly comfortable houses?—Yes.

41,467. All put up by their own industry?—All put up by ourselves: there was no help from the estate. In fact, they did not want them to put up houses at all, and they were prohibited from putting up byres or stables.

41,468. Do you think that these lands were cleared rather because they were suitable for forming into large farms, than because they were unsuitable for crofters? Is it because the lands were too good for them that they were removed?—I think it was in order to make one farm of it.

41,469. Because the land was so good, it was coveted?—Yes.

41,470. How many tenants were in the Sollas district, do you know?—Twenty in Sollas, and ten in Dunskellar. I have a few words more to say. The witness Mackinnon spoke about the people in Loch Efort being more comfortable there than they were in Sollas. Some of the tenants were obliged to build four houses before they could get a suitable house, and they are not more comfortable than they were in Sollas. When the people were sent away they were promised the lands of Langash and Breinish, but they have not got any of them to-day.

ochmaddy, orth Uist.

lexander orrison.

ALEXANDER MORRISON, Crofter, Loch Efort (61.)
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,471. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

41,472. Have you heard the evidence given by the last witness?—Yes.

41,473. Do you agree with what he stated?—Yes.

41,474. Tell us the size of your own croft?—I have two crofts, but they are intersected by a large fresh-water lake, so that I think 10 acres each is about the utmost extent.

41,475. What stock have you?—Two cows, a horse, and about 12 sheep.

41,476. There was one point which we did not get from the last witness. What hill pasture is attached to the township of Loch Efort?—It is very bad hill pasture we have; scarcely any hill pasture at all, it is all cut up by the feet of the cattle. [*The Secretary.*—The total extent is 1923 acres and is common to Loch Efort and Claddach Carinish. There are 30 crofters' holdings in Loch Efort and 9 in Claddach Carinish.]

41,477. The township grazings of Claddach Carinish and Loch Efort divide the tack of Liernish belonging to Captain Macdonald from the tack of Cnoc-Dhuibhean belonging to Mr Macaulay?—Yes.

41,478. Are you a fisherman?—Yes.

41,479. Is Loch Efort a safe harbour? Has it a good anchorage?—Yes, very good.

41,480. Do you find your crofts too small?—Some of them are too small, particularly those that are cut up by fresh-water lochs.

41,481. How much of your land is arable?—About four acres.

41,482. Do most of the people in the township engage more or less in fishing?—Yes.

41,483. Do you fish for white fish?—Both white fish and herring,—long line fishing.

41,484. Are there good-sized boats in the township?—We have no good fishing boats.

41,485. Have you boats large enough for going to the white fishing as far as the island of Canna?—They could do nothing: they are too small for that.

41,486. Is there no boat of that size in your township?—No, not one.

41,487. Can you not get boats from the Government?—No, we never asked for them.

41,488. Is there any difficulty in getting out and in to Loch Efort?—No, it is quite easy.

41,489. There is no difficulty with wind or tide?—No.

41,490. Do you know Lochmaddy?—Yes, very well.

41,491. Is it a good safe harbour?—Yes, some parts of it, very good.

41,492. How do you account for there being no fishermen in Lochmaddy?—Because there are no suitable places to reside in near it; and those who live near are not up to fishing.

41,493. Do you think if facilities were given for house sites here, fishermen would come to Lochmaddy?—I doubt whether they would be able to live by fishing alone unless they had a bit of land along with it.

41,494. You heard what Mr Maclellan said about the land on the north side of Loch Efort?—Yes.

41,495. Do you agree with what he said?—Yes.

41,496. You think the north shores of the loch are suitable for new crofts?—Some of it in the middle is not suitable for new crofts, but both ends are.

41,497. And would the north and south sides of Ben Lee be suitable for them?—The south side of Lee is not suitable, but the north side is.

41,498. Have you anything to add to what the other witnesses have said?—I have nothing more to add.

41,499. Tell us how many crofts of sufficient size you think could be formed in your township? How many would have to be removed from Loch Efort before the crofts would be of a size that you would consider sufficient?—It would keep about a dozen; not more than that.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Farquhar Macdonald.

FARQUHAR MACDONALD, Herd, Tighary, North Uist (44).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,500. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you the herd for the township of Tighary?—Yes.

41,501. Have you a croft there?—No.

41,502. Are you a cottar in the township?—I am grasskeeper for the township, and am paid partly by grazing the land.

41,503. Have you any stock?—Yes: three cows, a horse, and ten sheep.

41,504. Do you pay any rent?—I pay for six months in the year.

41,505. Did you hear what the other witnesses said?—Yes.

41,506. Have you anything to add yourself?—No, I have not anything particular to say.

41,507. Is the township of Tighary very thickly peopled?—Yes.

41,508. It is a pretty good township, is it not?—Middling.

41,509. Is there any land in the neighbourhood of the township which you think could be formed into crofter holdings?—Griminish is the most suitable piece of land that I know.

41,510. Do you think Griminish would be a suitable place for a new township?—Yes.

41,511. Is there a general desire among the tenants of Tighary for larger crofts than they now occupy?—Yes.

41,512. And do you think any of the crofters would be willing to remove from Tighary to Griminish, or to any other place where holdings could be got?—Yes, I believe they would, because a number of the Tighary tenants were originally tenants in Griminish.

41,513. Are there many cottars in the township of Tighary?—Yes.

41,514. How many?—Sixteen.

41,515. How do they make their living?—Some of them fish, some go to the militia, and others work on the farm of Balranald and elsewhere.

41,516. They live by labouring at home and abroad?—Yes.

41,517. Would the cottars be willing to take holdings if they got them?—Yes, they would indeed.

41,518. Is there a general desire among them to get land?—Yes, the majority of them would like it.

41,519. Do the cottars in Tighary have stock?—About the half of them have some stock: some have one cow and a horse, others two cows and a horse; but some have no stock at all, and pay no rent.

41,520. Do you think they would be able to stock crofts if they got them?—Yes, most of them would.

41,521. What is the average size of the Tighary crofts?—Some of them have 12 acres and others 23 acres.

41,522. Have they any hill pasture?—Yes.

41,523. They have a pretty large extent of hill pasture, have they not?—Yes, a good piece.

41,524. Have they a sheep stock?—Yes.

41,525. How many sheep have they got on an average?—Some have a score, others have not half a dozen.

41,526. How many crofters are there?—Sixteen. There are 16 crofters but only 20 crofts.

41,527. Would there be 300 sheep on the hill altogether?—No.

41,528. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Do you know the crofting township of Houghary?—Yes.

41,529. What rent do the crofters there pay on an average?—I don't know, but there are people present from Houghary who can tell.

41,530. Are they small crofts?—Yes.

41,531. Is there land adjoining that township that could have been added to Houghary, very much to the advantage of the township?—Yes.

41,532. What land?—Ard-an-Runnair.

41,533. Does it form part of a tack to-day?—Yes.

41,534. What tack?—Balranald.

41,535. Is that land suitable for cultivation?—Yes, I believe it is: it was considered so very suitable for cultivation that they were deprived of it.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Farquhar Macdonald.

41,536. Is it because it was under lease that the crofters of Houghary did not fight for it before the Crofters Commission?—There was some talk about applying for it at the time, but I don't know whether it was really done or not.

41,537. Do you believe in the abolition of leases for the erection of new crofts and the extension of holdings?—That would be our wish and our most earnest desire.

Alexander Macdonald.

ALEXANDER MACDONALD, Agricultural Labourer, Houghary (54).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,538. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a cottar at Houghary?—Yes.

41,539. Have you any land at all?—No.

41,540. Where do you get work?—Most that I do is on land.

41,541. To whom do you work?—Balranald, and on the club land of Kilmuir.

41,542. Did you hear the evidence given by Farquhar Macdonald?—Yes.

41,543. Do you agree with what he said?—Yes.

41,544. Is the township of Houghary congested?—Yes, there are too many people in it.

41,545. Is it one of those runrig townships?—It is not formed on the same principle as Hosta.

41,546. They have separate crofts?—Yes, the half of them on the *machair* and the half on the upland.

41,547. How many crofts are there?—I think it is 18. [*The Secretary.*—There were 20 separate holdings before the Crofters Commission; the total extent arable of these holdings is 187 acres, with 15 acres of outrun and 369 acres of township common. The crofters have also a share in the general common of 1027 acres along with Hosta, Balemartin, and Tighary. The total 'present rent' of £91, 10s. was reduced to £65, 9s.]

41,548. Do the people of Houghary engage in fishing at all?—No.

41,549. How do they get their living?—By working the lands, and what does not grow for themselves they import from Glasgow.

41,550. But where do they get the money to pay for what they import?—I cannot say, but they do the best they can.

41,551. Is there a general desire in the township for larger holdings?—Yes.

41,552. You heard what the last witness said about Ard-an-Runnair?—Yes.

41,553. It has been a part of the farm of Balranald within your memory?—Yes.

41,554. So there is no other land near Houghary that could be got for an extension of the present holdings?—Nothing but Aird-an-Runnair and the *machair* at Penmor, which is also attached to the Balranald lands. It originally belonged to Houghary, and the marches are still visible although now attached to the tack: also the hill of Burrival was attached to the same farm.

41,555. There is no other suitable land in the neighbourhood?—Not nearer than Griminish.

41,556. How many of the present crofters would have to be removed from Houghary before the crofts would be of a sufficient size?—The half of them.

41,557. And you think if the crofts were double the present size the people would be comfortable?—They would be very much better off.

Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.—There is a matter that I should like to bring before the notice of the Commission. I find from the Valuation Roll for the present year that Mr Arthur J. Campbell Orde is entered as proprietor of Balelone, Scolpeg, Vallay, and Griminish. I have heard Mr Orde say here that he had no authority to represent anyone at this meeting. I find that Mr Orde is present, and I should like you to ask him whether he is prepared to come forward to represent himself as proprietor here, to assist the Royal Commission in eliciting very important facts.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Alexander Macdonald.

Mr Gordon.—This is a matter for Mr Orde to judge for himself.

Mr Donald Macrae.—He is here, the proprietor of these lands, and he said that he had no authority to appear on behalf of the proprietor.

Mr A. J. Campbell Orde.—I may explain that I was asked by the Chairman whether anyone was here to represent my father to-day, and I answered that I had no authority to do so.

Mr Gordon.—That is so, sir.

Rev. Mr Maccallum.—I think the question really was whether there was anybody to represent the estate of North Uist; and I understand from what is now said, Mr Orde, that you represent a good deal of the estate of North Uist yourself.

Mr Orde.—I have two of the tacksmen's farms, that is all, and I am tenant of another farm, but the estate is my father's.

Rev. Mr Maccallum.—But you are proprietor of some of the lands?

Mr Orde.—I am proprietor of the farms of Vallay and Balelone. Griminish is part of Vallay Farm.

Mr Munro.—But you decline to make any statement, Mr Orde?

Mr Orde.—As far as we have gone yet, I hardly see any reason for doing so.

Mr Gordon.—It is quite optional on your part of course.

Mr Orde.—I should be very glad to be of any help to the Commission, but, as far as I can see, there has been no difficulty hitherto.

Mr Gordon.—You see no reason to interfere?

Mr Orde.—Not yet.

Donald Maclean.

DONALD MACLEAN, Cottar, Kallin, Grimsay, North Uist (58)—*examined.*

41,558 *Mr Gordon.*—You are a cottar at Kallin?—Yes.

41,559. Do you occupy any land at all?—No.

41,560. Is your house upon the farm which is occupied by Captain Macdonald of Waternish?—No, our township has nothing to do with Kallin. Our township is Grimsay: Kallin is only part of Grimsay.

41,561. But Kallin is said to be let to Captain Macdonald of Waternish along with the island of Ronay; and I ask whether your house is on the land let to Captain Macdonald of Waternish?—No, it is on the Grimsay land.

41,562. Are you in the township of Grimsay?—Yes.

41,563. How many crofts are in Grimsay?—Eighteen full ones and five half-ones. [*The Secretary.*—The Crofters Commission dealt with 25 holdings in the Island of Grimsay, 11 in Airdnastruban, 3 in Rhudubh, 3 in Scotven, and 8 in Gearraidh-dubh.

41,564. Which of these townships is your own?—Airdnastruban.

41,565. Did you hear what the other witnesses said who came from that part of the country?—Yes.

41,566. And do you agree with what they said?—Yes.

41,567. Is there a general desire in your township for additional land?—Yes.

41,568. Is it for additional pasture land or for agricultural land?—Both for grazing and for agricultural.

41,569. Are there many in your township?—Fourteen.

41,570. Are you a fisherman?—Yes.

41,571. Do the cottars generally engage in fishing?—Yes.

41,572. That is their means of livelihood?—Yes.

41,573. But they would like to get some land along with the fishing?—Yes.

Alexander Fraser.

ALEXANDER FRASER, Crofter, Boreray Island, North Uist—*examined.*

41,574. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at Boreray?—Yes.

41,575. Is that a crofting township?—Yes.

41,576. What number of crofts are there?—About 20, but in some cases there are two families living in the one croft.

41,577. How many families are there?—About 30 crofters and cottars.

41,578. How many cottars are there?—About 10, I believe. [*The Secretary.*—The Crofters Commission dealt with 22 holdings in Boreray, the total extent being 192 acres arable, no outrun, and 436 acres of common. The old rent of £100 was reduced to £68.]

41,579. Are you a fisherman there?—Yes.

41,580. Are most of the crofters fishermen?—A good many of them.

41,581. Is there a harbour on the west side of the island?—No, except a very bad harbour. We are expecting to get a pier soon: we applied for it and there is every prospect of getting a pier. We hope that will improve the fishing industry.

41,582. Is that upon the east side of the island?—Yes.

41,583. Do you find that the township is congested?—Very much so.

41,584. You have a difficulty in making a living, have you?—It is hard work to make a living.

41,585. Have you any big boats suitable for the fishing?—No, there is not a harbour for them as yet.

41,586. Now, suppose you could get small crofts in the neighbourhood of Lochmaddy where there is ample harbour accommodation, do you think that some of the Boreray people would come here and build houses, and follow the fishing?—I well believe they would; that is to say if they would get as much land as would make their circumstances a good deal better than they are. There is no use leaving one bad place and going to another bad place.

41,587. But in a case like this where the extent of land available is extremely limited the people who would build houses here would require to take to fishing as the main part of their subsistence?—Yes.

41,588. Now, do you think you would find men in Boreray or elsewhere in the island who would be content to follow the fishing as their main industry, and be content also with a small portion of potato land and a cow's grass?—I believe the crofters would hardly be pleased with such a small patch of land as that.

41,589. Do you think you would not find people in North Uist who would willingly devote their whole time to fishing?—I think not.

41,590. They don't follow the fishing in this country the same as they do on the east coast, say, Morayshire?—No.

41,591. The fishermen in Morayshire, Banffshire, and Aberdeenshire have no land?—No, but perhaps a few cottars here who have no land, and who engage in the lobster fishing, might take such a holding.

41,592. There are not many people in any part of the island who go as far as Canna for white fish?—No.

41,593. And you think there would not be people found on the island who would devote their time to that?—No.

41,594. Therefore, there is no use of speaking about any fishing village in which there is not a sufficient quantity of land to keep at least three or four cows?—They would require that, and a horse or so.

41,595. I am afraid the habit here is to keep too many horses?—Well, I don't know.

41,596. Did you hear the evidence we have already had about the farm of Grimsay?—I am not so well acquainted there.

41,597. Do you know of any land in your own neighbourhood that you think suitable?—Plenty land.

41,598. Where?—All the way from Sollas to Cheesebay, to the Minch, including several big farms, Sollas, Granetote, Trumisgarry, and Newton.

41,599. We heard a good deal about Sollas and Granetote; do you think these two farms would make good crofting townships?—Yes.

41,600. And Trumisgarry?—Well, hardly so good.

41,601. Would not there be a want of arable land there in proportion to the hill ground?—Oh, there is a good deal of arable land.

41,602. It was not the same solid lump of ground as there is in Sollas and Granetote?—Well, no.

41,603. And have you anything to say about the farm of Newton?—Any amount of land there.

41,604. Is not the farm of Newton principally under cultivation?—No, very little of it is under cultivation; only sheep and grouse. I would say not the tenth part of it is under cultivation.

41,605. No, not the hill ground, but the great bulk of land is on the north side of the road?—That is just a border to the Atlantic.

41,606. The greater part of it is under cultivation?—Yes, and Clachan too.

41,607. Now, do you know anything about the island of Berneray?—I have seen the place, and have lived on it. I was through it.

41,608. Is there a good harbour at Bays Loch?—Very good.

41,609. Do you think that the south or west end of the island of Berneray would be a suitable place for fishermen's holdings?—Yes.

41,610. Is the township of Bruist congested?—I believe so.

41,611. Is there anything else that you would like to say?—We were trying to get an enlargement to our holdings, as much as we could: we have been before the Crofters Commission, applying for pieces of land on the Newton Farm; and, in fact, we got it from Commissioner Macintyre, — everything was settled, and we thought it was our own, but Sir John appealed to the three Commissioners and we lost the place, for which we were very sorry.

41,612. What place did you apply for?—We applied for two places, such as Screvan—

41,613. That is next Berneray Island?—Yes. Then we applied for and got the island of Stromay, but lost it on appeal.

41,614. Do you know why you lost it?—No, I don't know, but we were very sorry to lose it.

41,615. Was it for peat pasture that you wanted it?—Yes, and for grazing too. We have a very narrow place where we are.

41,616. You have no peat land where you are?—No, nor heather.

41,617. The Secretary informs me that he has looked up the Crofters Commission Report, and finds that the application was finally refused on the ground of what was called 'contiguity;' it was too far away from you?—If we had applied for another place I suppose we would not have done any better. We are worse off than any other part of the country; we are congested, and the cottars are worse off than the crofters. They are quite willing to leave and to get lots.

41,618. Both the crofters and the cottars would be willing to leave?—A great many of them.

41,619. A sufficient number would be willing to leave to make the township suitable for the remainder?—I believe so.

41,620. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Can you tell us what townships there were on Newton Farm?—Every bit of it was townships at one time; the whole of it was under crofters.

41,621. And do you know when they left?—I believe Newton was constituted a farm about the year 1830 or 1832. It was then taken up by one Sheriff Maclachlan. He was the first that went into Newton Farm, but it was of small size then. Through time Loch Portan and Cheesebay which were full of crofters were added to Newton Farm, the crofters being chased away.

41,622. When was that addition made?—That was after the year 1840,—I don't know the exact date, but it was about that time.

41,623. How many were removed do you think from these places?—I cannot say; I was rather young at the time.

41,624. Then, has there been any other addition made since then?—I understand that Clachan and Reumis-

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
Alexander Fraser.

garry were occupied by Balranald for a length of time, and these were added again to Newton Farm.

41,625. Do you know at what date they were added to it?—I am not very sure of the date; I think it was Sir John Orde or Mr Orde, but I do not recollect very well. If I am not mistaken I believe it was in Mr Macdonald, the factor's time, that it was added to Newton. Clachan was a farm before the year 1840, but there was an addition made to it after that of the name of Reumisgarry; that was between Mr Macaulay's place and there.

41,626. Was Reumisgarry a crofting township?—Yes, it was a crofting township until after the year 1840, but Clachan was a farm before that.

41,627. Reumisgarry was added to it then?—After that.

41,628. Can you give us any idea as to the number of people that were in Reumisgarry?—No, I was rather young at the time.

41,629. Do you think then that the whole of Newton Farm is suitable for occupation by crofters?—Oh, yes, I have not seen a bit of it but what is suitable enough for crofters; in fact, all the best places in Uist were taken up for farms, and all the worst left for crofts.

41,630. Because they were good they were taken for farms?—Yes, and the people were chased away; and they left the worst places to the last.

41,631. I suppose at the time the Trumisgarry church was built, there was a large population in that district?—A very large population; I don't remember of that myself, but I understand the place was full of crofters at that time.

41,632. I suppose there are not people there that would fill that church now?—Very few people about there now; only herds and shepherds and one thing and another.

41,633. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—How many crofters are in Boreray?—The place is put for about 20, but some of these crofts have two crofters.

41,634. Are some of the crofts sub-divided?—Yes, they are sub-divided, although not in the proprietor's book.

41,635. Did the whole of these join in the application for the land at Stromay?—Not at first, but in the end we did. Mr Wilson there knows about it.

41,636. Was this island of Stromay a part of the farm of Newton?—Yes.

41,637. In that case you served notices upon Sir John Orde and Mr Orde,—upon the proprietor and upon the tenant of Newton Farm, did not you?—We just applied to the Commission for the place: we took the usual means as legally as we could.

41,638. Who appeared before the Crofters Commission to object to your application?—Sir John.

41,639. Did Mr Orde?—No, I don't think he did; it was Sir John.

41,640. What grounds of objection did he state?—Oh, I suppose, he was stating that it would injure the letting value of his farm, and one thing and another.

41,641. And Commissioner Macintyre gave it to you and fixed the rent?—Yes, and it was published in the paper, that it was given to 13 of the Boreray crofters; and then the next thing we heard was that the matter was appealed.

41,642. Who appealed?—Likely Sir John; we did not hear who it was.

41,643. Did you see the final order issued by the three Commissioners?—Yes, we got notice of that, and we were very sorry indeed; we were not proud of getting it.

41,644. Did Mr Macintyre join with Sheriff Brand and with Mr Hosack in upsetting his own previous decision?—I don't know indeed; I believe he did. I may add about our own place that it is so small that we cannot keep even a horse. Our township is very much congested, and is getting worse every year. The soil is very light and we have to buy peats from Mr Orde. Of course, we got the peat stance from Mr Orde for five days' labour or 10s. of cash for every family, and, in fact, we were glad to get it for that sum. We were very thankful to him for the same, because we could hardly live.

JOHN MACASKILL, Crofter, Malaclett, North Uist (47)—*examined*.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
John Maccaskill.

41,645. *Mr Gordon.*—How many crofters are there in Malaclett?—Twelve.

41,646. What is the average size of the crofts?—Fifteen or twenty acres.

41,647. Is the bulk of that arable? [*The Secretary.*—There were 15 holdings dealt with by the Crofters Commission. These extended to 196 acres arable, 16 acres outrun, with a township common of 191 acres, and a share along with ten other townships in 10,000 acres of general common.]

41,648. Your arable land is of pretty good quality, I think?—Only middling. Practically it grows no potatoes, hence the necessity of paying for suitable plots on the large farm.

41,649. Is your township congested, or your crofts too small?—Very small.

41,650. Do you live exclusively upon your crofts, or do you fish?—No.

41,651. You live mostly by your crofts?—Yes; but the crofts are too small, and we are obliged to work for the large farmers for additional pieces of land at exorbitant charges.

41,652. What stock have you yourself?—I have five cows.

41,653. Any horses?—Two horses.

41,654. Any sheep?—Twenty sheep.

41,655. Do you keep the sheep on the hill?—Yes.

41,656. I suppose there is nothing of the nature of a 'club farm' on this island,—each man keeps his own few sheep. Have you a common shepherd?—No.

41,657. Who attends to the sheep on the hill?—There is no shepherd at present.

41,658. How do you manage your sheep? Do you clip all in one day or in different days?—All in one day.

41,659. And do you all dip in one day?—We smear, we do not dip.

41,660. And how do you manage the wintering; are they wintered down in the low grounds?—Sometimes on the hill and sometimes on the low ground, where they are hand-fed.

41,661. But you winter the whole stock at home?—They are all wintered on the farm.

41,662. During the winter time do they attempt to separate their small flocks and to keep their own sheep on their own crofts, or do they generally keep the whole flock together?—They are all mixed together as in summer.

41,663. Have you not got a shepherd in the winter time?—We have no shepherd in winter, and we have no shepherd now. There was some talk of engaging a shepherd but it has never been done.

41,664. Are you not troubled with your sheep straying?—Yes, some of them do stray.

41,665. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did the township of Malaclett apply to the Crofters Commission for an enlargement of holdings?—Yes.

41,666. Did you find that the farm of which you applied for a part was represented by Sir John Orde to have been sold to his son, and that being part of another estate the Commission had no power to deal with it?—Yes, we heard some talk about that. There was a more convenient piece of land than that, though—the farm of Grenitote. This farm we could work from our present holdings.

JOHN MACASKILL, Crofter, Berneray, South Harris (56). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

John Macaskill.

41,667. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter in Berneray?—Yes.

41,668. Are you a fisherman also?—Sometimes.

41,669. Are you in the township of Bruist?—No, Risgarry.

41,670. Is that township very congested? Are the crofts small?—Yes, as small as they can be.

41,671. How many crofters are there in Berneray?—Twenty-two.

41,672. And how many cottars?—Sixty-seven.

41,673. Have these cottars any stock?—A few of them have.

41,674. And do they keep their stock on the crofters' land?—Yes.

41,675. What stock do the cottars generally have?—Some of them have a cow and a horse, others a cow without a horse.

41,676. What stock have you?—I keep a horse and a cow, but I keep another horse and cow, for which I pay separately.

41,677. Do the cottars generally pay anything to the crofters for the grazing of their stock?—Yes.

41,678. Have you any idea what number of stock there is on the part of the land that is under crofters?—About 50 cattle altogether in Risgarry.

41,679. How many in the whole crofting townships?—It is the crofting part I mean, in Risgarry and Bruist.

41,680. Fifty cattle, and how many horses?—About 40 horses.

41,681. Have you any sheep?—About a dozen sheep.

41,682. Then, there may be two or three hundred sheep altogether?—Yes, about that.

41,683. Is there a desire for larger holdings among the crofters generally?—Yes, the crofters would like to have more or less, and so would the cottars; they applied for it long ago.

41,684. Is there any land on the other part of the island that would be suitable for new holdings?—Yes, very suitable.

41,685. How is that land occupied at present?—By Roderick Campbell, Harris.

41,686. It is under a tenant?—Yes.

41,687. How many people were on that part of the island?—About 20.

41,688. Have you any idea how many there would be upon the crofting part of it?—I don't know the population of our part.

41,689. But there will be at least a couple of hundred?—Over 300.

41,690. Whether is the crofting township or the farm the larger part of the island?—The farm is the larger part and the better part.

41,691. There are only 20 people upon the better part and 300 people upon the smaller portion?—Yes.

41,692. To whom does the island belong?—To Lord Dunmore.

41,693. Did you ever apply to the Crofters Commission for an extension of your holdings?—Yes, we did. Commissioner Macintyre twice visited the island.

41,694. Was your application refused?—We did not get the lands.

41,695. Did he say why?—They did not tell us. We sent some of our stock there on one occasion, and as a result some of us were imprisoned. [*The Secretary.*—The application was refused because the rent of the farm was less than £100.]

41,696. Does the farmer reside on the island?—No.

MALCOLM MACLEOD, Cottar, Berneray, South Harris (53).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

41,697. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a cottar in Berneray?—Yes.

41,698. Have you a statement to submit?—Yes, in Gaelic.

41,699. *Mr Gordon* asked the delegate to hand the statement in. It was as follows:—

'A DHAOINE-UAISLE,—Tha mi air son, ma's e sin 'bhur toil, gu'n eisd agus gu'n gabh sibh bhuam beagan 'iomraidh air cor na bheil gun leud troidhe aca de 'thalamh air son an lòin a thoirt as ann an Eilean 'Bhearnaraidh; agus as deigh dhuibh amharc thairis 'air ar suidheachadh tha dòchas againn gu'n cur sibh 'sinn ann an seilbh air an fhearann a bha air a thoirt 'bho ar n-athraichean. Ach chuir mi mion chunntas 'air na bha de fhoirneart air a dheanamh air ar 'n-athraichean air beulaobh a' Chomuinn Uasail air ceann 'an robh Morair *Napier*, agus tha sin sgriobhta cheana 'ann an leabhraichean; agus mar sin cha bhi mi a' 'toirt a mach ùine le bhi ag aithris na rinneadh de 'eucoir air ar n-athraichean; ach ged tha iadsan anns 'an uaigh tha sinne a' fulang air sgàth na rinneadh 'orra-san, agus ged bha an fhirinn anns gach lideadh a 'labhair mi air beulaobh Mhorair *Napier*, bha nàire 'orm ag iunseadh pairt de'n bhiadh air an robh cuid 'air am beathachadh aig an àm anns an d'thugadh am 'fearann bho thuath Ceann-a-deas Eilean Bhearnaraidh.

'Ach beagan a nise mu ar cor fein aig an àm. Tha 'da earrainn de 'n Eilean aig aon duine bho chionn 'da-fhichead bliadhna 's a h-aon—bho 'n bhliadhna '1853,—agus tha air a' cheann bheag de 'n Eilean 'seachd-teaghlaichean-fichead aig am beil fearann—'pairt diubh sin aig nach 'eil ach aon fhearann eadar 'dithis bhraithrean. Tha da-fhichead 's a seachd de 'Choiteirean a tha 'togail teine, air ceann na Tuatha 'de 'n Eilean; agus tri-Coiteirean-fichead air a' cheann 'mhor a tha fo spreidh de 'n Eilean. Tha air fad anns 'an Eilean tri-fichead teaghlach 's a deich de Choiteirean, 'agus tha tri-ceud-a's-coig-pearsa-deug-ar-fhichead de 'shluagh annta, aig nach 'eil leud troidhe de thalamh. 'Tha mheud de na Coiteirean 's a tha comasach air a 'bhi ag iasgach a mach gach latha is urrainn bàta dhol 'gu muir, agus as deigh sin tha mòran diubh cho 'bochd na 'n dòigh beathachaidh is gu'm feum iad 'iomadh uair a bhi ag itheadh roinn de 'n cuid aodaich 'agus bròg an cas—oir rùisgidh éis a' chuirp druim is 'cas iomadh uair.

'Nise tha sinn a' fàs sgith de bhi ag innseadh 'ar suidheachaidh agus gun fhuasgladh againn ga 'fhaotainn. 'S e an t-àite a bha sinn ag iarraidh 'Borbh ann am Bearnaraidh.

'Cha'n 'eil aite againn anns am faigh sinn 'moine ni's mò, ach bagradh lagha oirnn air son a 'bhi ga buain anns an aite anns an robh ar n-ath-'raichean 's ar seanairean ga buain, agus tha sinn a' 'tagradh gu'n cuir sibhse sinn ann an seilbh daingean 'air aite-moine, cha'n ann 's an eilean anns a bheil 'sinn a mhain (oir tha e air ruith a mach) ach air 'eilean beag eile a tha faisg air, anns am beil moine, 'd'an ainm Obasaidh, oir feumaidh sinn moine air son 'teine, fearann againn no bhuainn. Gus am faigh 'sinn am fearann tha feum againn air àite-mòine.

'Nise tha dòchas againn gur e so an Comunn mu 'dheireadh leis am bi daoine air an ceasnachadh, agus 'leis na chi agus na chluinneas sibhse, gu'm faigh sinn 'a bheag no mhor de thalamh gu ar lòn a thoirt as mar 'a dh' òrdaicheadh le Uachdaran na talmhuinn uile. 'Tha iadsan aig am beil beagan fearainn a' faotainn 'leasachaidh (agus dh' fheumadh iad sin); ach is iad-'san aig nach 'eil dad idir bu choir fhaotainn an tois-'each. Tha cuid ag radh gu'm beil na Coiteirean cho 'bochd is nach togadh iad fearann, ach cha 'n e an 'duine a tha 'togail an fhearainn, ach am fearann a tha ''togail an duine as a' bhochdainn. Tha moran de 'laghanna feadh na rioghachd air am beil sinn, a tha 'fada bho cheartas, agus 's e aon de na droch laghanna 'sin nach fhaigh duine 'san teaghlach fearann ach am 'mac is sine, agus biodh càch beò no bàsaicheadh iad. 'Cha chuireadh e ioghnadh orm ged a chuireadh iad 'lagh air chois as deigh so nach leigeadh le fear air 'bith pòsadh ach seann nighean nach beireadh ach aon 'mhac, na'm b'urrainn iad e bhi 'na mhac!

'CALUM MACLEOID.'

41,700. Were you appointed a delegate at any public meeting?—Yes, five years ago.

41,701. You were not appointed to come before us and give evidence?—Yes, I was appointed on this occasion also.

41,702. Does this statement which you have handed in represent the views of the other cottars on the island of Berneray?—Yes, we are just as one man.

41,703. The last witness told us there were upwards of 60 cottars on the island. How many do you say there are?—Seventy. They are getting more numerous every day.

41,704. Are most of these cottars heads of families, or are there a good many widows amongst them?—Principally men, but there are a few women.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Malcolm Macleod.

41,705. How do the men make their livelihood?—By fishing.

41,706. They do not go for white fish, do they?—No, only lobster fishing.

41,707. Do they go to the herring fishing?—A few, but it is very little we do in that way.

41,708. Is there a general desire among the cottars for crofts?—Yes, ever since the passing of the Crofters Act. The cottars are asking it, but they are earning the displeasure of those in power.

41,709. Have you asked land from the proprietor or his agent?—Yes, we asked it of him, and he promised it to us in his own house at Rodel.

41,710. Who did?—Lord Dunmore.

41,711. But he did not give you anything?—He gave us a promise, but nothing else.

41,712. You never got the land?—We did not.

41,713. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Do you agree with what the former witnesses said as to the comparative value of the land held by the crofters and the land held by the farmers?—Everybody knows that what the farmer has is better; that is why the crofters were deprived of it. The crofting part is full of rocks.

41,714. What is the rent paid by the farmer for his farm? We are told that an enlargement was refused because it was under £100?—I don't know what the present rent is, but in 1885 the rent was £140. The law provided that no land should be interfered with that was under £100 of rent, so these lands were divided into two lots; the islands in connection with Borve were made one lot, for which £40 of rent was charged, and the remainder was rented at £100.

41,715. How are these islands held now?—By the same tenant and the same proprietor.

41,716. I see that the rent entered for Borve is £80, and your 'fair rent' for the crofting part of it is £69, 2s.: which of the two do you think is more fairly rented?—I know that Risgarry is more highly rented than Borve, but Borve is twice as good as Risgarry.

41,717. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—There is a large number of cottars in this island?—There are 335 of a population. There are 70 cottar families.

41,718. Supposing the lands of Borve were made available for new holdings, is there good arable land for crofts, and a good proportional share of hill grazing to attach to those crofts?—Yes, but if a person were hungry he would be thankful for a small portion, even though he did not get enough.

41,719. Is it a suitable place for making crofts?—We think so, at any rate. There are no houses on it except the house of the farmer who rents it.

41,720. If it was offered to the cottars, would they be able to erect their own houses there?—Yes, but we thought that for the first year they should get some help in paying their rents.

41,721. Supposing the rent was fixed in such a way as that they would sit easy the first year, with practically no rent; would they be able by their own industry and otherwise to erect the buildings without any Government assistance?—I think most of them could. I know that some of them won't build a house supposing they were left outside for ever.

41,722. How many of these cottars do you think would be able to live in fairly comfortable circumstances in Borve?—There were 40 crofters there previous to 1848, and then the number was reduced to 20. They were only left in possession for five years. The rent paid by the original 40 was laid on the 20.

41,723. But did the 20 get the lands which were occupied by the 40?—Yes, but it was too dear.

41,724. Were the 40 able to live comfortably there?—I cannot say, I was very young at the time.

41,725. Were the 20 able to live comfortably there?—Yes, I was there myself. I was about ten years old before I left.

41,726. Was the rent they were compelled to pay a rack rent?—It was on account of its being too heavily rented that they left it.

41,727. Did they leave voluntarily, or were they evicted?—They were evicted and deprived of their stock by the proprietor and the ground officer.

41,728. Because they fell into arrear on a rack rent?—Yes. All the cattle were driven off and sold except our cattle and those belonging to another tenant. They were put within the walls of a house and kept there because we were not able to pay for the lands.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Malcolm Macleod.

41,729. Who sold the cattle?—The factor and the ground officer.

41,730. Had they a Sheriff's warrant for doing it?—I don't know: I was very young at the time.

41,731. Who was the proprietor?—Lord Dunmore.

41,732. Are some of the cottars in Berneray willing, in the event of all the land in Borve being given as far as it goes, to migrate to suitable lands in another part of the country?—No, they would not go to any other place but Berneray: they would not like it.

41,733. Do you believe that Borve is sufficient for the 70 cottar farms?—Not if they were all to get some, but it would be a help along with the fishing.

41,734. Is the Borve side of the island of Berneray a suitable place for prosecuting the fishing?—The landing place is not in Borve, it is in the middle of the island, between Borve and Risgarry. There is only one bay; when the wind blows from one direction the boats are left on the one side of the bay, and when it blows from the other they are left on the other side.

41,735. If cottars were settled in Borve, would they be able to prosecute the fishing?—Yes, I have seen cottars selling hundreds of barrels of potatoes raised in Borve while the late Macdonald had it.

41,736. Do you believe that these cottars, if they got the land, would be able between the land at a fair rent and the fishing to live as comfortably as the 22 crofters who are in Berneray?—Yes, and much more comfortably.

41,737. Because the land is better?—Yes, and what they would do at the fishing.

41,738. Has anything been done by the estate to assist or develop the fishing industry in that island?—No, nothing.

41,739. Do steamers call there?—No, the steamers cannot call there.

Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.—Before Mr Wilson's * evidence is taken, I should like to submit a motion,—which is, that the Royal Commission invite Mr Orde to come forward and assist them by giving evidence; and that in the event of Mr Orde refusing to give evidence the Royal Commission exercise the powers conferred upon them under the Royal Warrant,—which power they claimed and exercised at Glen Urquhart last year,—and ordain Mr Orde to appear and answer questions.

Mr Gordon.—I am not disposed to adopt that course, but I invite Mr Orde now to come forward if he chooses, leaving it to him to do so or not, just as he pleases.

Mr Orde.—I stated already that I was quite willing to be of any help to the Commissioners, and when the surveyor came round I helped him to the best of my ability with the marches of the different farms. Beyond that I do not see how I could be of any use to the Commission. I know very little of the working of the affairs of the estate, and I do not see that I would have any right to speak, or to act for the estate without any authority.

Mr Gordon (to Mr Orde).—You have not hitherto taken any part in the general management of the estate?—*Mr Orde.*—No, I may say certainly not. I have sometimes been asked for my advice, but that was simply privately.

Mr Macrae.—Mr Commissioner, objections have been lodged to applications by crofter townships for an enlargement of holdings, on the ground that while the crofts were on the estate of Sir John Orde, the lands applied for were on the estate of Mr Orde. Mr Wilson, solicitor, Lochmaddy, who appeared as agent for the crofters, stated before the Commission that there was no

* Mr Thomas Wilson, solicitor, Lochmaddy

deed of sale, and that the transference of the lands from the name of Sir John Orde to that of Mr Orde was a bogus and fictitious transfer. That statement was made before the Crofters Commission in Sir John Orde's presence, and the Crofters Commission gave effect to the objections on the ground that Mr Orde was a very extensive proprietor in North Uist. If Mr Orde now declines to come forward, I move that the Royal Commission exercise the powers which they possess under the Royal Warrant, which powers they claimed openly and put in force in Glen Urquhart, and ordain him to come forward and give evidence.

Mr Gordon.—I don't think the cases are at all parallel. On the occasion you refer to, you had been present and had made your presence felt at the inquiry in Glen Urquhart in the cross-examination of a witness, in which something was brought out of which now I forget the exact import, but to which one of the Commissioners took exception, and he asked the Chairman that you should be called on to substantiate the statement which appeared to emanate from you. In the present case Mr Orde's presence here may or may not be as a proprietor: he may be here simply as a member of the community who came to listen to the court; and for my part I do not see what benefit the Commission could derive from any statement which Mr Orde could make. I, therefore, decline to order Mr Orde to submit himself for examination, but I invite him to come forward if he has anything to say.

Rev. Mr Maccallum.—There is no doubt that it is an important point that has been referred to, that these extensions could not be carried out on account of Mr Orde being proprietor and the crofters being on his father's estate; and it would certainly be very desirable that that point should be cleared up. I think it is very important, if Mr Orde has any statement to make with regard to the objections brought forward to the extension, that he should do so now because the matter has come up in our inquiry to-day. We have been told that the applications were opposed on that ground. We have also heard evidence that the properties standing in the name of Mr Orde are very suitable for crofter occupation, and, undoubtedly, as he is here present and has heard all these statements, I think it is very important that he should come forward to make a statement.

Mr Munro.—But Mr Orde, I understand, says that he declines to come forward, and in coming to that decision he is quite within his right. Now, I should like to put a question to Mr Macrae if he has no objection. [*Mr Macrae.*—None whatever]. Would you kindly mention what the incident was which took place in Glen-Urquhart upon which you now found? I would like to have my memory refreshed as to what exactly took place between you and the Chairman on that occasion.

Mr Macrae.—Relying upon my memory at this distance of time, I may say that the circumstances were to the best of my recollection as follows:—I either put a question or made a remark upon an answer given to a question, and from what I said it was inferred that a serious reflection was made upon the administration, in fact, the estate management, in connection with the home farm. Mr Shaw Stewart, a member of the Royal Commission, asked that I should immediately go into the witness-box. I was acting as agent for the people, and I begged leave to be excused at that particular moment, on the ground that I was there in another capacity, and that I was taken at a moment's notice. While I had no objection to appear before the Royal Commission, still I begged notice, reasonable notice, short notice, and that I would appear. Mr Shaw Stewart submitted to the Royal Commission that they had the power to put me there at once. I made a remark, to the best of my recollection, that I questioned whether the Royal Commission had that power, and I appealed to Sheriff Brand, who was in the chair at the time. Sheriff Brand ruled that the Royal Commission had that power, and commanded me to go immediately into the witness-box and give evidence. I bowed to that ruling of the Royal Commission. Sheriff Brand, in that ruling of the Royal Commission, said that they had the power under the Royal Warrant and that the moment had come for giving effect to that power, and he ordered me at once to go into the witness-box.

Mr Munro.—In point of fact you say that the Chairman on that occasion ruled that Mr Shaw Stewart could insist upon you going into the witness-box and giving evidence.

Mr Macrae.—Well, that the Royal Commission had the power.

Mr Gordon.—The wording of the Warrant is simply that the Commissioners have authority and are empowered 'to call before you or any 'three or more of you such persons as you may 'judge necessary by whom you may be better 'informed of the matters herein before submitted 'for your consideration.' Now, I must say this: if it was a matter that concerned the scheduling of any lands, or that would make it more apparent to the Commission whether certain lands were suitable for new holdings, I would hesitate before objecting to Mr Orde being called on to come forward. But this question does not affect this land, nor does it affect in the slightest manner our duties here. This matter undoubtedly affected the action of the Crofters Commission, and if they thought that there was any imperfection in the transfer of the land from Sir John Orde to his son, it was their duty to call upon him to come before them and substantiate or see that there was really a *bonâ fide* transfer of the property from father to son. As regards the transfer we have nothing to do, and whether Mr Orde chooses to come forward or not, I have no hesitation in saying that his coming forward here would not help the Commission in the least, one way or another, and I decline to call upon him or to exercise any power for the purpose of calling him to come forward. I invite Mr Orde to come forward if he has anything to say, but I can go no farther.

Mr Orde.—Perhaps it might help you if I was to verify what you seem to have heard as to the transfer having been produced to the Crofters Commission. It was questioned here by Mr Wilson, who said distinctly that there was no such thing, but it was produced to the Commissioners and they saw that it was all right.

Mr Gordon.—If you wish to give any evidence, Mr Orde, we shall be glad to hear you.

Mr Orde.—I don't see that I could help the Commission at all; if I did I would be only too glad to do so.

Mr Macrae.—As representing the people of this locality, I say on my responsibility that it will help the inquiry if Mr Orde comes forward.

Mr Gordon.—In what way?

Mr Macrae.—It will help the inquiry in this regard: it will enable us to hear from Mr Orde himself how the applications for more lands stood.

Mr Gordon.—No, I don't think so; that might help the Crofters Commission, but not this Commission.

Mr Macrae.—The remit to the Royal Commission refers to lands suitable not only for the creation of small holdings, but for the extension of crofting township areas. [*Mr Gordon.*—Admitted]. Applications were made with the view of extending crofting township areas. Mr Wilson, as agent for the crofters, said before the Crofters Commission, that the so-called transfer,—and he said it in Sir John Orde's presence,—was bogus and fictitious, and he challenged Sir John to produce the Deed to show that there was any real *bonâ fide* transfer. Such a Deed has not been brought forward,

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Malcolm Macleod.

and any dereliction of duty on the part of the Crofters Commission in that matter should not, in my humble opinion, be brought forward here as an argument why that question should be shelved again. I don't think an argument can be founded upon any possible neglect of duty by the Crofters Commission.

Mr Gordon.—If you hint that I am founding any argument upon it, I may tell you I do not. I found my argument upon this, that whether the land belongs to Sir John Orde or whether it belongs to his son is perfectly immaterial to me.

Rev. Mr Maccallum.—I must say that for my own part, I consider it would help the Commission very much that Mr Orde should give evidence. He must know well about these lands which he holds; he must know the difficulties that were put in the way of the crofters getting access to the lands. These matters are most important, and I think should be cleared up now. That is my decided opinion. The statement Mr Macrae has made just now is a very important statement with regard to the working of the Crofters Act, and it is in Mr Orde's power to clear up the matter entirely.

Mr Munro.—I should also like, Mr Chairman, to express my own mind and opinion on this matter. Certainly, very grave charges have to-day been made against the management of Sir John Orde's estate, but whether Mr Orde is in a position to repudiate any of these charges or to give us any additional information is more than I can say. Still, I am bound to say this much that I consider it exceedingly unfortunate indeed that there is no person here appearing to-day in the interests of Sir John's estates. I also remember, substantially, what took place on the occasion when Mr Macrae was ordered to appear in the witness-box and give evidence, and on that occasion the question of the scheduling of land was not under dispute; it was purely a question affecting the management of the Seafield Estates; and when Mr Shaw Stewart put a question to the Chairman of the Commission on that occasion whether he could compel Mr Macrae to give evidence, the impression on my mind is that the Chairman then ruled that Mr Shaw Stewart, as one of the Commissioners, could insist on his appearing. Still, of course, Mr Orde is here to-day able to speak for himself, and, probably he is quite within his right if he chooses to say that he cannot assist the Commission in any direction whatever.

Thomas Wilson.

THOMAS WILSON, Solicitor, Lochmaddy (38)—*examined.*

41,740. *Mr Gordon.*—Did you make any statement at the last meeting of the Commission?—No, I made no statement at the last meeting.

41,741. But you think you can give such evidence to-day as will be helpful?—I don't know; that is for the Commission to judge. I am asked by the people of Barra, South Uist and North Uist if I would put my evidence at their disposal, and I have no objection to do so.

41,742. You act, or have been acting, as the agent for the crofters in procuring evidence for this inquiry?—Not for this inquiry. I acted as agent for the crofters of Barra and South and North Uist, before the Crofters Commission.

41,743. Have you been taking any part on behalf of the crofters and cottars in this island in connection with the present inquiry?—To some extent I have.

41,744. Have you found in your communication with the crofters and cottars that there was a decided wish on their part for enlarged holdings?—That wish does exist, decidedly, by the crofters for enlarged holdings and by the cottars for new holdings.

41,745. And do you find, or is it within your knowledge, that in most of the present crofting townships congestion exists?—Speaking of the land from Barra up to North Uist, I think, with the exception of Benbecula, congestion exists in almost every township.

Lochmaddy North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

41,746. You don't think Benbecula is overcrowded?—I think not. In Benbecula there may be a little congestion, but not much. In the year 1881 a very good plan of re-division of the crofts was carried out in Benbecula by the proprietrix, which did a great deal of good. It may have had other effects, but certainly it was a good scheme of division.

41,747. But in the island of North Uist you believe congestion does exist?—Largely exists.

41,748. Does your opinion apply to the small islands as well as to the main island?—Yes, I think so. There is congestion in Grimsay and in Boreray; also in Heisker to some extent, but not so much.

41,749. Do you know how the cottars occupy themselves,—how they find a living?—Yes, they cultivate a piece of land where they can get the opportunity, from which they raise a few potatoes, and a little corn in the following year. They go to the fishing at the east coast, to railway work and the like; a number of them are militiamen; their wives work at the tweed industry in some parts of the island; their children go to service,—the girls as domestic servants, and the lads as militiamen or naval reserve men. But each district must be taken by itself, because the occupations, habits and circumstances, are different for almost every different district. I have given you the principal occupations however.

41,750. And a great many of the cottars occupy themselves with lobster fishing?—A goodly number, in some parts.

41,751. Is the death-rate here heavy from drowning at sea?—Not heavy, considering the amount of boating there is.

41,752. Do you know Lochmaddy well?—Yes, I have been resident here for 12 years.

41,753. Can you account in any way for the great advantage of one of the best harbours in Scotland not being better recognised by the people?—I account for it because the proprietor, Sir John Orde, will not grant privileges to fishermen to stay here: he will not grant sites for houses. Those who have been here have been put away, and fishermen who have come to prosecute their calling from other places, and who put up shelters, have had the shelters torn down by his own hands. He has given no assistance to fishermen here, but has placed every obstacle in their way.

41,754. And, from your knowledge of this part of the country, do you believe that if sufficient facilities were given for the building of houses, in and about Lochmaddy, the fishing industry would be assisted?—I say the fishing industry would improve in Lochmaddy, and would come back, perhaps not to the same degree as it reached 16 or 18 years ago, when 200 or 300 boats were fishing here for herring, but it would improve very largely. I have seen as many as 15 to 20 boats lying in this bay, prepared to fish, since I came here; and, before my time, I know from undoubted information that the number of boats was very much larger.

41,755. Do you not think that it would be possible to raise a fishing village here, where the people would devote their time to white fishing in the winter?—Not so long as fishermen are refused places to live in.

41,756. Assuming that they got facilities to build houses?—Assuming that they had facilities for building houses here, with security of tenure, then I think this could be made into a very good fishing place.

41,757. What distance are you here from Canna?—I don't know the exact distance.

41,758. About 40 miles?—Possibly between 40 and 50.

41,759. That is supposed to be a good fishing-ground?—A very good fishing-ground during the last two years.

41,760. It is largely fished by people from a greater distance than Lochmaddy?—Yes, fishermen even come from Ardrishaig to Canna; Barra men come to Canna, and men from all directions away down the west coast, twice as far distant as Lochmaddy.

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41,761. Canna is so situated that they could run either to Lochmaddy or to Dunvegan?—Yes, that is so.

41,762. Or to some of the harbours in Skye?—Yes, to Bracadale; or they could run into Lochboisdale or Castlebay.

41,763. But this harbour here would be one of the most convenient centres from which the fishing at the island of Canna could be carried on?—I think the fishing between this and Canna can be carried on very well from Lochmaddy.

41,764. That is my idea also. Now, do you think generally that if the cottar population was moved off the crofting townships, that in itself would be a great relief?—A great relief, undoubtedly.

41,765. It might not cure the whole evil, but it would be a relief?—It would not cure the whole evil, but it certainly would be a very great relief. There are in most island townships many small crofts, much too small, where, even though the cottars were all removed from that township, still the number of crofters left would be too large.

41,766. The best crofts, I think, are on the south and west side of the island?—On the north and west side of the island.

41,767. *Mr Maccallum.*—Has there been anything done to help the crofters by the estate in any way? Has there been any outlay on the crofters' holdings by the proprietor of late years?—Not that I am aware of; none whatever. I don't think there has been any outlay by the proprietor on the crofters' holdings since the Crofters Act was passed.

41,768. Has any good been done by proprietors in the way of road making?—By means of the district Committees of the County Council from funds derived from Government, a great deal has been done towards improving districts by laying down footpaths and roads among crofting townships, but not from any other source, unless it be from work done by the crofters themselves.

41,769. No help has been given in the district of which you speak in North Uist to improve the houses?—Not that I am aware of in North Uist. In South Uist Lady Cathcart in 1880 did give the people very considerable assistance. In Benbecula she supplied them with material for the roof and the woodwork inside of the houses which they built at the re-allocation of their holdings, and, in some instances, slating, I think. The cost of such improvements was placed against the holdings as a rent charge; but certainly it was a very great deal to do, and it was done before the Crofters Act. I think that even she has done nothing since that Act was passed.

41,770. And was there anything done here before the Crofters Act was passed?—Not that I am aware of.

41,771. And, since the passing of the Crofters Act and the crofters obtained security of tenure, have they been improving their houses themselves?—The people have improved their houses very largely. Within my own knowledge there has been a very considerable improvement in the housing of the people. The number of houses in which human beings and cattle are kept is not now so great as it was at the date of the passing of the Crofters Act by a very great number; there are many fewer such houses. There is a gradual improvement going on since the Act was passed. Not only are the crofters improving their houses by putting the cattle out of them, but they are erecting separate byres, and they are also to some extent draining their holdings here and there, and building dykes. There has been since the Act was passed a slow but certain improvement in the crofters as regards their houses.

41,772. I suppose they are only now perhaps realising that they have absolute security?—That is so. I think that even at the present day many of them do not understand that they have absolute security,—many of the older men do not, though the younger men certainly do.

41,773. And you think that the condition of the crofters has improved very much in respect of comfort since they got the benefit of the Crofters Act?—I think it has, and I think it will be more marked in the future, because, since the Act was passed, they have had to pay up the arrears and instalments of arrears of rent which were left upon them, and which to some extent was a burden, preventing improvements which will in future take place.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

41,774. And are they paying their rents in this island with regularity?—I cannot say as to that, although my belief is that they are.

41,775. Has there been much done here for the enlargement of holdings?—In North Uist the enlargement of holdings has been a dead letter.

41,776. How do you account for that?—In the Crofters Act there are a number of enlargement clauses, containing conditions which are very difficult to get over, and there is one clause in particular which applied to North Uist,—and it is this, that the land which had to be taken for enlargement should belong to the same proprietor as that upon which the crofter applicant resides. The proprietor of North Uist, when the Crofters Act was becoming law, was Sir John Orde, but either immediately before, or at the date of passing of the Act, he transferred to his son, Mr Arthur J. Campbell Orde, such portions of the estate as were in large farms, viz., Scolpeg, Balelone, Griminish, and Vallay. These were all lands which would have been available for enlargement of holdings but for the fact of this transfer from the one proprietor to the other: also the farm of Balranald at that date was under lease, and therefore also prohibitory, and the farm of Newton also was under lease. On every ground enlargement of holdings was practically an impossibility in North Uist.

41,777. Were these large tacks transferred immediately after the passing of the Crofters Act, or was it after a movement had been made by the crofters to obtain enlargements from them?—I cannot give you the date, but I believe the transference took place before the Bill became an Act of Parliament.

41,778. And that effectually prevents the enlargement?—Effectually.

41,779. In this case the transference is made from the proprietor to his son?—That is so.

41,780. I suppose the people of these islands are a peculiarly law-abiding people?—They are very law-abiding; you scarcely ever hear of a crime in their midst in the present day.

41,781. And do you think that natives of this island, who have gone to the south and prospered, would like to come here and build houses if it were possible for them to obtain sites?—I have no doubt they would.

41,782. And are there instances of their being refused?—Yes, I have known instances of their being refused; and not only those from the south, but I myself have been refused, and the Procurator-Fiscal has been refused a site. We are both without a house at the present day, compelled to trust to the generosity of friends for lodgings. We have been so situated for years, and can scarcely carry on our public duties for the want of a house.

41,783. Don't you think that is a serious disadvantage, that people cannot get sites for their houses on reasonable terms?—I think it is very serious. I think it strikes at the foundation of all justice. If justice is to be administered in this island impartially, I think it only right that the Procurator-Fiscal, who is the Crown public prosecutor for the Inverness-shire portion of the Outer Hebrides with a population of 20,000, and every other public official, should have an independent home.

41,784. And is it the case that the proprietor of this island refuses to give sites for houses in every case, except where he is compelled by some Act of Parliament to do so?—I believe that he did give a site for a mission-house, and I cannot say that he is compelled by Act of Parliament; but I know that, so far as individuals are concerned, there is no instance where a feu or lease has been granted for a dwelling-house, and if the report of what he said before the Committee of the House of Commons in London a few days ago be correct, he declines to grant feus to individuals. I myself applied for a feu and did not get one; the Procurator-Fiscal applied for a feu and did not get one. I produce copy of a correspondence which took place between Sir

John Orde and his agents, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson, W.S., Edinburgh, on the one hand, and the Procurator-Fiscal and myself on the other, and which I place before the Commission, because I think it is a very important matter. At a public meeting of the people of North Uist, held in Paible not a year ago, and largely attended, they desired me to place before this Commission the fact that they did not consider that justice could be properly administered in this island until public officials were placed in a position independent of the proprietor. I therefore produce this copy correspondence, as an essential part of my evidence.*

41,785. *Mr Munro.*—I think you told us that you have had an experience of 12 years in this island?—That is so.

41,786. During that time you have no doubt had frequent intercourse with the crofters in the island?—Yes, I have been through their homes in every district; I have travelled on foot through almost every inch of the Long Island time after time. I have been in crofters' houses, and cottars' houses, and houses of every description, and have been constantly among the people, and I should say that I know them as well as any man at the present day.

41,787. Could you tell us what opinion you have formed as to the character of the crofters?—I have a very high opinion of the people of those islands; I say they are a very law-abiding and a very moral people, and I think that with due encouragement they would greatly improve. They are certainly not the very finest men you could get, in the sense of education and industry; but with the advantages which are coming towards them now in the shape of steamers and telegraphs, and post-offices and railways, these men will improve until they will be just as good men as you will find in the whole of the British Isles. I have a very high opinion of the people of the western islands.

41,788. I have no doubt you have heard it suggested from various quarters that the crofters are a lazy and non-industrious class. Is there any foundation for that suggestion?—There is some foundation, among some of them: there is no flock without its black sheep; there are very many crofters who are very industrious, but I cannot deny that, to a certain extent, the remark is well deserved, because some of them are very lazy.

41,789. Supposing that some of these men, who have obtained a character for laziness, were placed on crofts of reasonable size and under better conditions, would that not incite them to greater exertions?—It might help them a little. But there are some men in this island who, if they were placed in the midst of gold, would be none the better for it. But, speaking of the great mass of the people, I say, of the cottars especially, that if they were placed in comfortable holdings it would improve their position very materially. Many of them are very energetic and willing to work.

41,790. Wherever we have gone in this island we have been surrounded by the signs of poverty and want. What, in your opinion, is mainly the cause of that?—I think there is no doubt about it, the cause of the poverty in those islands is the want of land. If you go through different districts you will find that the poorer the people the worse is the land; the better off the people appear in every way, the better the land. Go into their houses and if you find a comfortable house you find it has attached a suitable sized croft; if you go into a poverty-stricken district you find miserable beings squatted where no human beings should be placed. In my opinion the want of land very largely causes the poverty, though not wholly. It is also a striking thing that on the pauper rolls, which are very heavy, the great majority of our island paupers come from the cottar and farm servant class and not from the crofter class,—from the landless, not from those who have land.

41,791. Then do you think that if the people were transferred to better land the poverty would largely disappear?—I believe it would, and pauperism too.

41,792. A statement has been made here by more than one witness that Sir John Orde's management of his estates here hinders the prosperity of the island. Is that your opinion?—That is my opinion.

41,793. What in your judgment is the reason for Sir John having such an aversion to the settlement of crofters here?—He is different from almost any man I have ever met in my life. He is one of those peculiar men whom no man understands: what his reasons are I cannot tell you, and I don't suppose anybody else could. I think he scarcely knows himself.

41,794. Are the people generally civil towards him?—Yes, I think they are; I think they would be civil to any man.

41,795. Do you know whether they pay their rents regularly to Sir John or not?—My belief is that they pay their rents regularly, but I don't have access to the estate books, and my knowledge of that cannot be taken as accurate. I think they are willing to pay their rents so far as in their power.

41,796. Now about the fishing at Lochmaddy,—have you ever, as a legal gentleman, inquired what power the fishermen possess to erect buildings of a temporary character to enable them to pursue the calling of fishermen?—Yes, I have had occasion to inquire into that matter. I know the Act of Parliament to which you refer, which gives to fishermen the right to prosecute their calling along the coast here, by the erection of temporary huts, stages and erections of that sort, within a distance of not more than 100 yards from high water-mark, upon waste ground.

41,797. And they can do so independently of the proprietor, and without paying any feu-duty?—That is so,—independently of the proprietor and without paying anything; and, indeed, if they are interfered with, they are entitled to take action for damages against the person who interferes with them.

41,798. Is the landlord subject to any penalty if he interferes?—Speaking from memory I think the penalty is £100.

41,799. Do you think now that if proper facilities were afforded by Sir John for the erection of buildings for fishermen's houses in or near Lochmaddy, the fishing industry would thrive here?—I think it would. Three fishing boats from the east coast fished here all last winter, and did fairly well.

41,800. And the people would readily take to the fishing?—I think the people would take to fishing, but they require to be trained to it. You cannot make a fisherman simply by putting him into a boat.

41,801. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—With regard to the transference of portions of North Uist to Mr Orde, do you say that the transference has helped very materially to frustrate the enlargement clauses of the Crofters Act? [*Mr Gordon.*—I cannot allow that question. We have nothing to do with the Crofters Commission at all.]

41,802. Do you know a crofting township that meant to enlarge its area by taking advantage of the law as it stands, *i.e.*, the Crofters Act, and which meant to apply to the Crofters Commission for enlarging the crofter area of the township, but in which the people did not apply, because they were led to understand that there was a transfer of the adjoining farm, which was represented as belonging to another proprietor?—I do.

41,803. Can you give the name of that crofting township?—Malaclett.

41,804. They would have applied to your knowledge?—They would have applied; I was asked to lodge an application for them, and told them it was useless, because the lands belonged to another proprietor.

41,805. Were you agent for the crofters in the Land Court at that time?—I was.

41,806. Did you state before the Crofters Commission?——

Mr Gordon.—Now, so far as your questions tend to show that the crofting township of Malaclett is in want of enlargement, they are proper and perfectly allowable; but so far as they make any reflections upon any alleged shortcomings of the Crofters Commission I cannot allow them.

* For copy correspondence referred to see after Question 41,869, page 1009.

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Mr Donald Macrae.—I was not going to make any reflections upon the conduct of the Crofters Commission.

Mr Gordon.—You can ask the witness if this was an indication that the crofting township of Malaclett was overcrowded, and required an annexation of boundaries.

Mr Macrae.—Might I state the purpose of my question? The purpose of my question is to show that, however inadequate the law is as it stands, something might be made of it in the matter of extending the area of crofting townships.

Mr Gordon.—I question whether we are justified in going into legal matters. We are here for a specific purpose; we are here to inquire what land there is suitable for new holdings in North Uist.

Mr Macrae.—This is a subject that has been debated at every hearing of the Royal Commission, and the evidence of Mr Wilson I consider evidence of supreme importance. For one thing, it is a statement of fact, and not a statement of opinion.

Mr Gordon.—What is your question, if you please?

41,807. *Examination continued.*—My question is this: does Mr Wilson know, from his position as agent for the crofters, that Malaclett would have applied for an enlargement of holdings if this transference had not been entered into? [*Witness*].— Yes, they would.

41,808. Did you, as agent for the crofters before the Crofters Commission, state on your responsibility as agent, that the transference was bogus and fictitious?—I did.

41,809. And do you still believe that it was?—I believe it still.

41,810. Did the Crofters Commission ordain Sir John Orde to produce the deeds?—The Crofters Commission did ordain that.

41,811. Did he produce them?—He never produced them.

41,812. Not to this day?—Not to this day. He produced the draft of a deed, but he has never produced the deed itself.

41,813. Now, speaking about the fishing industry in connection with crofts; has Sir John been exacting dues of the general public for landing on the foreshores of Lochmaddy?—He charges twopence upon every man who lands from any vessel upon the foreshores embraced in the harbour area of Lochmaddy.

41,814. How much does the harbour area embrace,—the foreshore of Lochmaddy?—It embraces the space of ground from the pier at Lochmaddy running eastwards about 100 yards to the point of the rocks; it then goes southwards another 100 yards out, then westwards in an imaginary line along the water, until it touches a point there, from which again it runs northwards another 100 yards till it joins the pier. Roughly speaking, that is the area.

41,815. What length of foreshore does it embrace, roughly speaking?—I don't quite follow the question.

41,816. Suppose the foreshore is followed, what length would it be?—Roughly speaking, 100 yards of foreshore to the east of the pier, and the effect of the imaginary line crossing on the right-hand side is to embrace a large area above it; how large, I cannot tell you, but possibly a mile of foreshore.

41,817. Did you see that charge you speak of levied?—Yes, the twopence.

41,818. On whom?—I saw it levied upon Alexander Mackenzie, Editor of the *Scottish Highlander* (*The Clach*) for landing on the rocks; and on many others.

41,819. Do you believe that it would be a matter of very considerable importance to this island if fish-curers could be induced to take up residence here during a portion of the year?—I think it would; it would bring money into the island.

41,820. Fishing-boats would follow as a matter of course?—As a matter of course.

41,821. And a local trade would be developed?—Quite so.

41,822. And Lochmaddy would grow into an important place, in your opinion?—I think so. Lochmaddy, North Uist.

41,823. Could you give the name of any fish-curer who applied for a stance, say, for a curing-station, or for a residence?—I can give the names of two: Davidson of Peterhead (I think), and Maccormack of Wick. Thomas Wilson.

41,824. What was the reply to Mr Davidson?—He was asked by Sir John to pay, I think, £10 for the stance. He refused to pay it, and asked me what he should do. I pointed out to him a stance upon the foreshore which he could take for nothing, and he took it. Maccormack was asked to pay £10, or some such sum, and he paid it, I believe.

41,825. What did Mr Davidson say?—He said he would not come back again if he had to pay.

41,826. But he had not to pay?—He did not pay.

41,827. Would he be allowed to erect the necessary buildings?—He put them up.

41,828. Had he to remove them?—I cannot remember whether he removed them or not; I think he must have.

41,829. Now, with regard to the position of the cottars; in the event of a large area of land, suitable and available, being scheduled, and in the event of Parliament legislating with regard to that land, in your opinion would a large number of the cottars of these islands take advantage of the facilities for taking up land?—I am quite certain a very large number would: 99 per cent. would, in my opinion.

41,830. And do you believe that there is sufficient enterprise and public spirit and industry among them to enter into possession of these lands, and to erect the necessary buildings in many cases without Government assistance at all?—Well, a goodly number of them could take a croft and stock it, and build a house without help; but there are a good number also who would require to get assistance to build their houses. The district Committees of the County Council are now insisting that healthy dwelling-houses be erected, with the cattle kept separate from the human beings; and I don't know but that a number of the cottars would require assistance to enable them to build such houses.

41,831. Are you personally acquainted with the facts and circumstances of the case of the widow, about whom we have heard something to-day, who began to erect a byre?—I know the case,—I acted as agent for the widow.

Mr Gordon.—What is the object of this line of examination?

Mr Macrae.—I wish to bring out that legislation is necessary to deal with the island of North Uist, and with Sir John Orde.

Mr Gordon.—We have it as a matter of fact from the other witnessess that Sir John Orde gives a general order against buildings. In this case he objected to the good lady building an addition to her steading, and she obtained, under a warrant from the Sheriff, as I understand, authority to build the house. That has been brought out already.

Mr Macrae.—Could I ask Mr Wilson his opinion with regard to any bill that might be presented to Parliament dealing with the existing crofting townships, and with land that may be scheduled?

Mr Gordon.—I think not.

Mr Macrae.—The opinion of a man like Mr Wilson on this matter is of supreme importance. Sheriff Brand followed Mr Myles Macinnes of Portree for, I believe, a whole hour upon that question of future legislation and so forth; his opinion was taken and is down upon the evidence. But if the evidence of a man like Mr Wilson, Lochmaddy, is to be objected to, I will not pursue the matter.

Mr Gordon.—I have not the slightest objection to Mr Wilson's evidence, but as I have explained to you, we are here for a specific purpose; we are not here to discuss or criticise future legislation, nor are we here to suggest what Government should do in regard to framing the bill. I have no doubt a bill will follow our action. But if you have any

Lochmaddy. North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

question to put that will throw light upon the matter of our inquiry, I have no objection.

Mr Macrae.—Every single one of them has that in view; that is my object, and nothing else.

Mr Gordon.—Well, we will hear you.

41,832. *Examination resumed.*—Supposing now that lands were scheduled and that cottars were to enter, what machinery would you propose for dealing with cottar applicants on the one hand, and land scheduled on the other?

Mr Munro.—Excuse me stopping you, Mr Macrae for an explanation; what do you mean by the scheduling of lands?

Mr Macrae.—The Royal Commissioners have been inspecting lands,—deer forest, grazing farms, grouse moors, and so on, and, as I understand it, the Royal Commission are to submit to Parliament a report of evidence, recommendation very likely, and maps showing lands that in the opinion of the Royal Commission, are suitable. I call those lands scheduled for the purpose of extending the crofter area, either in the matter of adding to crofter townships that exist, or in the matter of new holdings, small holdings.

Mr Munro.—You assume that we are scheduling lands for certain purposes?

Mr Macrae.—Exactly so,—for that double purpose, I hope you are scheduling the land.

41,833. *Examination resumed.*—What machinery would you suggest should be employed for the purpose I refer to,—is it the estate machinery, or machinery provided by Government?—I think you would require to use the present Crofters Commission in the form of a Land Court, but on a much larger scale.

41,834. A larger scale as regards the number of the Commissioners?—Yes, in order that they may be able to overtake the work, because there would be a very great deal of work to do, and it would take a long time to do it.

41,835. And further powers?—Further powers.

41,836. You have made a study of the Crofters Act and of its defective points?—Yes, I have done so.

41,837. Then the first point I would ask you upon is as to a clause that very likely could have been put in to force in the case of that widow, *i.e.*, the bankruptcy clause?—Yes.

41,838. After being engaged in litigation with the landlord for a considerable time in the Sheriff Court, no doubt at considerable expense, that widow might not be able to meet obligations. Would you make any change on that clause dealing with bankruptcy?—That was a possibility; but I could take a stronger case than that,—say, where a crofter obtains decree against another for £10 of damages on account perhaps of some dispute with his neighbour. If decree is granted and a charge of payment given, and if the days of charge expire without payment, that crofter is notour bankrupt, under section 1, sub-section 6, and he is liable to have his holding forfeited. I think that clause of the Act should be so amended that it would not be simply upon notour bankruptcy but upon a decree for rent, that the croft should be forfeited. The present clause is much too sweeping, in my opinion.

41,839. What is your most serious objection to the enlargement of holdings clause of the Crofters Act, section 11, I think?—The number of crofters who can apply for enlargement of holdings is limited to five,—there must be five to each application. Now, I think, there should be no such limitation, but that a single crofter should be entitled to apply for enlargement of holding if he thinks proper.

41,840. And what is your view with regard to the crofters whose holdings are too small applying for additional lands on the estate of a neighbouring proprietor?—Well, I have very great difficulty there: I am not inclined to say that a crofter upon one proprietor's land should be entitled to apply for enlargement of his holding from another proprietor's lands. The difficulty to my mind is this: the first proprietor, A, might obtain a decree against his crofter, and might forfeit his tenancy: proprietor B, might not wish to do so, and the man might be living on proprietor B's land. That would, in my opinion, be a hardship.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

41,841. How would you meet the case of a proprietor who has a large number of crofters in very poor circumstances on his estate, and whose neighbour, the adjoining proprietor, may have practically no crofters on his land, the crofters having been evicted by his forefathers?—I think the remedy there is one which is not supplied by the present Act of Parliament, and it is this:—that power should be given to cut out or to make entirely new holdings for such men, and that there should be no debarment to a crofter from one landlord being transferred to the neighbouring landlord.

41,842. Now, with regard to the clause which deals with succession, have you in your experience met with cases of real hardship resulting from the restricted character of that clause?—Yes: I think the clause at the end of the 16th section ought to be expanded, and the power which a crofter at present has, extended so as to include sons-in-law. I think it is objectionable that a woman should be tenant if a man can be got. Therefore I think the Act should be enlarged so as to give power to the crofter to bequeath his holding to a son-in-law.

41,843. Would you give the crofter power to dispose of his holding *inter vivos*?—No, I am not prepared to go as far as that yet; unless you bring in the right to sell.

41,844. Do you think the nationalisation of the land would be an advantage,—land purchase?—I think it would be a great improvement if crofters were allowed to become their own proprietors, under some such scheme as the Irish Land Acts.

41,845. Do you know the large farms of North Uist?—I do.

41,846. Will you name them?—Newton, Trumisgarry, Granetote, Sollas, Vallay and Griminish, Scolpeg, Balelone, Balranald, and Lee and Eaval.

41,847. Within your knowledge is there a considerable area of those farms once cultivated but now out of cultivation for a long period of years?—Yes: any man going along over these farms can see for himself that the land which was formerly under cultivation is now going back into moorland; the heather is overcoming the grass.

41,848. Is that the effect of land lying waste that was once under cultivation,—that after a considerable number of years it becomes practically useless?—It goes back to heather.

41,849. What is the only thing to improve that land?—Turn it back to cultivation.

41,850. Speaking generally, do you concur with the evidence led here to-day that the lands occupied by crofters in this island, and in the whole of the Long Island up to North Uist, are of the poorest character, while the lands taken up by the big tacks are of far superior quality?—I am not prepared to say that in every instance that is so, because I think there are lands among some of the crofts quite as good as in the large farms.

41,851. But, generally speaking, is it so?—Generally speaking, it is so, but you must bear in mind that the superior cultivation in the case of the tacksman may account for the land being better than the crofters' land. Still, generally it is the case that the crofters have the worst portions of the land.

41,852. And are the cottars on Sir John's estate in a much worse position to-day than they were before the 'fair rent' were fixed?—Decidedly; they are in a miserable condition.

41,853. Worse than ever?—Worse than ever, by a long way.

41,854. What has caused that?—The fact that under the Crofters Act the crofter is not entitled to sublet any portion of his land to any other person, except under pain of forfeiting his holding. That is certainly a very serious matter for the cottars, who formerly got land from the crofters to plant potatoes in, but now are debarred from it.

41,855. And did Sir John, to your knowledge, issue circulars, printed letters, to all his crofters, warning

them that if they gave any land to the cottars to cultivate, he would take advantage of that for evicting them out of the holding?—I read copy of a circular, which was to the effect that if any crofter gave land without his permission, he was liable to forfeit his tenancy. [*Mr Gordon.*—That was a simple repetition of the Act of Parliament.]

41,856. And in view of that statement coming from Sir John Orde, the crofters in their own self-defence, unwillingly in your opinion, have in recent years been refusing to allow the cottars the advantages which they gave them before the passing of the Act?—In many instances unwillingly; but in some instances they are not at all averse to turn the cottars off.

41,857. *Mr Gordon.*—We had the case of one man, a cottar, who had more animals than any crofter in the township, and paid no rent?—A very hard case.

41,858. But that man's condition could not be said to be worse than it was before the passing of the Act.

41,859. *Mr Macrae.*—Generally speaking, if the cottar population were removed by some means or other from the crofting townships, would the conditions of the crofters in North Uist, who have full crofts, be tolerable?—Yes, where they have fairly large holdings, but the very small holdings in North Uist will always be in a bad condition.

41,860. But the development of a fishing industry, from Lochmaddy as a centre, would be a benefit to everybody?—It would help the whole island.

41,860*a*. *Mr Maccallum.*—I take it that it is your opinion that what is chiefly wanted by the people is land, and that no diminution of the rent would ever make the people comfortable on their present holdings?—It is not merely a diminution of rent that will cure the evil; there must be land given if the evil is to be remedied.

41,861. And the Crofters Act you think has failed principally because it has not been effective in getting them the lands?—That is where the Crofters Act has failed. Fair rent, fixity of tenure, and compensation for improvements were all very good, and certainly gave a great stimulus to the people, but the want of enlargement of holdings and new holdings has been the dead letter part of it, because men who are eager to improve their position cannot do it for the want of land.

41,862. Do you think the proprietor has tried to act up to the spirit of the Crofters Act, with regard to extensions generally?—I don't think so; I think he has put every obstacle he possibly could in the way of it.

41,862*a*. Now, in this particular island, and with reference to the transactions of which we have heard to-day, and which Mr Orde refuses to clear up, has this transference been made by the proprietor to the heir-at-law?—To the heir-at-law.

41,863. Who would succeed in any case to the lands that were transferred?—Quite so.

41,864. Can you imagine any reason for this transference, except to frustrate the enlargement clauses of the Act?—I cannot think of any other reason. What makes that reason plausible is, that the very lands which were transferred were those in the vicinity of crofting townships, while those distant from crofting townships were not transferred. The non-contiguity clause of the Crofters Act amply protects the far off lands already.

41,865. Have you heard of any other proprietor who has acted in that way?—No.

41,866. Have you heard of it in the Island of Skye?—I never heard of it; it may have occurred, but not to my knowledge.

41,867. *Mr Munro.*—Have you any reason to suppose that Sir John Orde would refuse more land to the cottars, if they combined and asked him for it,—if they all went in a body, and asked him to break up one of his farms, would he grant it?—No, he would not. Time after time they have asked it, and always got the same answer: 'I will not give you the land.'

41,868. Your only hope in that direction is through some change in the present law?—It is the only hope the people have; and more than that,—I do not say it as a threat, but I say it from my knowledge of the people, that unless it is granted the people will seize the land. Lochmaddy, North Uist. Thomas Wilson.

41,869. But you think Sir John will do nothing until he is compelled by law to do it?—No, I am quite certain of that.

COPY CORRESPONDENCE, &c., BETWEEN ARCHIBALD A. CHISHOLM, ESQ., PROCURATOR-FISCAL, LOCHMADDY, AND SIR JOHN W. P. CAMPBELL ORDE, BARONET, PROPRIETOR OF NORTH UIST, AND THEIR AGENTS, REGARDING A RESIDENCE FOR THE FORMER AT LOCHMADDY.*

NOTICE TO REMOVE, for Archibald Alexander Chisholm, Esquire.

At Inverness, the sixth day of October, eighteen hundred and ninety years.

You are required to remove from all and whole the house and offices at Rhuiar, Lochmaddy, in the parish of North Uist and County of Inverness, as lately occupied by the deceased Theophilus James Bulkeley, Esquire, including the lands formerly known as the croft of James Macdonald, mason, as presently occupied by you, at the term of Martinmas eighteen hundred and ninety-one, in terms of minute of lease thereof, between Sir John William Powlett Campbell Orde, of Kilmory and North Uist, Baronet, the proprietor and Lessor, of said subjects, on the one part, and you, Archibald Alexander Chisholm, Esquire, Procurator-Fiscal, Lochmaddy, Inverness-shire, of the other part, dated the tenth day of April and thirtieth day of May, both in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-two, and also in terms of the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, eighteen hundred and eighty-three.

A. MACDONALD,
Messenger-at-Arms and Sheriff-Officer.

CORRESPONDENCE.

I.—Letter, 28th September 1889, from Archibald A. Chisholm, Esq., Procurator-Fiscal of the Long Island District of Inverness shire, at Lochmaddy, to Sir John W. Powlett Campbell Orde, Baronet, proprietor of the Island of North Uist.

Rhuiar, Lochmaddy, 28th Sept. 1889.

DEAR SIR,—I beg to enclose cheque for £15, 0s. 6d., being half-year's rent of cottage and croft occupied by me here for half year from Martinmas 1888 to Whitsunday 1889, with 6d. for charge on cheque.

I called for you at the hotel here, but you had left for Newton, and I may not have the pleasure of seeing you about the matter, as I had hoped, before you would leave the island, and I may again say that I am not to pay what you claim as rent for the cottage lately occupied by Mr Wilson, until you satisfy me of the cost of the building as agreed. Mr Wilson says he has overpaid, and declines to pay me the last year's rent. I believe I have overpaid on account of it already. If yet you desire to try the question in Court, I shall be glad to accept service of any summons you may raise,—Yours faithfully, (Signed) ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

II.—Letter, 22nd January 1891, Mr Chisholm to Sir John Orde.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 22nd Jan. 1891.

SIR,—Referring to conversation here to-day, when you intimated that you would refuse renewal of my

* See Question 41,784, page 1005.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
Thomas Wilson.

dwelling-house lease unless I pay the claim you make as for 'old arrears' for cottages built at Lochmaddy for my clerks. Before you leave Uist, I desire to state that I am anxious, as I was all along, to have that claim (which I repudiated long ago), settled upon its own merits in some way; and I am still ready (1) to refer it to arbitration; or (2) to accept service of a summons to Court, if you raise an action to test the matter, and in the event of your non-success not to ask expenses against you, which consideration I do not ask of you in return.

Expecting the favour of a reply hereto before you leave Uist on this occasion,—I am, yours faithfully,

ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

III.—Letter, 9th November 1891, Sir John Orde to Mr Chisholm.

Post and Telegraph,
Kilmory, Lochgilphead, N.B., 9/11/91.

SIR,—As your tenancy of Rhuiar house and land will be at an end at this term day Martinmas, I have instructed your acct. for rent for same, and also that now some time in arrear for cottage by Ct. House, to be sent you. With reference to the latter, I have failed to find any memorandum that will show the cost of the concrete work supplied to contractor, and I have no reason to think that the rent charged and paid by you up to the last year was erroneously calculated by my late factor. I do not either consider that it was competent for you to take objection to it at so late a date.

I have therefore to say that it will only be on payment of the account for Rhuiar and for the cottage as sent you that I shall be prepared to state the terms on which I shall accept you as a tenant for the former for any further period at Rhuiar, or other place.

Mr MacLean is authorised to sign receipt for rent.—I am, yours,

J. W. P. CAMPBELL ORDE.

IV.—Letter, 14th November 1891, Mr Chisholm to Sir John Orde.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 14th Nov. 1891.

SIR,—Your letter of the 9th, bearing only the Lochmaddy post mark of the 11th, reached me on the evening of the 12th.

The half-year's rent of Rhuiar Cottage, &c., due to you at this term, I went with to-day to Mr McLean and paid. Had you or he called for it even earlier it would have been paid.

Regarding the question of what you call arrear of rent for clerk's cottages, I thought I made a very fair offer, when I wrote to you on the 24th of January last, inviting you to have it determined free of cost to yourself. Instead of my being indebted to you on that transaction, you are due me roughly £30. As you have not accepted my offer of 24th January last, I now withdraw it. That question, as you before stated, has nothing to do with the cottage occupied by me as a dwelling, though now you make a lever of it. I have only to refer you to former correspondence, to show that the 'objection' was not taken at a late date, as you now set forth.

You are aware it is necessary for me to have a residence at Lochmaddy, the seat of the Sheriff Court for the Long Island District of Inverness-shire, in order to enable my duties as Procurator-Fiscal of Court for the public interest to be attended to at that Court.

In order to procure such an abode, and to maintain amicable relations with you, I have borne with different demands already made by you.

When, in 1881, I took a ten years' lease of my cottage and land called Rhuiar (the original purchase price of which to your predecessor was about £15, and on which I have yet to learn you or he expended any money on improving), the rent as per Valuation Roll of 1880 paid by my predecessor in Rhuiar was £10 per annum. You demanded an immediate rise of rent to £30 per annum, and insisted on some conditions in my lease which I felt inequitable; and, over and above, you also demanded a certain £150, all which I had to agree to. The cottage was small, old, and rickety, without a single room wind and water tight or of reasonably large size; but I had, tho' I protested, to accept it as in 'good tenantable order and repair,' and to sign a lease to that effect, while, afterwards, I had to make it habitable entirely at my own expense, with the exception of a few bags of cement supplied by you. I was likewise obliged to say, I accepted fences, roads, drains, and sandbanks, as in like tenantable order. But the 'lands,' being simply about a dozen acres peat bog having a skin of grass on, and no sandbanks at all, nor any fences, roads, or drains worth speaking about, I was under the necessity, in order to obtain some little benefit from the so-called lands, of making more than double the extent of roads and drains, and put up new fencing. I made various improvements and repairs, among others being nine new windows, including frames and glass, and I put a glass into a door. I also built four brick and concrete water tanks. I may remind you of the payment made by me to Mr MacTavish for repairs, the receipt for which your late factor obtained from me on his promise to reimburse me, but which was not paid for or returned to me. I may also remind you that, though I paid you fire insurance premium, I have had to go without repayment of damage by fire, which I repaired.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.
Thomas Wilson.

Altogether, I have expended several hundred pounds in these ways, while you did nothing but draw your rent.

These things I suffered from patiently; but now I find that, instead of appreciating my forbearance, you take advantage of your position as sole landlord of the place, to attempt to intimidate me into paying what I consider an unjust demand (which though invited by me for years to sue for, you failed to test at law), and into foregoing my claim to the money due to me by you.

Instead of availing yourself of the offers I made, which were more than reasonable, or of the ordinary process of law, you intimate that unless I pay an undue demand on account of a totally distinct matter, I can have no place of abode on your property of North Uist. I already yielded to demands beyond reason, and to me it seems you imagine you can exact whatever you like under pain of eviction. I so yielded because I considered it due to myself that I should so far as possible, and even at some sacrifice, be on agreeable terms with you on personal matters. You are aware that, to evict me now from the only available dwelling-house forces me to break up my home, and displenish my furniture, stock, &c., and thus I will be put to serious inconvenience and loss. Yet, notwithstanding, unless I submit to an undue exaction on a different matter you evict me, and inform me I can have no other place from you.

Even were I to submit to that exaction, I fear it would be merely the prelude to further exactions—you not having put in writing the terms you would offer, and the removal term being now at hand, my servants then leaving, and my sale being arranged cause further complications.

I regret exceedingly that I must at last take a stand and say I will pay only what is legally due. I am greatly vexed and injured by having to obey your formal notice to remove, and that I cannot get another house here. A local gentleman has, however, extended hospitality to me, which enables me to stay at Lochmaddy for the present.

I shall be glad to know whether you will purchase my grates and such fixtures as belong to me, and I may wish to sell to you.

I shall also be obliged by your now kindly furnishing me, at your earliest convenience, with a note of the cost of the clerk's cottages, and kindly sending me your cheque for the balance due thereon, and for the £150.

Lochmaddy, North Uist. — Thomas Wilson.

In view of these circumstances, which make me feel the disadvantage of holding under you, and in view of the fact that, in the public interest, the security of my personal independence from the power of any one to hurt or favour me is demanded, I consider I must incur the expenditure of building a suitable residence for myself, and to that end I beg respectfully to ask that you will be pleased to let to me as early as possible, a convenient and suitable site for a dwelling-house, on fair terms, and under feu.—I am, yours faithfully,

(Signed) ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

V.—Letter, 17th November 1891, Mr Chisholm to Sir John Orde.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 17th Nov. 1891.

SIR,—In my letter of the 14th inst. to you, I notice now that I made a clerical error in referring to my letter of the '24th' January. It should be the '22nd,' instead of '24th.'—I am, yours faithfully,

(Signed) ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

VI.—Letter, 23rd November 1891, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson, W.S., Edinburgh, Agents for Sir John Orde, to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
23rd November 1891.

DEAR SIR,—Sir John Orde has handed to us your letter to him of the 14th.

The letter is full of inaccuracies, and if you really wish Sir John to give you a lease or feu, it is certainly an odd way of making such a request by prefacing it with four long pages of an attack upon Sir John which the facts do not warrant.

To Sir John, the letter reads very much as though you rather wished him to refuse your request in order to use his refusal for other purposes, otherwise he can scarcely conceive why, as a preface to your letter, you should indulge in a series of offensive remarks and reflections on his management of his estate, which are not justifiable.

We do not know what was the previous rent of Rhuiar, and cannot admit your figures.

As regards the rents of the clerks' cottages the sum was adjusted with Sir John's late factor, and has been paid continuously year by year until the last year of your occupation, when you for the first time withheld payment for one of the cottages which still remained in your occupation.

We have not the missives which passed between you and the late factor. If you have them we shall be glad to receive a copy. But as the rent was fixed and has been continuously paid till the last year, it seems to us there is no room for any question.

You cannot keep the tenancy of the clerks' cottages distinct from that of Rhuiar.

It is surely unreasonable to expect a proprietor to give a new lease of one property to a tenant who is in arrear with his rent for another. Sir John instructs us to say that it is not the fact that you were asked to accept as good and tenantable buildings which were not so, and it is certainly somewhat odd for you now to disclaim a statement which you admitted to be true when you signed the lease, and to excuse yourself by stating that you were forced to put your name to that statement although you considered it contrary to the fact at the time. When the subjects were let, they were, Sir John believes, in good tenantable order and repair, and they had been occupied by the late Mr Bulkeley and his family up to your entry, and Sir John has no recollection of any complaint having been made by you about the time.

Sir John has no knowledge of the improvements which you state you have made during your tenancy except generally as to some repairs which were made after a fire which took place. These are the repairs, we understand, which you paid for to Mr MacTavish. Sir John has never received the money from the Insurance Company; but if you have Mr MacTavish's detailed voucher, and send it on to us, we shall submit it to Sir John, who will pay the amount.

Lochmaddy, North Uist. — Thomas Wilson.

Sir John has given you no cause for exercising forbearance. He never had, nor has the least wish that you should abate one jot of what are your just rights and claims, or that you should hold otherwise than a perfectly independent position in North Uist. Indeed it is his wish that you should, while in North Uist, occupy an entirely *impartial and independent position.*

Sir John gave you notice to quit Rhuiar, but he was perfectly prepared to receive an offer for a new lease. Although the notice was given on the 6th October 1890, that is, more than a year ago, you have not even so much as asked for a new lease, and have allowed the whole year's warning to expire without making any offer, which certainly one would have expected if you had desired a new lease.

Sir John did intimate that if you took a new lease he would expect you to pay the arrears for the clerk's cottage, which amount to £14, and a few shillings of insurance money, and this indicated that he was quite willing to treat with you for a new lease, and indeed he has made no attempt to let Rhuiar in order that if you desire it you might make an offer to him for it.

Assuming you do not take a new lease, Sir John is willing to take your grates and has telegraphed to-day to that effect.

We do not know what the £150 is of which you claim repayment. If you will be good enough to send us details of this sum and copies of any missives under which it is payable by Sir John, they will at once have his consideration.

Sir John has no desire to alienate Rhuiar or any other portion of North Uist, and therefore declines your request for a feu.—We are, yours truly,

(Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

VII.—Letter, 1st December 1891, Mr Chisholm to Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 1st Dec. 1891.

Feu for Dwelling-House at Lochmaddy.

DEAR SIRS,—Your letter of the 23rd reached me on the evening before the sale of my household effects—the 25th. Being engaged with sale matters prevented my replying earlier. I will be obliged if you will kindly revert to my correct name and designation used by you and your client in addressing me heretofore.

My letter to Sir John Orde was perfectly accurate, and I will only be glad if you point to any inaccuracy in it.

I am judge of how I should write to Sir John. I made no attack on him, and no remarks or reflections on the management of his estate. Remarks by me were necessary and pertinent to my own case, and if they were unpleasant reading for Sir John, and if he managed to extract offence from them, I am not to blame. To pretend to have read my letter in an offensive sense, and to insinuate that it was written with any object save what it bears, is, in view of what I have suffered, mere subterfuge. I had no wish to offend, nor have I. But I desire fair dealing and personal and official independence of the exercise as here of landlord power.

It is needless, although the late factor is dead, to attempt to saddle him with the matter of the cottages for which I dealt, as I will continue to deal with Sir John principally, and he is due money to me on adjusting the matter instead of my being, as you erroneously allege, in 'arrear of rent' for them. If, as you say, it really seems to you 'there is no reason for any question' on that matter, which is entirely distinct from Rhuair, why did not Sir John avail himself of

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

my most reasonable offers to have it determined on its own merits, or why does he not now resort to the ordinary process of law, instead of attempting, by the use of his power, as sole landlord, to extort an unwilling payment from me.

Your letter contradicts former letters of Sir John as well as of your own.

Sir John and his late factor saw some, if not all, of the improvements he now denies knowledge of. Promises by him to make others remained unfulfilled. You ask me for a voucher which he in conversation gave me to understand he had found among his late factor's papers.

You are evidently afraid to say plainly what you mean to convey at the part underlined in your letter. But if any insinuation against my official actings is intended it is best to take it up at once, and for answer to refer your client to the instances where I could not see my way to do what he might wish, and where, on his appealing to Crown counsel, the correctness of my actings was found. Yor insinuation leads me to wonder whether my '*impartial*' position can have anything to do with this infliction of personal inconvenience on me. And the sincerity of his wish for my '*entire independence*' is confuted by his refusal of an independent dwelling-place. I must protest against his being judge and ruler of my position, past or future. His refusal of a feu or other dwelling-place I take unmistakably to show his real desire is to hold me in a position subject to his favour or fear.

Your attempt, by a letter reaching me at the time of my sale, to make it appear that Sir John was all along, or even at that time, prepared to treat fairly with me for Rhuiar is, in view of notice to quit, and following correspondence and actings, flagrantly incorrect. That Rhuiar is not re-let is doubtless due to the fact that no one else would put up with the same terms as I held on, and not to any consideration for me. If what is attempted now to be shown for the first time had any foundation in fact, why did he bar my offer from me which he knew I was of necessity anxious to make, by his adhering (as he still adheres) to his intimation that he would make no terms for Rhuiar until I would yield to his exaction in name of rent for the cottages, which exaction was for a totally distinct matter, as his own letter shows, and regarding which I made the favourable offers for its determination on its own merits, referred to already? Why did he not even reply to my letter of 22nd January. And why, on the 5th ultimo, when I met him on the public road here, and approached him with the intention of speaking to him, did he, in presence of the Sheriff-Substitute, turn his back on me.

The offer made for the grates was so small that I had to refuse it and to expose them at the sale, where they fetched double.

The £150 is, as Sir John no doubt well knows, due for buildings, and I again ask payment of that and the balance due to me on the matter of the cottages.

I did not ask to feu Rhuiar, tho' I am ready to do so on fair terms. I simply ask, under fair conditions, any suitable house site on feu. Sir John's acceding, and that only, will prove his wish for the independence of Crown officials at Lochmaddy, and I respectfully ask that, upon consideration, Sir John will be pleased to accede to my request.—I am, yours truly,

ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

VIII.—Letter, 5th January 1892, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
5th Jan. 1892.

DEAR SIR,—On the 7th ulto., we received your letter of the 1st, but owing to Sir John Orde's engagements and his recent illness, we were unable until last night to confer with him, and obtain his instructions for our reply.

We may mention that, when writing to you on the 23rd Nov., we were not aware that we were designing you otherwise than we had previously done, and the words we underlined were not intended to convey any insinuation, but merely to emphasise Sir John's acquiescence in your desire for an impartial and independent position in the island.

We do not propose to continue at present the correspondence in regard to the arrears for the cottages and your claim for buildings, or the various statements in your letter which could only lead to further controversy, and prevent a right understanding, at which it is most desirable to arrive.

Sir John now authorises us to state that he cannot assent to give you a feu; but that, in recognition of your official position, he is willing to renew your lease of Rhuair, at the same rent and for the whole period during which you may hold your present office, subject of course to the regular payment of the rent.

We shall be glad to know at your convenience if this offer is accepted.

The question of the arrears for the cottages, and your claim for buildings, we propose to reserve to be dealt with separately, and in this matter we are meeting your own desire in regard to the arrears.—We are, yours truly, (Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

IX.—Letter, 25th January 1892, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
25th Jan. 1892.

Rhuiar.

DEAR SIR,—We wrote to you on the 5th, stating that although Sir John Orde could not grant you a feu, he is quite willing, in consideration of your official position, to continue your lease of this house and ground for the whole period of your office, subject, of course, to due payment of rent.

We have not, however, received any reply from you.

Sir John has several applicants for the place, and one of them is pressing for an answer. Moreover, Sir John is ordered to take a voyage for his health, and desires to have this matter settled before he leaves.

We shall, therefore, be glad to hear from you in course if you desire to accept Sir John's offer, contained in our letter to you of the 5th, or not.—Yours truly,

(Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

X.—Letter, 13th February 1892, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
13th Feb. 1892.

Rhuiar.

DEAR SIR,—We wrote to you on the 5th, and again on the 25th ulto., on behalf of Sir John Orde, offering you a lease, during your tenure of the office of Procurator-Fiscal, but have not had a reply to either of these letters. Sir John has left for the West Indies, but left us instructions to close with another offerer, if you do not wish to renew your lease.

We shall, therefore, feel obliged by your letting us have your reply in the course of next week.—Yours truly, (Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

XI.—Letter, 18th February 1892, Mr Chisholm to Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 18th Feb. 1892.

Feu for dwelling-house at Lochmaddy.

DEAR SIRS,—Your three letters of the 5th and 25th January and 13th instant respectively I have.

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Speciously enough, your letter of the 5th January professes a desire to arrive at a right understanding. The way you propose such to be reached is anything but right to my understanding. Things ripest for settlement you propose to leave over, so that, I presume, you can raise after trouble about them, and to thus begin at the wrong end. First for settlement stand the monies due to me before and at my eviction if there is any genuine desire for a right understanding. It is a great pity that such a desire was no way manifest before the 5th of January last. Faith in its real existence will obtain only when your actions prove it. I regret that I cannot discover anything beyond its wordy profession. Sir John still declines to grant me a house site as I asked and still want; he, without so much as alleging a right or excuse, withholds settlement of the £150, and other monies of mine; and you make no reply to parts of my previous correspondence. Another revelation of the 'desire' is I believe the delay in paying me for things taken at my eviction from me. By your offering 'to renew' or 'to continue' my lease, I failed to see what you intended. When you so wrote you well knew no lease was then held by me, and the only lease I had at one time has been brought to an end by Sir John Orde's eviction of me, while the subject became tenanted by himself. I also fail to see why, before suggesting in any way such a thing, you do not pay over the £150, &c., due to me long ago on account of that subject. Tenure such as is suggested by your letter, may end at any time from one of several contingencies, and a lease on anything like the terms of the lease I once held would, I fear, merely mean spoliation of me, if during such a tenure my duty might chance to disagree with the aims of whoever might be proprietor. I have no reason to feel sure I would not be harassed and put to needless loss personally, either during such tenure or at its termination, by some of the devices of professional landlordism which are so difficult to guard against, and of which a feu would render me independent. You say Sir John Orde at 5th January last authorised you in recognition of my position to make the sort of offer you made. My position was as easy of recognition before I was evicted and ever since 1881 when I took the lease of Rhuair Cottage and land, under which I was evicted last year, and have suffered so much. He recognised my position in 1881 by trebling the rent of my predecessor, by getting also the £150 (which he is now so loath to disgorge), and by insisting on a lease on his own terms. Promises by him as to certain things were disregarded. The ostensible reason given by Sir John and you for insisting on my eviction and which you before attempted to justify, and said was inseparable from a tenancy of Rhuair, you now propose, without even apology, to treat as unworthy of discussion meantime. Your own proposal is a fine satire upon your client's conduct. All the trouble and loss that could be inflicted on me was inflicted. Up till 5th January last I was barred from making any proposal regarding Rhuiar, and informed I would have no place on Sir John Orde's property, and I was evicted although Sir John could well calculate the loss, anxiety, inconvenience, and indignity put upon me. My effects had to be sacrificed at public auction, and now after all my dear-bought experience, the replenishing of a house, &c., in an outlandish place like this, is a matter not to be lightly thought of unless the house be a good one, and be held under fair secure tenure. Now, you unexpectedly abandon your high-handed style, and suddenly you make me a bald offer and try to hurry me into an acceptance of it, the acceptance of which would be as stupid as the offer itself.

I may say that had I not been barred before my eviction last year from making overtures regarding my continuing to reside at Rhuair Cottage, I would require the £150, and the non-exaction of a like sum on any pretext, also that water should be supplied, and certain apartments and the kitchen enlarged, and that ridiculously irritating conditions should not again obtain. So little worth in Sir John's eyes is the cottage that, after my eviction from it, it was for days left open to all comers, and since the eviction it has been left notwithstanding the trying climate and exceptionally severe winter, absolutely unoccupied, unaired, and unfired. I do not suppose you mean to say you have really any *bona fide* offer for Rhuiar on the terms imposed upon me. A feu as asked would enable me to erect a house with suitable apartments and conveniences, in which I, and probably my successors, would live in comfort and in independence of any landlord's control. I cannot see why, in order to my living here in comfort and health, and carrying out my duties, I should (after all my past forbearance, under my trying experiences), be forced by circumstances (which can surely be controlled by Government), to retake under name of a house, a cottage with ridiculously small apartments, and destitute of a regular water supply, and to retake, under name of lands, a tract of peat under whatever conditions a landlord chooses to lay down. The question is, I think, of National importance.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

I hereby intimate that I reserve right to take such proceedings as I may be advised in respect of the insinuation I before complained of. The illness of a legal gentleman has prevented my doing anything as yet. It is specially hurtful that it is made through the medium of, and, I presume, on the advice of, your firm. You had already had opportunity to withdraw and tender satisfaction, or else, if you possibly could explain it fairly away, and you have attempted to pass it off by an explanation obviously false. This was to some extent a cause of delay in writing, and I do so now only as you press for a reply.—Yours truly,

(Signed) ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

XII.—Letter, 5th March 1892, Messrs Tods, Murray and Jamieson, to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
5th March 1892.

DEAR SIR,—We received, on the 23rd ulto., your letter of the 18th ulto.

We regret that you should still continue a tone of correspondence which is not calculated to promote good feeling, and should still make remarks which are quite uncalled for and unjustifiable.

The position, we understand, to be as follows:—

As Procurator-Fiscal you desire a residence at Lochmiddy. In your letter of the 14th Nov. last to Sir John, you stated that the house occupied by you from him was the only available dwelling-house, and you complained of being removed from it without having any other house to go to. Sir John has offered to let that house to you again, and we referred to the old lease that you had from Sir John for the terms upon which it was proposed to be let.

If the house is not in a tenantable condition, Sir John will put it into proper tenantable condition for your occupation.

It is now two months since we made this offer on Sir John's behalf, and after a delay of six weeks, your reply seems to indicate that the house is not suitable, and that you do not wish it.

We shall be glad to know if we correctly interpret your letter, as, if you do not take the house, Sir John must, of course, let it to some other offerer.

It seems to us that a lease to last during your tenure of office as Procurator-Fiscal gives you as completely an independent and impartial position as a feu would, with this further advantage, that when your tenure of office expires the house would be available for your successor in office, should he desire it. Sir John has no desire to feu, and if he did give you a feu he would not be able to offer it to your successor in office.

As regards your claim for £150, we have no information before us to enable us to judge whether that claim is well founded or not. We asked for details and vouchers of your claim in our letter of the 23rd November last, but have not yet received these from you. If you will supply us with this information the

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

claim will have our attention, and also Sir John's, when he returns from the West Indies.

We had no desire to ignore this claim, but, as we understand, your great desire was to have a house, and that you objected to mix up your request for a house with the question of Sir John Orde's claims against you, we thought we would only be meeting your own wishes by dealing with the question of a house for you *separately*, and leaving over these other matters, which must necessarily take some time for adjustment.

Regarding the concluding paragraph of your letter, we have simply to repeat that no such insinuation as you suggest was made or intended by us, or Sir John.—Yours truly, (Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

XIII.—Letter, 22nd March 1892, Mr Chisholm to Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 22nd March 1892.

DEAR SIRS,—I have your letter of the 5th inst.

Facts necessitated the tone of my last letter, and I will thank you if you will kindly confine your remarks to business. Good feeling there was far too much of on my part, but most things have bounds, and good feeling will be promoted best by good dealing. You will please allow me to express my regret that owing to your attempts upon me I must continue the correspondence without change of tone, however distasteful to you it must be.

I have asked a house site in feu in consequence of the treatment which I suffered and of which I dreaded recurrence.

You diverted the correspondence into trying to get me to re-take the place I was evicted from. After the refusal by Sir John Orde to treat before eviction and the eviction, I never dreamt of putting myself again in his power to be treated as his aims may best be suited.

The position is not what you try to build up.

The position was as I already wrote. I had in 1881 to take such a house at such terms as Sir John Orde insisted on. The terms were the same as were then imposed on his poor crofters, until, fortunately for them, more favourable modifications were since enacted by Parliament for them, and these old ridiculous terms you, notwithstanding my former letters, would still hint at my subjecting myself to again. The alleged offer is inapplicable and senseless, and whatever object you had in so making it, unasked, and in pressing it on me, it was so made as to be practically impossible to be accepted. You would ask me again to pay £150? On what grounds? You already know what I suffered during my former lease and since my eviction. The monies paid by me for repairs, the £150, &c., and the other monies due to me at last November, and before then, are delayed settlement of by you, though you do not even allege a right to them.

I was debarred for nearly a year before my eviction, by Sir John Orde, from making any approach to him unless I submitted to what I knew was pure extortion. Ostensibly because I would not pay a sum of money not due to him, and forego my right to a sum due to me by him, both in a matter very distinctly apart from my tenancy of the place from which I was evicted, and despite my most reasonable offers for settlement of those sums, he insisted on evicting me and putting me to all attendant troubles, as you can see by reference to my letter to him of 22nd January 1891, and his letter to me of 9th November 1891. That ostensible reason you, on 5th January last, dropped, after all possible power had been exhausted in hurting me on it, and then you also began to try and lure me back to have me again at Sir John's mercy. In your letter of 23rd November last you justified and upheld Sir John's conduct, and raised frivolous pretexts (not yet departed from) for delaying to settle sums long past due to me now, and you then denied I made certain necessary improvements and repairs, though since some have been admitted by Sir John's local agent. You have coolly proposed that I should not have matters connected with the old holding paid up to me, but that I should retake it and so become the sport of further proceedings or delays. I know your client far too well to put myself in any position where he can harass or exercise control over me. He has delayed to pay monies due to me at outgoing, and having outrageously insulted me by eviction, he, in the same breath says, through you, that he desires I should have an '*impartial*' and independent position, and then he declines my request for a feu, and tries to get me to retake, on terms altogether one-sided, the very place he evicted me from. I do not want to be forced to experience any more maltreatment. My letter of 14th November was not at all written by way of complaint, as you say, but merely to point out reasons for wanting a feu, rather than to be disadvantaged on every hand as a tenant. As to monies due to me at outgoing, they were so clearly and inseparably mixed up with the tenancy that they cannot for any good purpose be desired to be separated from it. You well know they are not the monies I objected to being mixed up with my tenancy of Rhuiar. The want of settlement inconveniences me. It is distinctly not at my request any of the matters are left over so long. The delay in settling is entirely due to yourselves or your client, for some ulterior object. Had you authority to settle as to my retaking Rhuiar you must have had authority also to settle matters bearing on a tenancy of it, and of which payments of these monies are some. And I still think, as I before said, that if your professions of desire for any proper understanding were genuine, you would at once have offered to settle these old matters connected with the place from which I had been evicted before you would presume to ask me to retake it on any terms. That, and as I already more fully explained, was the position.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

The position now is that I am houseless, and Sir John is sole proprietor. He turned me out on a pretext so flimsy that it has been dropped by yourselves. I was compelled to sell off my effects at a heavy loss. Every ingenuity has been used to harass me, by withholding monies not questioned to be due to me, and by now making for articles I was induced not to sell (as they were beneficial to the holding), on the day of my sale upon the agreement that I would get paid for them—ridiculously low offers, in consequence of which I have had to place the latter in the hands of an agent. The only safe footing for me is, I clearly see, a house site in feu, as I asked. The position after eviction is entirely different to what it was before. Since you have suddenly turned round on your base, and try to urge me to walk back on unintelligible terms, and without first having payment of monies past due, into your client's power, and that, too, at a rack rent, into subjects which are unique, and, as I said, unsuitable, on ridiculous conditions, and without any suggestion of compensation or apology for the proceedings by your client I dread a repetition at another outgoing of the treatment meted out to me now. I cannot be buffeted about like this for Sir John Orde's profit or caprice. I ask a house site in feu, that is the position.

There is no need to discuss what you say seems to you best for me. In view of the past I can hold only one opinion.

It is absurd to say you have no information as to the £150, and to ask instruction regarding it from me. Your instruction will come best from your own client who will tell you on what grounds he demanded and took the £150 from me. Did your 'offer' mean that I should forego the £150 and again pay you another £150?

I hope this correspondence will now end by my getting my simple requests of settlement of my monies and a house site in feu granted without more delay.—Yours truly, (Signed) ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

Lochmaddy, North Uist. Thomas Wilson.

XIV.—Letter, 1st April 1892, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson, to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
1st April 1892.

Rhuiar.

DEAR SIR,—We have received your letter of the 22nd ulto.

We are not aware of having wandered beyond what was strictly pertinent to the business in any of our letters to you; nor shall we follow you in your lengthy remarks regarding Sir John Orde and his actings, beyond stating that they are quite inaccurate. The position which you put forward is that you are homeless, and that Sir John Orde is sole proprietor.

We have referred to your lease. It is exceedingly short and contains eight clauses. The 1st fixed the endurance; the 2nd fixed the rent, £18 for the house and offices, and £12 for the land, making together £30; the 3rd gave you right to take peats; the 4th was the cropping clause; the 5th relates to fences; the 6th bound the tenant to maintain the buildings in tenantable order and repair; the 7th reserved to Sheriff Webster right of passage through the subjects let; and the 8th is the ordinary clause of removing at the termination of the lease. Which of these provisions you can call unintelligible or ridiculous we do not know, and we ask you to explain.

We have already offered you, and we repeat the offer, a lease to endure so long as you are Procurator-Fiscal at Lochmaddy, at the old rent of £30 upon the eight conditions above stated, subject to any modification which the circumstances may require.

You speak of the rent as being excessive. Our information is different, but if you specify the rent you are prepared to give, your offer will be considered.

As to the £150 we have no information. Sir John could not inform us how your claim was made up, and although we have repeatedly asked you, you have given us no information.

If you will give us particulars and vouchers of your claim, and will let us have any documents you may have substantiating it, or copies of them, we shall give it our prompt consideration.

We must now ask you to let us have an early reply to our repeated requests, whether you wish to retake the house and land on the footing we have stated, viz.: that it shall be yours during the whole time you occupy your official position at Lochmaddy. We cannot allow the house to remain longer unlet and unoccupied, and we now formally intimate to you that this offer is made to you, on the terms we have stated, until the 1st of May, and that if not accepted by you by that date *simpliciter*, or with such alterations, if any, as you may propose and as Sir John can agree to, we shall hold on Sir John's behalf that it is declined by you, and shall thereafter proceed to let or otherwise dispose of the house.

Sir John declines, as we have already told you, to give you a feu, but the present renewed offer has the advantage, as we have repeatedly explained, that it secures the house we offer you as a residence for yourself and your successors as Procurators-Fiscal of the district, which, of course, a feu could not secure.—We are, yours truly, (Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

XV.—Letter, 1st March 1893, Mr Chisholm, to Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

Lochmaddy, 1st March 1893.

Residence for Procurator-Fiscal, &c.

DEAR SIRS,—I would desire to call your attention to the fact that payment of the sum of £150, due by Sir John Orde to me, has not yet been made. In your letter of 1st April last to me you made reference thereto, and asked me to supply you with further information about that sum, but you could not expect me seriously to believe that Sir John Orde was ignorant of what he asked and received payment of the £150 from me for, and I have some hopes now that he has had time calmly to consider the true position of matters, you will advise him candidly to inform you of the facts regarding it, and to pay me that and the other sums justly due to me. I have, you must admit, waited long enough for a settlement of that and other claims, and I must now ask you to say 'yes' or 'no' whether your client is to pay. Evasion will not do any longer.

The other matters referred to in your letter I had considered it advisable should lie over, so that your client might calmly consider the true position of matters. It is time an end should be put to the position into which the Public Prosecutor for the district has been driven, and of being without a dwelling-house of his own to reside in, and indebted for hospitality to a local gentleman—not even being permitted to live in the only hotel in the place, the property of Sir John. I have already fully gone into that, and need not do so again in this letter, but you will permit me to say that my experiences (and what I have seen in the way of other public officials similarly harassed) satisfy me that a public officer cannot, save at great sacrifices to himself, personally carry out his duties, without fear or favour here, so long as he is in any position save that of a proprietor of a comfortable and sanitary residence, held independently under feu, and absolutely free from the power, control, or influence of any landlord. A lease does not afford that position. It is scarce necessary for me to enter on further argument with you on the details of my old lease, save that I must correct your way of quoting it. The eight clauses you do refer to are incorrectly quoted, and you entirely omit mention of thirty-two additional clauses referred to in the lease, and forming part of it—they being estate regulations. Read them. We need not discuss them farther, as they speak for themselves. These and the treatment inflicted on me will surely satisfy the public mind that a residence, as asked by me, is necessary in the circumstances. And I now finally ask if your client is to grant my simple requests. And I ask them not as favours, or anything else, but as matters of simple right and equity.—I am, yours truly,

(Signed) ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

XVI.—Letter, 17th March 1893, Messrs Tods, Murray and Jamieson, to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
17th March 1893.

DEAR SIR,—We received your letter of the 1st, which we communicated to our client.

As to the claim for £150, we have already asked you for particulars. Sir John is not aware of any undertaking or agreement under which you can claim that sum from him, but if you will be good enough to give us a statement of the grounds of your claim it will have his consideration.

As regards your renewed application for a feu, we have no other answer to make than that which was made to your letters in the spring of last year.

As to the propriety of the Government supplying official houses for public officers, that is a matter beyond our sphere. We think it formed the subject of a question in the House of Commons with reference to your very case in March last, and you are, no doubt, aware of the answer which was then made.—Yours truly,

(Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

XVII.—Letter, 17th April 1893, Mr Chisholm, to Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 17th April 1893.

Feu for Residence for Procurator-Fiscal.

Dear Sirs,—I duly received your letter of the 17th ultimo.

Sir John Orde must be, as I already said, perfectly aware of the nature and grounds of the claim for £150, &c. It may, however, be that he has not a copy of the receipt granted for the money paid by me, and I annex a copy of it for him, but he must surely have had all along entries in his own books relative thereto. I expect an early remittance of that amount, and also settlement for the articles taken over at Rhuiar at my ejection, not yet paid for, and of the balance due to me on the cottages (sometime Mr Wilson's, &c.), which was made a handle of for my ejection, when money was really due, and is still due, to me, by Sir J. Orde instead of my being due to him.

My attention was drawn to a question in March 1892, in the House of Commons, and answer thereto. So far as I am concerned, the question is not such as I would have put had I framed it, but as to the answer I had little doubt it was inspired from you while you were agents for Sir J. Orde, through the medium of your Mr Jamieson, then Crown Agent, and conveyed to the House of Commons by the then Lord Advocate, about that time employed by you as private counsel for Sir J. Orde. You are as well aware as I am how much value need be placed upon it. I was not consulted as to its correctness.—I am, yours truly,

(Signed) Archd. A. Chisholm.

(*Copy Receipt.*)

Newton, 23rd Feb. 1882.

Received from Archd. Chisholm, Esq., the sum of One hundred and fifty pounds stg., being for new buildings at Rhuiar (£150).

(Signed) J. Macdonald,
23rd, Feb. 1882,
Factor for
Sir J. W. C. Orde, Bart.

XVIII.—Letter, 25th April 1893, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson, to Mr Chisholm.

66 Queen Street, Edinburgh,
25th April 1893.

Dear Sir,—We received your letter of the 17th inst., sending us a copy of the receipt you hold from Mr Macdonad p. £150, signed 23rd February 1882. That money did not go to the estate, but to the widow of the late Mr Bulkeley, who had agreed to bear half of the expense of the new buildings, and we understand that it was a condition of your getting a lease that you should pay the £150 to Mr Bulkeley's representatives.

It was never intended that you should receive this sum at the end of your lease. If there had been any such understanding it would have been expressed in your lease, but we find nothing in it to warrant the claim.

We may further mention, that though you were bound by your lease to keep up and maintain the buildings and fences, &c., in good tenantable order and repair, that obligation was not properly implemented, and Sir John has had to be at considerable expense in putting them in sufficient repair.

As regards the articles taken over at Rhuiar, we understand that you were tendered the value put upon them by a valuator, when you referred the factor to Mr Wilson, who has made no communication to him (the factor).

As you, however, object to the value, we understand Sir John proposes to have the articles taken down and removed, but we shall write to you again on this subject when we hear further from Sir John.

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

We think we have already sufficiently discussed the question of the cottage rents.

The insinuation in the concluding paragraph of your letter regarding the Lord Advocate's reply to the question put in the House of Commons, in March 1892, is without any foundation, and we consider it deserves no notice from us, although we may remark that Mr Jamieson was abroad at the time when the question was put and answered.—We are, yours truly,

(Signed) Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

XIX.—Letter, 21st November 1893, Mr Chisholm to Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

Procurator-Fiscal's Office,
Lochmaddy, 21st Nov. 1893.

Feu for Residence for the Procurator-Fiscal at Lochmaddy, &c.

Dear Sirs,—I have been waiting expecting to hear further from you, as you promised in your letter of 25th April last, without having heard from you.

It was not a condition of my getting a lease that I should pay £150 to the late Mr Bulkeley's representatives. You yourselves, in narrating in your letter of 1st April 1892, the conditions upon which I had held do not specify this as one of the conditions: nor would you ever reply to my repeated queries about this when you tried to hurriedly entrap me into saying I would re-take the place I was evicted from on terms which I said were indefinite and unsatisfactory, but your letter of 25th April last makes it clear you intended to mulct me afresh of another £150. Can you yet appreciate the difference between such a short lease and a feu, or that I should decline your overture to enter into your '*impartial*' position! I paid the £150, as Sir John is well aware, on his instructions to his late factor, on the distinct undertaking they would be repaid at outgoing. They were paid to Sir John, and I had nothing to do with their application afterwards. I ask repayment without further ado, and if it is not at once made Sir John will not have to blame me for the consequences.

I distinctly contradict your statement that I was in any way responsible for the state of repair of the old cottage when Sir John came to repair it. He left it uninhabited and uncared for for nearly two years after he evicted me, notwithstanding that Sir John wrote to me on a previous occasion — "Unless a house is 'inhabited in these damp climates they deteriorate very 'much,' and now, long after my eviction, you make this bogus statement, while nothing of the sort was hinted at that time.

As to the articles taken over at Rhuiar, and unpaid for, I declined all along to accept as sole valuator the man Sir John wanted—a jobbing contractor in his own employ. Sir John may do with the articles, which are his, what he pleases, but he must pay me for them.

The money due to me on the question of the cottages I daresay you have, in your opinion, sufficiently discussed. It was made by Sir John Orde the pretext for my eviction, and by his requesting me to pay a sum I was not due for them, and he declared he evicted me on account of that question. After my eviction you asked me to leave over that question for after adjustment. Now you would like to drop it altogether. I cannot afford to allow it to drop, and must ask finally for payment of the money due to me on that head.

I made no insinuation regarding the late Lord Advocate's reply to the question in the House of Commons, in March 1892. I leave insinuation to you. I made a plain statement. The high-toned explanation your firm presumes to adopt, that your Mr Jamieson was, at the time the question was answered, temporarily absent from both his offices, does not virtually alter my view.

I ought in fairness to you to candidly say that the dual position of your Mr Jamieson, as Crown Agent for Scotland (through whose office my official correspondence had for years passed) and as private agent for Sir John Orde, has to my mind been, in these proceedings, an unsatisfactory factor, both in regard to that answer, and also in regard to the insinuation, contained in your letter to me on 23rd November 1891, that I should, as Sir John Orde wished, 'in North Uist occupy an entirely *impartial and independent position*,' and of which the explanations you tendered were such as I could not, in common sense, accept as satisfactory.

I still want a house site, and payment of the several sums due to me.

As I previously said, this matter is of national importance, and I do not propose to continue any further a discussion with you which seems, notwithstanding my forbearance, to be so fruitless of good result, but I must now submit the matter elsewhere, and with that view I am having the correspondence printed. For two years I have striven, at great personal sacrifices, to obtain recognition of my just requests, and to avoid publicity, but I am sorry to see my efforts have failed, and that now you leave me no alternative but to publicly vindicate my position.—I am, yours truly,

(Signed) ARCHD. A. CHISHOLM.

XX.—Letter, 25th January 1894, Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson to Mr Chisholm.

Edinburgh, 25th January 1894.

DEAR SIR,—We received your letter of the 21st November, and would have replied to it at the time, but Sir John Campbell Orde was then unwell, and we were unable to confer with him.

He has been able to discover no writing, and you have not produced any, showing that the £150 was to be repaid to you, and he has no recollection of any promise of repayment being made or authorised by him. If there had been such a promise it would have been a condition in your lease, and as your lease contains no such condition, and as Sir John has no recollection of any such promise being made or authorised, it is clear that you have no good claim for this sum against him.

Moreover we have again to remind you that by your lease you were bound to maintain the buildings, and to leave them in good order and repair. You failed to do this, with the result that Sir John had to expend over £120 upon them.

With reference to the articles taken over at Rhuiar and our promise to write to you again on the subject we communicated with Sir John, who informed us that Mr Maclean would take up that matter with you, and we were in consequence under the impression that this matter had been arranged between you and Mr Maclean. It now appears that is not the case, and we have therefore to inform you that the articles belonging to you are still at Rhuiar, and are at your disposal. Sir John had them valued and made you an offer. As you considered the offer inadequate and Sir John is not disposed to increase his offer you had better have them removed.

We do not consider that the other matters referred to in your letter require any further answer or notice on our part.—We are, yours truly,

(Signed) TODS, MURRAY & JAMIESON.

XXI.—Letter, 2nd February 1894, Mr Wilson to Messrs Tods, Murray & Jamieson.

Lochmaddy, 2nd February 1894.

DEAR SIRS,—Mr Chisholm, Crown Prosecutor for the Long Island Division of Inverness-shire, sometime ago handed me the correspondence which had passed between him and Sir John Orde and your firm, relative to Sir John Orde's treatment of him and refusal to grant him a site to erect a dwelling-house in North Uist, and he has now handed me your letter of the 25th ulto.

I regret your letter did not reach me before that correspondence was sent for publication, or I would have had it and this reply published also; but you must blame yourselves, as I see from the *Northern Chronicle* your client, Sir John Orde, was on 5th ulto. at the Central Hotel, Glasgow, and was then offering to travel to Inverness (if someone else would pay his expenses), so that your excuse for him of ill-health comes to me very much like the echo of the reason given for his failure to proceed beyond Varna, when his country's battles had to be fought in the Crimea.

Upon perusal of that correspondence I was so struck with—(1) The conduct of your client, Sir John Orde, in systematically blackmailing and outrageously evicting Her Majesty's Public Prosecutor in these islands, and refusing to allow him a place of abode anywhere 'in North Uist,' ostensibly over a trifling matter of a few pounds, but, as is now clear, really because he did his public duty justly and fearlessly over the whole area of his jurisdiction; and would not make any exception 'in North Uist' (the fractional part thereof belonging to Sir John Orde), and because he refused at all costs to himself (and truly they have been heavy) to be coerced into, or to entertain any covert understanding for, the administration of the criminal law 'in North Uist' differently from the rest of Scotland. (2) The conduct of your firm (your Mr Jamieson being at the time Crown Agent for Scotland), acting as Sir John Orde's paid private agents, aiding and abetting Sir John Orde in his abominable scheme, and by making the grave insinuation or overture (whichever way it may read) in your letter of 23rd November, 1891, to the Public Prosecutor, an insinuation which you must have been perfectly aware was untrue, and which your explanation in your letter to him of 5th January, 1892, only aggravated; and then in attempting to cover your client's scheme by dragging into the correspondence and founding upon an apologetic and partial statement made in the House of Commons in March, 1892, by Lord Advocate Pearson (then employed by you as Sir John Orde's paid private counsel) from information which you do not deny was supplied through you. On these and other grounds I considered it advisable to have the whole correspondence published, with the view of having determined—(*a*) Whether her Majesty's Public Prosecutor in the Long Island is to obtain a proper dwelling-place at the seat of Court to enable him to carry out freely, and without even colour of persecution, his official duties; or whether he is to be under the control and at the mercy of Sir John Orde, the sole proprietor of that part of the district in which the Court is situated, and the administration of justice be thus reduced to worse than a farce; (*b*) Whether the Crown Agent for Scotland was justified, for the sake of private gain, in acting on behalf of Sir John Orde—the sole landlord—in his attempt upon a subordinate Crown official, and in supplying only *ex parte* information to the Lord Advocate without any inquiry for full information of the facts from that official.

The Crown Prosecutor is correct when he says in his letter to you of 18th February 1892 that the matter is one of national importance. It raises two questions of far greater importance than the pecuniary ones involved. It will now require to be determined by the nation whether the right use of landed property is not a higher right than that of technical proprietorship, and whether the Crown is not bound in the public interest to insist upon Sir John Orde, the technical proprietor of North Uist, granting the Crown—the true proprietor—a piece of land for the site of a dwelling-place for the Crown Prosecutor; also whether the Crown Agent for Scotland is to be allowed to have the advantage of such a public position for the furtherance of the illegitimate aims of his private clients for pay.

It is too monstrous for expression to find (as the correspondence clearly shows, has been Mr Chisholm's experience at Sir John Orde's hands) that in the 19th century the Crown Public Prosecutor should not dare impartially to perform the public duties he is sworn to perform without having the wrath and systematic vengeance of the man who happens to be sole pro-

Lochmaddy, North Uist.

Thomas Wilson.

prietor of North Uist Island levelled at him—evicted from his home through your agency on a trumped up pretext which I observe you afterwards not only abandoned, but desired even to drop discussion of; his household effects compelled to be sacrificed by sale at public auction; thereafter a pretence of willingness to relet, which, when examined, was seen to be a petti-fogging dodge; next, the only hotel in the place (also belonging to Sir John Orde) debarred him; every harrassment studiously used against him, and he himself forced to trust to the generosity of the only leaseholder in the district for a roof over the heads of himself and his family, and it is deplorably humiliating to find that in that course of outrageous conduct Sir John Orde has been aided by the Crown Agent for Scotland for pay. I propose presenting a petition to Her Majesty the Queen in Council in regard to this matter.

Your letter of the 25th ulto. I briefly dismiss. It is but a continuation of that evasion and quibbling of which your letters are unfortunately too full. I observe that time after time Mr Chisholm questions you on material points which you, with undoubted discourtesy, ignore replying to, and I find it impossible to conclude that you had any other object in so doing than to make it impossible for him, even if he wished, to accept the pretended offer of a relet of the place he had been evicted from, therefore he declines further correspondence with you and I have advised him not to entrust you with any documents bearing on his claims against Sir John Orde. The alleged want of recollection of Sir John Orde on the £150, etc., claims, I will take an opportunity of refreshing, and asking him to disgorge. The rapacity of the man who, taking advantage of his position of sole landlord of an island suddenly raises a rent from £12, 10s. to £30 per annum; makes the tenant pay £150 for buildings; evicts him without cause; refuses to settle or disgorge anything; and then proposes to the evicted and insulted tenant to retake the place on the same terms, is unparalleled.

Mr Chisholm has already repudiated liability for the repairs you allege to have been executed at Rhuiar Cottage, which you first bring to his notice two years after his eviction therefrom, and as to the articles at Rhuiar it is absurd to offer them back to Mr Chisholm, after taking over, keeping, and using them for over two years.

Sir John will have to pay for them.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) THOMAS WILSON.

26th June 1894.

P.S.—I will endeavour to do justice by having your last letter and this published.

[ADJOURNED.]

FORTY-NINTH SITTING.

Tarbert, Harris.

TARBERT, HARRIS, June 28, 1894.

Present:—

GEORGE GORDON, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
Rev. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*.

Norman Macleod.

NORMAN MACLEOD, Crofter, Borsham, South Harris (75). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter).

41,870. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter in Borsham?—Yes.

41,871. How many crofters are there in Borsham?—Four.

41,872. And how many cottars?—Only one cottar. Allan and Angus Macdonald have the same croft, No. 4, Borsham.

41,873. Then there are four crofts and five crofters?—Four crofts and two on each croft.

41,874. What size of a croft have you?—Only very small.

41,875. What stock have you?—Two cows, with calves, and three heifers.

41,876. Any horses?—No.

41,877. What rent do you pay?—£2, 15s.

41,878. Are you a crofter under the Act?—Yes.

41,879. What was your old rent?—£4, 17s. 6d.

41,880. Is your township crowded?—Crowded enough: eight families to-day.

41,881. I thought you said there were only six families,—five crofters and one cottar?—There are two families on every croft, making eight on the four crofts.

41,882. How long have the eight families been on the four crofts?—A long time.

41,883. Is there any land in your neighbourhood that could be got for the extension of your township?—There is land near us.

41,884. Where?—There is vacant ground southward of us.

41,885. On what farm is the vacant ground?—It is in the tack of Rodel and Strond: it belongs to Mrs Macdonald: it is on both sides of the township of Rodel, east and west of it.

41,886. Then it is part of the farm of Rodel?—Yes.

41,887. Is there arable land on that farm that would be available for new townships?—Yes, there were people there before.

41,888. Is there any other land in that part of the island which you think would be suitable for new holdings for crofters?—I don't know any except what is to the west of Harris.

41,889. On what farm is the land that you speak of?—It is vacant without any people: there are nine vacant townships between Nisishee and Nisabost.

41,890. Can you tell us the names of these nine townships beginning with Nisishee?—Drimaphuind, Ceann-Tuilbheig, Caolas-Liadiar. [*Mr Macrae.*—He is going south instead of north]. I cannot say much about the rest.

41,891. You have named only four townships out of the nine?—Craco is the first township, Vatten next, then Seilebost, Nisabost, Torgabost, Borvebeg, Borvemeanach or Mid-Borve, Borvemore, Scarastavore, and Scarastaveg.

41,892. Is there old arable land upon all the townships that you have mentioned?—Yes.

41,893. Suitable for crofting townships?—Yes, I was born there myself.

41,894. Were there crofter townships on that ground before?—Yes.

41,895. When was the ground cleared of the crofters?—When the army came to remove them; when I was a youngster a company of soldiers came to remove them.

41,896. Did the people leave of their own accord?—No, they would never do that: they were very loth to go.

41,897. Were they put out of that by force?—Yes, against their will.

41,898. Is there a desire in your township for larger holdings?—I cannot say anything about that.

41,899. Are you content with the size of holdings which you now have?—I am too old to go into that now, but if I would get additional land where I am I would prefer it.

41,900. Is there a general desire among the crofters in the island to get back to the townships which you have mentioned?—Yes: I would ask myself, if I was young enough. It was very well worth asking for, compared with what we have now; and there are men here who will speak for themselves. I would rather a foot there than a yard or even two yards where I am.

41,901. Is the land better along the west coast of

the island than on the east side where the townships are?—It is well known that it is. Where I cut my peats this year I must put my crops next year; that is on the east side.

41,902. What was the object they had in view in shifting the crofters from the west side to the east side of the island?—They did not care where they went if they would get that ground cleared for Mr Stewart.

41,903. What was Mr Stewart going to do with that ground?—To stock it for himself.

41,904. Which ground is that?—Borve and those other townships.

41,905. Who was Mr Stewart?—Old Donald Stewart, who was a while factor to Lord Dunmore.

41,906. *Mr Maccallum.*—You mentioned a large number of townships, and we would like to localise them better. The first farm that you mentioned, I think, is Rodel; can you give us the old townships that were on the present farm of Rodel?—Some of them, at least.

41,907. Give us their names as well as you can?—Lingarabay, another place called Uamh, then the Black Park, South Strond. I don't know any more.

41,908. Now, do you know how many tenants occupied these places? How many were in Lingarabay?—I don't know whether it was four of my size of lots, or only three.

41,909. Then in Uamh?—Scarcely a croft at all, only a lot of rocks.

41,910. By how many was it occupied before?—They were forced to live in places that were not fit to live in.

41,911. And in South Strond?—There were four at least of that class of crofts.

41,912. When did they cease to be there?—It is 20 years since they were removed.

41,913. Are you quite sure about that period of years?—I think I am.

41,914. Had these four townships the whole of Rodel Farm between them?—These townships that I mentioned were only wings on the farm of Rodel.

41,915. And these were removed 20 years ago?—Much more.

41,916. But these particular wings that you talk of?—It is 30 years since they were removed from Lingarabay and these places.

41,917. What was the cause of their removal at that time?—To make room for bigger people in the world; to add it to tacks.

41,918. Are these places that you mentioned the places on Rodel Farm that you consider suitable for occupation by crofters?—The Strond end is very good; and Lingarabay would suit two or three.

41,919. Was there any part of the farm of Rodel occupied by crofters except these four wings of it?—All Rodel was occupied by crofters at one time.

41,920. When was that?—Long since.

41,921. Can you give us any idea of the time of removal?—No, I don't know if I was born at the time, I don't mind the removal at Rodel, but I remember when they were removed from South Strond.

41,922. It was before your time, but did you hear what number of crofters were there?—I cannot say, but I remember Macleod being proprietor and Donald Stewart his factor. Stewart took up Rodel as a farm so far as I know. Mr Shaw was factor in Harris for a while, then Mr Stewart got the factorship, and then he took Rodel himself.

41,923. Have you any idea then how many small tenants were in Rodel before Mr Stewart got it?—I remember Mr Macdonald being the farmer of Rodel, and then there were people on Lingarabay: he came there as a tacksman and then he got to be factor, and was factor for North and South Harris.

41,924. Did Macdonald come after Stewart?—Yes, after Stewart.

41,925. I want to find out from you, as far as you can tell us, the old condition of things in Rodel. Can you give us any idea of the number of people that were in Rodel before it was cleared for Stewart, and can you tell us what the condition of the people was?—I cannot tell you the number, but I have heard that they were well off.

41,926. Do you think that it is suitable for being re-occupied by crofters?—Why not?

41,927. Tell us about it and why you think it is suitable?—The land is very good for people, but I don't know how it would suit them to-day, owing to there being so many big houses. We have no right to think about these good lands.

41,928. Do you think the people have no right to ask for it because there are white houses there built by the proprietor?—The people would be very glad of places not so good as Rodel: they would like to leave Rodel to the proprietor himself.

41,929. Does the proprietor reside there?—Not at present.

41,930. Does he usually live there?—Sometimes.

41,931. Is the farm of Rodel in his own occupation?—It is rented.

41,932. Does the tenant reside on it?—No.

41,933. Has the tenant of Rodel another farm?—She has a farm on the *machair* besides.

41,934. Is it a large holding?—Not very big.

41,935. Is it good land?—It is like all the rest.

41,936. All the rest on the west coast or the east coast?—On the west coast.

41,937. That is on the good side of the island?—Yes.

41,938. What is the name of the other place that the tenant holds?—Borvemore.

41,939. Were there small tenants there before?—I saw tenants there, but they were not very long.

41,940. Now, with regard to Rodel, how many comfortable, self-sustaining crofts do you think might be formed there?—I cannot say.

41,941. You have come here to give evidence with regard to the lands which you consider suitable, and if you do not give your opinion in regard to that I fail to see how we are to be informed by you?—I came here because I was called for: I am not going to say what I do not know.

41,942. Was your name not put here as a delegate to give evidence?—Yes, and am I not doing it as far as I know?

41,943. You represent others, do you not?—Yes.

41,944. You know the present crofts you have, and you say they are very small and unsuitable: you mentioned yourself the farm of Rodel as a place that contains much better land than the land of the crofters: now, would you give us some opinion as to the number of crofts that might be formed on that farm? There is no proposal on your part to interfere in the slightest way with the occupation of Rodel, but give us your opinion how many could be formed there?—I cannot go into that.

41,945. Have you any idea of the acreage of the arable that is in it?—No.

41,946. Tell me then is the land in it very much superior to the land held by the crofters?—Oh, yes; there are none in the Bays of Harris where I am that have land so good.

41,947. Can you tell us any land occupied by crofters in Harris that is equal to the land in Rodel?—Perhaps places could be found on the west coast as good as Rodel.

41,948. But these are not occupied by crofters?—No, there are farmers there.

41,949. Can you tell us of any land occupied by crofters that is equal to the land in Rodel?—It is, at least, as good as any land occupied by crofters in Harris.

41,950. Is it better?—I cannot say that it is.

41,951. Where are the crofts that you think equally good with Rodel?—The small crofters are now in the peat mosses.

41,952. Are the crofters in Harris placed in the peat mosses?—All the people on the east coast are situated there.

41,953. So that, in your opinion, the crofters have land much inferior to the land in the farm of Rodel: that must necessarily follow?—Yes.

41,954. If crofters were placed in Rodel would they be able to make a better living than they are doing in their present crofts?—Yes.

Tarbert, Harris.

Norman Macleod.

41,955. Could a large number of crofts be formed there?—You can see for yourself: I cannot say.

41,956. If you are not willing to give evidence, we have no desire to force you to do so against your will or what you think against your interest?—I will do my best.

41,957. Do you know Rodel?—Yes.

41,958. Is it an extensive farm?—It is not very big; it is narrow; there is no great deal of land in it; it is but a small glen, only there are big houses along the shore built for shooting lodges and for sportsmen.

41,959. But you have already told us that the land is very much superior to that held by the crofters: now can you tell us the number, in your opinion, that might be comfortably settled on that farm?—I cannot take anything to do with that: I cannot say how many could be put there.

41,960. Can you tell us whether the people were put out of Rodel for their benefit? Was that the purpose of removing them?—I was not born when they were removed, so I cannot say: I remember seeing in my own place, very near where I lived, two tenants paying £9, and there are ten there to-day.

41,961. And what do the ten pay among them?—Only what the two were paying.

41,962. What is the name of the place?—Ardvey.

41,963. How did it come about that that was divided among ten?—I will tell you that. Some ran into arrears and debt; the half of the people went to Australia, and the other half were settled here and there because they were in debt.

41,964. Some of the tenantry that left Quidnish were sent to Ardvey?—Yes.

41,965. What was done with those who had Ardvey at that time: did they also leave?—Those that were there at that time died, and their sons went to Australia.

41,966. Were the two who were in Ardvey put out to make room for people in Quidnish, or was their own place divided, and small parts of the old place given them?—Yes, they were removed. One of the two tenants in Ardvey was removed to the west side of Harris and took good crofts there: they ran into debt and had to leave.

41,967. Now, with regard to Quidnish, was that a better place than the place to which they were sent in Ardvey?—Much better.

41,968. Had they larger holdings in Quidnish than they got in Ardvey?—Yes.

41,969. Were the people in Quidnish in more comfortable circumstances than they were after going to Ardvey?—Of course they were.

41,970. Can you give us any information as to the reason why they were put out of Rodel?—No, I cannot say.

41,971. But you are quite clear that the land there is much superior to anything now held by the crofters?—It is much better than the land where we are.

41,972. Now, can you tell us about Kyles? Were there crofters there in olden times?—I don't remember seeing any in Kyles but one house. I cannot speak except of what I have seen myself there.

41,973. Then we may take it that it was not in your time that this land was cleared, if it ever was cleared: but can you tell us whether there are any indications to show that there were tenants there, and whether there is a general belief among the crofters that there were tenants in Kyles?—I believe there were, but I did not see them.

41,974. Are there ruins visible?—I am not going there: it is far from me.

41,975. How is Kyles occupied just now?—The farmer resides on Kyles.

41,976. Has he another farm besides Kyles?—I don't know of any other.

41,977. Is Northtown in it?—Yes.

41,978. Were these two farms ever separate?—I don't remember.

41,979. During all the time you can remember, were these two large farms held as one holding?—They were in the occupation of one so far as I remember.

41,980. Had the tenant of Kyles always the farm of Northtown?—Since I remember they were the same farm.

Tarbert, Harris.

Norman Macleod.

41,981. How do they happen to have two names, Northtown and Kyles, if they were always one farm?—I cannot tell.

41,982. Was there ever a farm-house on Northtown?—I never saw a farmer there or a tenant: it is only a shepherd that I have seen there.

41,983. Is this farm of Kyles and Northtown a large holding?—Yes, a pretty good farm.

41,984. Is there land there of much superior quality to that held by the crofters on the east side?—Yes.

41,985. Do you think that there were tenants there at some time or other?—I never saw them.

41,986. Did you hear that there were crofters there?—Yes, I believe there were.

41,987. Did you ever hear of the clearances from these places?—I never heard. I heard of some being removed from Ceann-Tuilbheig near Kyles.

41,988. But did you ever hear that there were people removed from Kyles and Northtown?—I cannot say.

41,989. You can say whether you heard it or not?—If I heard it I do not remember.

41,990. You do not remember that you ever heard of people being removed from these places?—I do not remember of hearing of any people being removed, but I saw the people removed from Ceann-Tuilbheig.

41,991. Now, do you consider that if some of the crofters and cottars on the east side were removed, and got fairly sized crofts there, they could make a comfortable living?—Very likely they would be better.

41,992. Is that your decided opinion, that it is suitable for occupation by crofters?—Oh, why not?

41,993. Is there a considerable proportion of good arable land, and also of pasture?—Yes.

41,994. Then as to Scarastaveg, can you tell us whether there were crofters there in olden times?—No, I don't know, but there are other people here who can tell.

41,995. You say you never saw crofters in that place: but did you hear of there being crofters there?—Yes, and in Scarastavore, but I did not see them; they were removed from there before I was born.

41,996. Did you hear anything as to the number of crofters that were in Scarastaveg?—No, I cannot say as to that.

41,997. Did you hear anything as to the reason for their removal?—What I remember about Scarastaveg is that Mr Stewart had it first, then came Dr Clark in his place.

41,998. Did you ever hear how it was occupied before Stewart got it?—No, I did not hear.

41,999. Don't the people speak about these lands now?—There are none living that saw people there.

42,000. But did you hear them speaking about these lands and how they were occupied in the times of their forefathers?—I heard many things, but I do not recollect them all.

42,001. You seem somewhat unwilling to tell us what you heard about these things?—I heard and I know that people were removed from there by Mr Stewart and sent to the Bays; I saw Scarastaveg with Mr Stewart first, to my own knowledge; then Dr Clark came, and he built a house there.

42,002. Now, with regard to Scarastaveg, give us your opinion as to whether it is suitable for occupation by small crofters?—Undoubtedly it is.

42,003. How is it occupied just now?—A tacksman has got it.

42,004. Is there anything else held by that tacksman in connection with Scarastaveg?—Yes.

42,005. What other place has he got?—Taransay.

42,006. That is an island that he has in connection with his farm?—Yes.

42,007. Is that a suitable place for occupation by crofters?—They were there before, at all events; I never went through it much.

42,008. Were there many there?—Yes.

42,009. Can you tell us about what time they were removed from Taransay?—I have a faint recollection of seeing crofters in Taransay.

42,010. Where did they go after they lost Taransay?—Some of them were sent down to Ceann-Tuilbheig, and some went to Lewis—to Arivruach.

42,011. Can you tell us what you think the reason of the removal was?—I don't know.

42,012. What was done with the land after they lost it?—John Macdonald got it.

42,012A. Who was he?—A brother of Malcolm Macdonald, Obe.

42,013. Had he anything to do with the estate management?—No.

42,014. Do you think Taransay is a place suitable for occupation by crofters?—I believe it is.

42,015. Is it the opinion of those whom you represent that Taransay is suitable for occupation by crofters?—I believe it is suitable for crofters, and other people can say so as well.

42,016. Would they have opportunities of fishing if they were placed on Taransay?—Yes.

42,017. Would the condition of the cottars and crofters be greatly improved by their being settled on Taransay?—I believe they would be improved: nature says that they would be better with something than with what they have.

42,018. What fishing would they have access to if they were placed on Taransay?—The long-line and lobster fishing and the hand-lines.

42,019. Do they fish for lobsters in the neighbourhood of Taransay?—Yes, those who are there.

42,020. Are the cottars and crofters of Harris greatly dependent on the fishing?—They are obliged to be, but the sea does not pay so well nowadays.

42,021. Would they be quite as well situated for fishing on Taransay as they are in their present holdings?—Scarcely as well for herring as where they are; but the land is better in Taransay.

42,022. What fishing do they find most profitable—lobster fishing or herring fishing—hereabouts?—They complain of both nowadays.

42,023. From which of those fishings do they get the better return?—Both would pay very well if they got them, but the fish get very scarce nowadays.

42,024. The fishing has not been successful for some years?—No.

42,025. When had they a good herring fishing?—It is some time since a good fishing was done in Harris, and therefore we are poor.

42,026. Is the herring fishing much more uncertain than the lobster fishing?—They are always sure of lobsters, but not so sure of herring; sometimes you won't get any herring at all.

42,027. I think you were able to give more definite information about Scarastavore. You have heard about the removals there; can you tell us about what time the removal of the people took place?—I cannot say, but I have heard about crofters being there.

42,028. Did you hear that there was a large number of crofters there?—Yes, but I did not see them.

42,029. Did you hear why they were removed?—Yes.

42,030. Did you hear what was done with the land that they had?—I heard that they were removed from Scarastavore and from Scarastaveg by Stewart.

42,031. And the tenants were sent to the east?—Yes, into the peat hags.

42,032. So your evidence comes to this, that those two places, Scarastaveg and Scarastavore, were cleared in order to make a large tack for Mr Stewart?—I am sure of it.

42,033. How is Borve held now?—Borvebeg and Mid-Borve are in the possession of Duncan Macrae.

42,034. Does he reside on the farm of Borve?—Yes.

42,035. Has he any other place in connection with the farm of Borve?—No.

42,036. Has he not an island?—Unless he has a small island in the Sound of Harris.

42,037. Do you know the island of Sursay?—Yes; I don't know whether he has it now or not.

42,038. Can you tell us anything about it?—It is a small island; I have been there myself.

42,039. Do you know how it was held formerly,—whether crofters ever held it in connection with their holdings?—I don't know: but there is arable land on it; I don't believe anybody resided there.

42,040. Is Borve also a suitable place for occupation by small tenants?—Why not?

42,041. Do you mean that, in your opinion, it is suitable?—I believe it is, if they got it.

42,042. Is there a deer forest in Harris?—Yes: did I not tell you about the townships in the deer forests along these places?

42,043. Perhaps you can give us now distinctly the names of the old townships in the deer forest: kindly give them in their order?—Craco is the first, at the north end, then Seilebost, Gearraidh-fada, Nisabost, and Torgabost: we are at the fence now.*

42,044. Five townships are now included in the forest?—Yes.

42,045. Now, could you give us any idea of the number of families that occupied each township?—No; these people were removed from there before I was born. My father lived there before he was married.

42,046. What township was he in?—Torgabost.

42,047. Were you born there?—No.

42,048. Where were you born?—In Borve.

42,049. Had your father a holding in Torgabost?—Yes, and my grandfather.

42,050. Have you any idea of the number who were there along with your father?—No, I cannot say.

42,051. Can you tell us why your father was removed?—I cannot tell that.

42,052. Did your father never speak to you about his removal from Torgabost?—I might easily have known, but I did not hear: possibly others present might know.

42,053. But did your father ever speak to you about his removal from Torgabost?—I do not remember.

42,054. Do you distinctly tell me that you cannot remember ever having a conversation with your father about the removal from Torgabost?—I do not remember hearing anything.

42,055. Had you no curiosity yourself about it?—I did not ever think of asking.

42,056. Can you tell us who got it after your father left?—All that I remember about Torgabost and Nisabost is that it was stocked by Stewart, and was full of cattle since I remember.

42,057. That is your early recollection?—That is what I recollect about it.

42,058. Then it is a place suited for rearing good Highland cattle?—Yes, it was then better than to-day.

42,059. Would the land occupied by crofters rear such Highland cattle as could be reared in places like Torgabost in the deer forest?—No, nor half so good.

42,060. It is quite impossible for the crofters to rear cattle of as good quality as were raised on Torgabost?—We only feed our cattle to-day.

42,061. And you cannot rear heavy cattle there?—No, the place is so boggy.

42,062. And the land which was capable of raising such good Highland cattle is now occupied as a deer forest, is it?—Yes.

42,063. Do you think that the crofters would be much benefited by the cottars getting land out of the large farms and deer forest if they were settled there?—Yes, undoubtedly.

42,064. Could a large number of crofts be formed all along the west side of the island?—Very likely.

42,065. Is there a large number of crofters in Harris?—Yes.

42,066. And are they all placed on the most barren parts of the island?—There is not a bit in Harris worse than the east of Harris.

42,067. Can you tell us the number of crofters in South-Harris?—No.

42,068. Are there as many cottars as there are

* A delegate who accompanied the Commissioners at the inspection enumerated the old townships on the west side of South Harris as follows:—Craco, Gearraidh-fada, Seilebost, Torgabost, Nisabost, Borbh-Bheag, Borbh-Mheadhonach, Borbh-Mhor, Scarasta-Mhor, Scarasta-Bheag, Nishishee, An Taobh-Tuath, An Taobh-Deas (of Northtown), Uidhe, Druim-a'-Phuinnd, Caolas, and Ceann-Tuilbheig. These are all absorbed in the forest or in farms.

Tarbert, Harris.

Norman Macleod.

crofters?—I don't think there are quite so many, but there is a large number.

42,069. You were sent here to represent the views and opinions of the people, and can you say what they look to as a remedy for their present poverty?—If they got a piece of the land.

42,070. Do they look for land as their chief remedy?—That is what I hear them saying.

42,071. Do you agree with them?—Yes, undoubtedly. I never wanted land myself, and I know I would do anything to maintain my footing on the land.

42,072. You think it is a great benefit to yourself to have land?—Yes.

42,073. Are you prepared to speak of any other land in South Harris?—I cannot say much more than what I have said.

42,074. *Mr Thomas Wilson, Solicitor, Lochmaddy, representing the estate.*—Are Borvemore and Scarastavore the same place?—The same place.

42,075. You have spoken of a great number of evictions: did those take place before the present Dunmore family obtained the estate?—I believe they took place in Scarastavore before Lord Dunmore got it.

42,076. But you have spoken of a great many evictions. Do you know of any which have taken place since the Dunmore family acquired the estate?—I remember when we had three proprietors in Harris, and the Scarastavore people were removed before then.

42,077. Do you recollect any evictions by the present proprietors, the Dunmores?—No.

42,078. Was old Donald Stewart ever a factor to the Dunmore family?—I believe he was.

42,079. That is not the case: he was never a factor for Lord Dunmore.

Mr Gordon.—How long is it since the Dunmore family got the estate? (*Mr Wilson*).—I have not the exact date.

Can you tell us roughly the date, because the witness stated that there were some people cleared out of the farm of Rodel twenty or thirty years ago? (*Mr Wilson*).—I am told it was fifty-seven years ago.

Then the evictions from Rodel, twenty or thirty years ago, must have taken place when Lord Dunmore was proprietor. (*Mr Wilson*).—I want the witness to state if they were done by the Dunmore family.

You must put the two facts together yourself. Lord Dunmore's family have been in the possession of the estate of South Harris for fifty-seven years: and the witness stated that he remembers crofters being cleared out of the farm of Rodel within the last twenty or thirty years. (*Mr Wilson*).—Very good.

42,080–84. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Do you remember when the portion of the farm of Rodel, which is called the Strond-side, was occupied by crofters,—the south side?—Yes.

42,085. How many crofters were cleared out of that part?—Not more than four or five.

42,086. Tell us as near as you can how many years it is since those crofters were turned out of the place and the land added to the farm of Strond?—Over twenty years.

42,087. Were the lands they occupied added to the farm of Rodel immediately after they were put out?—Yes.

42,088. Were some of those crofters paying as high as £9 or £10 of rent each?—I believe so.

42,089. Did you know one of them called John Mackenzie, whose son Donald is to-day living at Strond?—Yes, I knew him.

42,090. Had he a big croft?—He was near Glen-Borosdale.

42,091. Is it a fact that he had 15 head of cattle and 180 head of sheep when he was evicted out of that place?—I will not say anything about that.

42,092. Was he not in good comfortable circumstances when he was evicted?—Yes. I am not going to say what he had.

42,093. Was he, to your knowledge, in very comfortable circumstances when he was sent out of that place?—He was like any other good crofter.

Tarbert, Harris.

Norman Macleod.

42,094. Can you see any good reason why a crofter to-day could not, if placed there, be as comfortable as that man was?—I think he should be.

42,095. Did those who elected you to come here to-day to represent them ask you to make a statement before the Royal Commission about some lands being too good for cottars to think about?—I would not go by what other people might say, but by what I know myself.

42,096. Did they say in your hearing that there were certain lands which they considered too good for them to apply for?—No, they did not.

42,097. Did you ever hear any of the cottars whom you represent say that it would be out of place to think about lands on which there were slated houses, occupied by sportsmen or by landlords?—I believe they never expect such lands, whether they get them or not.

42,098. (*Question repeated in Gaelic by Mr Macrae*).—He dare not ask such land as Rodel, because it is under the proprietors, and is a big shooting place. [*Mr Macrae.*—I am afraid the interpreter (Mr Macaskill) is at fault: witness said the very opposite. He said the people would dare to ask any land because they need it, wherever it is, if the law would give it to them.]

42,099. Did those whom you represent here state, or did they authorise you to state, that it would be improper or impertinent of them to aspire to lands on which there are big slated houses, or lands which are occupied by sportsmen?—I did not hear anything about that. Let them do what they like, but I have no expectation of getting a white house, or of troubling those who have white houses.

42,100. But in all that you said in that regard, you did not represent the people?—I was saying that I did not think they wished to get the Rodel house, but that they would take the lands about Rodel.

42,101. Was the Donald Stewart you spoke about the same Donald Stewart who cleared Park in Lewis?—I believe so, but I am not sure.

42,102. Was he the father of the present laird of Ensay?—Yes.

42,103. Do you know the island of Ensay?—Yes.

42,104. Do you believe that there were small tenants in that island at one time?—I believe there were, but I have not seen them.

42,105. Is there another island in the neighbourhood near Ensay of which Mr Stewart is proprietor also?—Mr Stewart is proprietor of Pabbay and Ensay.

42,106. Do you believe there were tenants in Pabbay also?—Yes, I remember tenants in Pabbay.

42,107. Now, if those whom you represent had their choice, which would they prefer,—being in the Bays of Harris or having holdings in Ensay or Pabbay?—I believe they would prefer to be in these islands: the land there is much better.

42,108. You think the islands are more suitable for crofter tenants than the places where the crofters are in Harris?—I think the crofters would be better there than where they are. I also think that if I were young myself I would leave where I am and go there.

42,109. On the farm of Rodel is there a great deal of land that was at one time cultivated, but that has for a number of years now been allowed to go to waste?—There are strips on each side of Rodel proper, but the east side of Rodel has land of the same class as we crofters occupy.

42,110. But, with regard to Rodel proper, leaving out those wings, is there much land that was once arable but has been waste for a long time?—There is a considerable extent of such land; but as there are large buildings on Rodel, and as sportsmen come there, I do not think the tenants would care to trouble them about the place. So long as there are other places in Harris, the tenants would not like to trouble them about Rodel.

42,111. Did you hear any cottar of those whom you represent saying that he would not care about getting those lands on the farm of Rodel?—No, I did not hear a word from them on that point, but that is my own opinion. My opinion is that if I could get another place I would sooner take it than interfere with that farm.

42,112. In the event of new crofter holdings being created, would you think it improper for a crofter to have a slated house with an upstairs as well as downstairs?—I think a crofter would take a poorer house than that if he only got land.

42,113. Do you approve of slated houses for crofters?—It is not the custom with them in this country.

42,114. Are you one of the men against whom action was recently taken for keeping the cattle inside your own dwelling-house?—I am the very man.

42,115. Have you any reason to believe that any crofters who would settle down on the west side of the island would have any objection to a slated house for himself?—If they got them they would be very glad to have them, or if they could build them. Who would not be glad to have them?

42,116. What land now waste was cleared with the help of the military?—I remember that I was a young lad at the time, and ran out of the township before them. That was from Little Borve. My father and many others went away to the moss with all their stock at that time.

42,117. Who was the factor at that time?—Mr Duncan Shaw.—[*The Secretary*—Mr Duncan Shaw, who was factor for Lord Dunmore at the time, gave an account of the Borve clearance before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on 19th March 1841. According to Mr Shaw, the tenant of the large farms surrounding Borve refused to renew his lease if Borve were not included in it. Accordingly, the crofters were warned to remove at Whitsunday 1839. They refused to go, and a company of soldiers was sent to Borve. Some of the leaders were arrested and the others yielded. They were allowed to remain in possession till Whitsunday 1840.]

42,118. Who got the land when the people were evicted?—Mr Donald Stewart. He got the land my father was in.

42,119. You never heard any crofter or cottar in the Highlands propose to get the military to put Mr Stewart out to-day?—No.

42,120. And you never heard a crofter or a cottar wanting land for nothing?—No, I did not hear that either. I don't think they would ask it for nothing.

42,121. *Mr T. Wilson.*—You said crofters were evicted from Ensay. Could you tell us when that happened?—No, I do not know.

42,122. Was it in your lifetime?—I do not know whether it was done in my time, but I don't remember it. [*The Secretary.*—According to a return made by the parish minister in 1764, and published in Dr Walker's *Economical History of the Hebrides*, there was at that time a population of 60 in the island of Ensay, 186 in the island of Pabbay, 48 in Killegray, and 28 in Taransay. Again, in Robert Heron's *General View of the Hebudæ or Hebrides*, published in 1794, Pabbay is referred to as having once been the granary of Harris. "Its population in 1765, estimated at 120 souls, appears to have since increased." The population of Ensay is not given, but that of Killegray is stated at 30 souls, and Taransay "about 140 souls."]

Donald Maclennan.

DONALD MACLENNAN, Cottar, Scarasta, Harris (52). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

42,123. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a cottar?—Yes.

42,124. Is Scarasta a farm?—Yes, it is on the glebe.

42,125. Do you work for the minister?—Yes.

42,126. Are you his servant and horseman?—No.

42,127. What is your occupation?—I am a roadman.

42,128. Are there many cottars near you?—Yes.

42,129. How many?—Between ten and twelve.

42,130. Were you appointed by them as a delegate to come here and speak for them?—Yes.

42,131. Did they desire you to say that they would like to get land?—Yes.

42,132. Is there any land near you that you think would be suitable for holdings?—Plenty.

42,133. Where?—All the west of Harris.

Tarbert, Harris.

42,134. Did you hear the evidence given by the last witness as to that part of the island?—Yes.

Donald Maclennan.

42,135. Do you agree with what he stated?—With some of it.

42,136. What part of it do you disagree with?—I cannot put it consecutively.

42,137. Is there any other place on the west coast of Harris which you think specially well suited for new crofter holdings?—I know it is all suited for crofters.

42,138. Could you tell us a few places which you think suitable?—Every one of them.

42,139. Do you mean every one of the places spoken to by the last witness?—Yes.

42,140. Then you agree with him as to these?—Yes.

42,141. What is it that you differ from him about?—That part is as good as any in the Long Island.

42,142. (*Question repeated*).—(A.) We will come to that by-and-by; I cannot give it all at once.

42,143. Was it about the crofters on Rodel?—I see every place that is there good for crofters.

42,144. Could you give us some idea of the kind of croft you would like?—Yes; a croft that would rent at £5 or £6 at least.

42,145. Would such tenants hold their croft as part of their living, and find work elsewhere to make up a livelihood?—I would require £12 worth of land before I could make a living off it.

42,146. Is the general desire of the cottars in your neighbourhood to have crofts fairly rented at about £5 or £6, or would they like larger crofts?—Some of them would like crofts of that size.

42,147. And would some of them prefer larger crofts?—Yes.

42,148. Is there any labouring or fishing to be had in your quarter?—Plenty fishing, but not much work.

42,149. Is it a good place for fishing?—Yes.

42,150. What kind of fishing?—Every kind.

42,151. Is there any harbour where good boats could land safely?—They were not required: there are anchorages and harbours.

42,152. Is there any place for a harbour near where you reside?—No, there is none near me.

42,153. Is it lobster fishing that is mainly prosecuted on that side?—Yes.

42,154. Are there any men who devote their time mainly to fishing in that part of the island?—Yes; they have nothing else to do.

42,155. Where do they reside?—About Obe, Taransay, and Ceann-Tuilbheig.

42,156. But that is not near where you live?—No.

42,157. Can you tell us how the cottars in your neighbourhood occupy their time?—They have nothing except the work they may get from the tacksman.

42,158. They maintain themselves mainly by labouring on the land?—They get bits of land besides, from the tacksman.

42,159. Do you think that any land in your neighbourhood could be formed profitably into small holdings for fishermen?—Yes, I think so.

42,160. Where?—All along the *machair* coast.

42,161. Is there any harbour near that?—No.

42,162. How then could you locate fishermen without a harbour near?—There is plenty of fishing if there was a harbour.

42,163. Then the crofts they would require would of necessity be of a size sufficient to keep them and their families without fishing?—That is the best way they could be.

42,164. Do you know the farm of Rodel at all?—Yes.

42,165. Are there any harbours on that farm?—Yes.

42,166. Is there any land on that farm near a harbour that could be made into small holdings for fishermen?—Alongside there is.

42,167. Would you consider that a better place for fishermen than the west side of the island?—It is safer for the men.

42,168. *Mr Munro.*—You told us that the cottars of Harris mainly obtain a livelihood by outside labour. Now, what kind of living do they get?—Some make

Tarbert, Harris.

Donald Maclennan.

living by having bits of land from the tacksmen, and by fishing, and others have to go outside for work.

42,169. Is it not the case that the main contribution to the living of the cottars in Harris is in tweed-making?—Yes, to a large extent.

42,170. Almost every cottar, I suppose, makes tweed more or less?—Yes.

42,171. Where do they get the wool?—From the merchants.

42,172. Is the cottar in every case obliged to buy from the merchant?—Yes.

42,173. If the cottar were to get a fair quantity of land, could he not raise sufficient wool for himself to make the tweed from?—Any amount.

42,174. Then, of course, it follows that he would be able to make a better profit from the tweed industry?—Double.

42,175. And his position would be so much more comfortable?—Much more so.

42,176. How long have you lived in this island?—All my life, only going outside for work.

42,177. I suppose I may assume that the cottars are very anxious to obtain possession of suitable pieces of land?—They are very well since I remember.

42,178. Do you remember the evictions that took place?—I was born the year after the evictions.

42,179. So that you cannot speak of them except from hearsay?—I remember every word I heard about them.

42,180. Do you know who is the present tenant of Taransay?—Mr Macdonald.

42,181. What is he?—A farmer.

42,182. Does he reside on his farm?—One of them is there, and another is in Edinburgh.

42,183. What does he do in Edinburgh?—He has a clothier's shop there.

42,184. He does not reside on the farm?—No. [*Mr Wilson.*—The farm is held by the late Mr Macdonald's representatives, one of whom lives on it.]

42,185. *Mr Maccallum.*—On what farm are you living?—On the glebe.

42,186. Are the twelve cottars you represent also on the glebe?—No.

42,187. Where are they located?—Between the two Borves and Scarastavore.

42,188. Are they farm labourers?—Yes, and some go out to work.

42,189. Are there many cottars on the large farms?—Some of the farms have cottars on them.

42,190. Can you give us any idea of the number of cottars on the large farms in South Harris?—The tacksman of Borvebeg has five, and there are six in Scarastavore.

42,191. In Kyles and Northtown how many are there?—About seven or eight.

42,192. How are they employed?—Almost entirely by the sea.

42,193. Where is the great body of the cottars situated?—Among the tacksmen.

42,194. But, speaking of the cottars of Harris as a whole, where do the great body of them reside?—All along, in among the tacksmen and crofters.

42,195. The great body of cottars are situated on the crofts?—Yes.

42,196. Can you tell us how many cottars there are in South Harris?—I cannot say.

42,197. Are there as many cottars as there are crofters, do you think?—I think there are.

42,198. You heard of the people being removed from the west side: do you know what the reason of the removal was?—To make room for sheep.

42,199. Do you think it was in any way in order to benefit the crofters?—In order to destroy them.

42,200. Do you think there was any idea of making fishermen of them?—I believe they did not care what became of them.

42,201. Do you know if the fishing was successful on the east side at the time they were removed?—Middling.

42,202. Now, with regard to Rodel, was there a farm-house built there?—Yes.

42,203. Is there a good farm-house and steading there?—Yes.

Tarbert, Harris.

Donald Maclennan.

42,204. Does the tenant occupy the house and steading?—No.

42,205. How is the farm-house occupied now?—By a sportsman.

42,206. But it was originally built for a farm-house?—The factor used to live there, so far as I know.

42,207. And it is now occupied as a shooting-lodge?—Yes.

42,208. What is your opinion with regard to the suitableness of the land in Rodel Farm for occupation by crofters and cottars?—It is as good as is to be seen in the country.

42,209. Do you think the cottars and crofters of Harris derive any great benefit from the large farms?—They have never got any benefit from them.

42,210. Would there be any loss in any way to the people of Harris if these farms were occupied by crofters and cottars?—It would do a great deal of good.

42,211. And no loss whatever to the people?—Of great use.

42,212. Do you think the large farms and deer forests ought to be reserved as such if there happens to be a good house built on them?—I never looked at the thing in that light.

42,213. It is not your opinion that it would be for the good of the people of this island that such places should be reserved?—It is a great loss to the people that they are as they are.

42,214. You think that on the west side there should be formed self-sustaining holdings?—Yes.

42,215. But would it be possible for a man to have a small croft there and prosecute the fishing?—Yes.

42,216. How would he be able to follow the fishing?—It could be done as before.

42,217. How could they prosecute the herring fishing, for example?—If they could not do it on the west, they could do it on the east coast.

42,218. They are not so far away from the ground but what they could easily come to the fishing?—They could easily come across to the east.

42,219. And you think that the cottars would be better fitted for prosecuting the fishing if they had crofts on the west side than they are at present?—They would be better.

42,220. *Mr Munro.*—I think I understood you to say, in answer to Mr Maccallum, that the crofters and cottars derived no benefit from the large farms?—They do not get any benefit from them.

42,221. Do they get no employment from the big farmers?—They get a little land.

42,222. Do they get any work from them?—Some go to work for a while.

42,223. Is not that a benefit to some extent?—Yes, but if they had the land for themselves they would be much better.

42,224. You told us that the cottars were obliged to buy their wool wholly from the merchants. Does that answer apply also to the crofters?—Yes.

42,225. Have they to buy the whole or only part of the wool?—Not the whole: they have some sheep of their own.

42,226. And if they got more land would they be able to dispense with purchasing any portion of the wool from merchants?—Yes.

42,227. *Mr Maccallum.*—You stated that the farmers give work to the cottars. Can you tell us at all the extent to which they are employed?—I cannot say.

42,228. Are there many of the cottars employed for any length of time on the large farms?—They do not get any work from the farmers except what they do in return for the bits of land they get from the tacksmen.

42,229. They get no money payment but just a bit of the land to cultivate, and work for it?—Yes.

42,230. If the land were re-occupied by crofters, would there not be much more work going on in the island than there is at present?—Yes, there would.

42,231. So that, as far as work is concerned, they

would be benefited by the doing away with the large farms?—Yes.

42,232. *Mr Thomas Wilson, Solicitor, Lochmaddy, representing the Estate of South Harris.*—If you had a fishing township on the west side of this island, where would the boats be kept?—They could fish on the east.

42,232A. Is it a place that would do well for good sized crofts rather than small crofts?—Yes.

42,233. What would you do with the buildings which are on the farm at present?—I don't care what becomes of them.

42,234. Are they valuable?—I don't care what their value is.

42,235. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—If a cottar had a family, and nothing to give that family to eat, would it not be a benefit to the cottar to get a brown copper penny?—Yes.

42,236. And would not a cottar without an inch of land, and with a hungry family, be greatly benefited by getting anything, down to a brown penny or a yard of land, to put potatoes in?—Yes.

42,237. Would it not be an infinitely greater benefit if the cottar was made a tenant by an Act of Parliament, and allowed to cultivate his own holding on fair terms?—It is long since I hoped for that.

42,238. Would not he work a great many more days in the year than he is able to work to-day?—Yes, if he had work to do.

42,239. The big farmers never pay for labour except by a bit of land?—Only to their own servants.

42,240. Did you hear that the big farmers have this year declined to have the services of the cottars for clipping their sheep?—Yes.

42,241. Were the cottars in the habit in former years of getting from the tacksman a few days' labour at this time at clipping?—Yes.

42,242. And they were in the habit of getting bits of land for potatoes in lieu of that labour?—Yes.

42,243. Why were they boycotted this year?—Owing to this Commission.

42,244. Are you aware that Harris mutton was famous all over the British Isles?—I heard that when I was away in the Reserve.

42,245. And are the lands on which that mutton was raised now turned into a deer forest?—Yes.

42,246. Is that a benefit to the country?—No.

42,247. And does it mean ruination to the native population?—Yes.

42,248. Are you aware that the deer forest in our immediate neighbourhood here used to export between 1500 and 1800 prime wedders every year, which went towards the food supply of this country?—I heard that often as to Lady Scott's forest in North Harris.

42,249. There is nothing of that now?—No.

42,250. And the native population have no mutton to eat?—They have nothing of it.

42,251. Is it your idea that the new holdings, if made, should have from the sea up to the mountain-top—*Srath is monadh?*—It is my wish.

JOHN MACKAY, Cottar, Scarasta (72).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

42,252. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a cottar in Scarasta?—Yes.

42,253. Is that a crofting township, or is it a farm?—A farm.

42,254. Are there more cottars besides yourself on that farm?—Yes.

42,255. How many?—Other five.

42,256. Have you any land at all?—None, unless I get it from the tacksman.

42,257. Have you any stock?—I have one cow.

42,258. Do you get grazing for the cow from the farmer?—Yes.

42,259. What do you pay for the grazing?—I pay it in work.

42,260. Do you get any potato land from the farmer?—Yes.

42,261. And do you pay for it also by work?—Yes.

42,262. Does he charge you a large price for the grazing and the potato land?—I don't think he does.

42,263. Did you hear the evidence given by the previous witnesses?—I did.

42,264. Do you agree generally with what they said?—I agree with some of it.

42,265. What part of it do you not agree with?—I will tell you that. There were people on the north and south sides of Northtown about whom he forgot to tell the Commission.

42,266. There were formerly crofters on the north and south sides of the farm of Northtown which is now part of Kyles farm?—Yes.

42,267. Do you remember seeing crofters there?—I don't remember seeing them myself, but the remains of the houses are still to be seen on the farm.

42,268. Is there a desire by you, and the other cottars near you, to get land?—Yes, indeed there is.

42,269. And would you be willing to move to the farm of Northtown, provided land was found to be available there for crofts?—Yes, indeed I would.

42,270. Would you be able to build a house and stock a croft?—We would try

42,271. Do you think you would be able to do it without outside assistance?—I would find it hard to do it, but I would expect help: I have sons.

42,272. What are your sons doing?—They are all away in the south.

42,273. Do they send you any money?—Yes.

42,274. *Mr Maccallum.*—Have you any idea when the crofters were removed from Northtown?—They were removed in the time of Macgillivray.

42,275. Who was Macgillivray?—A bad man.

42,276. What was he?—He was a farmer, and he was not a good one.

42,277. Was it he who occupied it immediately after the crofters were removed?—He removed them.

42,278. Was he factor as well as farmer?—No, he was not factor.

42,279. Who was factor at the time?—Donald Stewart.

42,280. Was it by the authority of Stewart that the tenants were put out to make room for Macgillivray?—Yes.

42,281. Where did these crofters go?—They went away to different places; some to Scarasta, and others left the country.

42,282. Do you agree with the other witnesses that the whole west side of the island is suited for occupation by crofters?—It is.

42,283. Before the people were removed to the east side, where was the bulk of the population of South Harris situated?—All along the *machair*.

42,284. The great bulk of the population was on the west side of the island?—There were very few on the east till the removals began.

42,285. So that the great bulk of the population was on the west side?—Yes.

42,286. Where is the bulk of the population now?—Are they not on the east side, where beasts could not live?

42,287. Where was the parish church situated?—In Scarasta.

42,288. That is on the west side?—Yes.

42,289. Where was the main road through the island?—Where it is to-day.

42,290. The principal highway is on the west?—Yes, on the west.

42,291. Is there a good road on the east?—No, there is no road at all on the east.

42,292. Would the people be in every respect better on the west side?—Of course they would.

42,293. Was there much cultivation on the east before the people were removed from the west?—Part was cultivated and part was not.

42,294. Was there as much cultivation as there is to-day?—No.

42,295. Do you think there is sufficient land in the island to accommodate all the cottars and the crofters whose holdings are too small?—I think the island would do a great deal for them.

Tarbert, Harris.

John Mackay.

42,296. Would it put the people in comfortable circumstances if they got the land on fair conditions?—It would; they were comfortable before.

42,297. And is that the chief remedy to which the people look?—Yes, if they could get it.

42,298. Were there farm-houses put up for the farmers when the crofters were removed?—There were.

42,299. These houses were put up, I suppose, by the proprietor?—Yes.

42,300. Were the houses of the crofters put up by the proprietor in the same way?—Of course they were not.

42,301. Has there been much expenditure on the part of the estate on the land of Harris?—I don't know if anything at all was spent.

42,302. On the farm-houses was there much spent in the way of putting up buildings and improving the land occupied by the farmers?—I believe something was spent.

42,303. Whatever expenditure was made by the estate, was it for the farmers?—It is known that it was.

42,304. Were the crofters paying road money?—They were.

42,305. On what was that money spent?—The ground officer was collecting it, and he kept it for himself.

42,306. Was it spent on roads for crofters?—They never spent anything on roads for crofters.

42,307. What road money was collected was spent, I suppose, on the road going through the large farms?—Very little was spent on that road.

42,308. Is there a good road through the farms?—Pretty fair.

42,309. How was it maintained?—They were keeping it up.

42,310. Who had charge of the up-keep of it?—The workmen were paid by the estate.

42,311. Were they not collecting money for keeping up the road in the usual way?—It was the estate that kept up the road.

42,312. But did you not tell me that the crofters were paying road money?—If they were, it was not spent on the roads.

42,313. Was the estate keeping up the road going through the crofting townships?—Yes, the only road that there is; I don't know any other road.

42,314. Was there any considerable expense on the part of the estate for keeping up the road going through the crofting townships?—I don't know whether they spent that money on it.

42,315. There is a sort of path is there not, through the crofting townships?—I am living on the west, and I don't know how the footpaths on the east are kept up.

42,316. *Mr Munro.*—Why did your sons leave you and go south?—Because there was no place for them to stop here.

42,317. So that, if the land were more freely opened up to the people of the island, they would not have gone south?—Of course not.

42,318. They would have remained in the island?—They would have stayed in Harris.

42,319. *Mr Maccallum.*—You say that you pay for your potato ground and for your cow's grazing by work: what work is charged for that?—I am having a look over the farm.

42,320. How many days' work do you give?—Always when there is work to be done.

42,321. Is there no definite understanding as to the number of days you have to give?—No; as long as the hay is to be cut, I am cutting and working when there are odd things to do.

42,322. You are liable to be called on at any time to give work?—Yes, at once.

42,323. *Mr Munro.*—Does the farmer give you a fair equivalent in land for your labour?—No, nor half.

42,324. Supposing that you refused to work any longer, what would be the result?—If anything took place he would not blame me; supposing I did not go he would not blame me much.

42,325. Did you ever submit to the farmer that you were not getting half the value in land for the labour you were giving him?—No.

Tarbert, Harris.

John Mackay.

42,326. Why did you not do that?—I would be afraid that he would get angry, and then I would have no place at all to live on.

42,327. So that he actually gives you sixpence in value in land for every shilling's work of labour?—Perhaps it is.

42,328. *Mr Thomas Wilson, Solicitor, Lochmaddy, agent for the proprietors.*—How many crofters do you represent?—I do not represent anybody but myself.

42,329. Did you ever pay road rates in your life?—No.

42,330. Have you had the privilege of walking upon the road yourself?—Yes, and I would walk otherwise as well.

42,331. Did you make any complaint, on your own behalf, that you had no road?—No, I have no road to my own dwelling; when I go there is a dyke on each side which I have to cross, and if I fall I am in danger. My wife fell there while crossing the dyke and injured herself.

42,332. How far is your house from the public road?—About 200 yards.

42,333. Whom do you expect to make a road from the highway to your door? Do you expect the crofters to make it?—I thought I should get a gate on the dyke to get to my dwelling-house.

42,334. Who is to make the 200 yards of road,—yourself, or the crofters, or the estate?—I do not expect anybody would make a road for me; they would remove me out of there altogether if they could.

42,335. What is your complaint, then, about the public roads?—I do not complain.

42,336. Are you aware that the roads have been under the charge of Road Trustees for over thirty-five years, and that during that time the estate has had no control over them at all?—I knew that.

42,337. Are you aware that the estate has had to pay its share of the road money as well as the crofters?—I knew that.

42,338. Are you aware that crofters have the use of the public road from Tarbert to Uamh, a distance of five miles; and also from Obe to Rodel?—Yes, I know they have the use of that road.

42,339. Do you know whether the people who were upon Northtown on the south side were cottars or crofters?—I think they were crofters.

42,340. Have you any knowledge of the matter yourself?—No doubt they were crofters until they were removed by Macgillivray.

42,341. Are you certain of it?—As certain as I am seeing you.

42,342. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Would you name the places in Northtown farm to which you referred, from which crofters were evicted?—We used to call them the South-Side (*An Taobh-Deas*) and the North-Side (*An Taobh-Tuath*).

42,343. Do you know a place called Ceann-Tuilbheig on that farm?—Yes, very well.

42,344. Were there crofters there before?—Yes.

42,345. Is that at the north end or the south end of the farm?—It is at Obe.

42,346. Is it a part of that big farm of Kyles and Northtown?—Yes.

42,347. Are there many families there to-day?—Yes.

42,348. How many?—Five.

42,349. Are they all cottars in the same position as yourself?—Yes.

42,350. Does the farmer allow them to cultivate bits of land?—Yes.

42,351. And have they to pay for it by labour?—I believe they work to him for the land.

42,352. Have they to turn out whenever he asks them?—He is not so strict as that altogether.

42,353. But does he ever give them money?—I don't know: I cannot say.

42,354. You never get money yourself for your labour?—I never got much of it.

42,355. Now, with regard to these roads, do I understand that you never complained of the want of roads on your own behalf?—No.

42,356. Is it a fact that, while the crofters on the east side of Harris pay road money, they have no road at all?—I don't know whether they pay or not.

42,357. Is it the case that the only money expended on roads in the island is spent on the road along the west coast?—Yes.

42,358. Name the crofting townships on the east side of Harris?—I can name some of them. In South Harris, Lingarabay, Borsham, Finsbay, Quidnish and Cnoc-Eisken, Floddibay, Manish, Geocrab and Ardslave.

42,359. Have the crofters in these townships for the last thirty-five years been paying a regular road rate?—I have no doubt they were; it is a burden on the land.

42,360. During those years were those townships without a public road?—Yes.

42,361. And is that the statement that you made already before this Royal Commission?—Yes.

42,362. You did not complain personally of the want of a road?—No, I do not complain; we have a road on the east side. [*Mr Wilson.*—But Obe and Strond have a road. The public road from Tarbert to Obe runs through crofting lands, but the houses are away down at the seaside far from the road. All the townships Mr Macrae mentions are without a road, and never had one.]

42,363. Have footpaths been made in these townships within the last year?—Yes.

42,364. By means of a special grant from Government?—Yes.

42,365. With the view of supplying the people with labour, in order that they might get a day's pay and be able to buy seed for their crofts?—I don't say it was.

42,366. Do you remember any eviction in South Harris?—Yes; I know that Stewart removed a lot of them: it was he who removed every crofter in Harris.

42,367. Name a crofting township which you yourself remember being cleared?—Borve.

42,368. Who was proprietor of Harris at that time?—Lord Dunmore.

42,369. How many years since?—I think it is about fifty-six years since they were removed by the military.

42,370. In what circumstances were the people who were evicted?—They were in very good circumstances.

42,371. Was there any provision made for them by the estate when they were evicted?—No, except that the proprietor would give them £100 if they would only go to America.

42,372. Did that offer of £100 induce them to leave willingly? Was it sufficient to induce the people to leave of their own accord?—No, it was not; supposing they got another £500 along with it they would not go.

42,373. So that, literally, the military had to be employed to put them out of their houses?—And they took them and removed them.

42,374. Who got that place as soon as they were cleared?—Stewart got it immediately.

42,375. When the crofters were at Borve had they the *machair* land and the hill right up to the top?—Yes, except the piece he took off it.

42,376. What piece was that?—The piece that is under the dyke to-day.

42,377. But, before the evictions began, had they the low land, the arable land, and the hill grazing up to the mountain top?—They had the *machair* land and the hill also.

42,378. If new holdings were made there to-day, would it be necessary, in order to make the new tenants comfortable, to give them the whole hill along with the *machair* lands?—Of course it would; they would require that.

42,379. Did those crofters get any compensation for their houses?—No, they did not.

42,380. And they were able to build houses without any assistance?—If they get a place to build them.

42,381. When the crofters were put to the east side, did the estate make any piers, or landing-stages, or boat slips, to assist them to prosecute the fishing?—Nothing whatever.

42,382. *Mr Maccallum.*—Before they were removed entirely, is it the case that some of the *machair* land was taken from them by Mr Stewart?—Yes, that is so. Tarbert, Harris.

42,383. How many years before the removal was that done?—It was a long time; over twenty years. John Mackay.

42,384. And what was done with that piece of land?—He had it for calves for himself.

42,385. Was that a valuable piece of land?—Yes, it was.

42,386. What would be the extent of land that was taken from them?—I cannot tell, but it was a good piece of land.

42,387. What hill grazing had they?—They had good hill pasture.

42,388. Were they allowed to graze on the hill that now forms Lady Scott's deer forest?—They were not.

42,389. Was Lady Scott's forest a common grazing for the tenantry of Harris?—Yes, for the crofters of the islands.

42,390. For the whole of Harris?—Yes, it was open as a common to North and South Harris.

42,391. And do you think that having that as a common grazing was of great advantage to them?—It was.

NORMAN MACDONALD, Cottar, Rodel, Harris (54)—*examined.* Norman Macdonald.

42,392. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a cottar?—Yes.

42,393. On Rodel Farm?—Yes.

42,394. How many cottars are there on Rodel Farm besides yourself?—Other three.

42,395. Are there any crofters near your house?—Yes.

42,396. What township do they live in?—Strond.

42,397. How do you make a living?—I have done nothing the last year.

42,398. You cannot live on nothing?—Perhaps for a year I can manage.

42,399. What is your usual occupation?—I was a shepherd on the farm before that.

42,400. And now you are living in a house on the farm but are not employed?—That is so.

42,401. Would you like to get a croft?—I would.

42,402. Were you appointed as a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

42,403. To represent the cottars on the farm of Rodel?—Yes.

42,404. Did your neighbours, the other cottars, desire you to represent to the Commission that they were all desirous of having land?—Yes.

42,405. Can you tell us where land can be got suitable for crofts?—Oh, quite easy.

42,406. Did you hear what the other witnesses said here to-day?—Yes.

42,407. Do you agree that the places they mentioned are suitable?—No, in some things.

42,408. What things do you not agree about? Is there land in your neighbourhood that could be got?—Plenty.

42,409. Is there plenty land in Rodel?—Yes, plenty good land.

42,410. Suitable for crofts?—Very suitable for crofts.

42,411. Did they omit to mention any place which you know of?—The country side was cultivated all over.

42,412. I think the witnesses who have been already examined told us of places all over the country?—I believe you could not have walked a mile without coming on cultivated land from Huishnish to Rodel, which is about 16 miles along the west side of the island.

42,413. What size of a croft would you like?—A croft to keep four cows and forty sheep and a horse.

42,414. Would you, if you got such a croft, be able to stock it?—Yes.

42,415. From your own money?—Yes, and to build a house too.

42,416. Would the other crofters in your township be able to do the same?—I believe most of them would.

Tarbert, Harris.

Norman Macdonald

42,417. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Have you ever had a holding?—No.

42,418. Had your father a holding?—Yes.

42,419. In what township?—In Strond.

42,420. Is your father alive?—No.

42,421. Had he a holding till his death?—He was a shepherd till his death.

42,422. Did he give up the holding in Strond of his own free will?—Yes, because the rest of the family had gone to America, and he was left alone.

42,423. How many tenants were in Strond when your father was a tenant there?—I believe the number was about twenty-four.

42,424. There were twenty-four crofter tenants?—Yes.

42,425. Were these all put out?—No, there are nineteen of them in it yet; but seven were put out.

42,426. What was done with the land?—It was added to Rodel sheep farm.

42,427. Do you know what the circumstances of those seven were? Were they in good circumstances?—Yes, they had a good stock and a good strong family, each of them.

42,428. What rents were they paying?—I believe from £4 to £9.

42,429. How much stock would those have who paid £9?—I cannot remember exactly how much, but they could easily keep five milking cows, with forty sheep and a horse.

42,430. Do you mean forty ewes or forty head?—Forty ewes.

42,431. How many head would that represent?—About one hundred head.

42,432. Do you know any crofter to-day who has got such a stock as that,—any crofter in all Harris?—Yes, and more; the first man examined here to-day had more.

42,433. Do you mean Mr Norman Macleod, crofter, Borsham?—Yes.

42,434. He had more than that?—Yes.

42,435. Where?—At Borsham.

42,436. What rent does he pay at Borsham?—About £4, or less.

42,437. When had he a stock as big as that,—five cows and about one hundred sheep?—I believe he has had that stock for many a year.

42,438. Is he entitled to keep that stock?—I believe not.

42,439. Does he keep more than double his souming?—I believe he is keeping that, at any rate.

42,440. Is there a tenant living beside him, the ground officer?—Yes.

42,441. Is he overstocking the township?—I believe he has that number at any rate; I don't know about his cattle, but he has a good stock of sheep,—I cannot exactly say how many.

42,442. What would be the average stock of the others?—I believe some of them about one cow and perhaps two, three, or four sheep.

42,443. What is the name of the ground officer?—Alexander Morrison.

42,444. Do you know that he has been keeping far more than he ought to keep in the township?—He has more than the rest at any rate.

42,445. How many sheep was he in the habit of having?—I don't know how many he had at this time, but his father always had a good stock of sheep.

42,446. Do you know the islands occupied by Mr Stewart?—Yes.

42,447. Do you know the ground personally?—Yes.

42,448. Do you know Pabbay?—I have been there.

42,449. Where were you a shepherd?—On the farm of Rodel.

42,450. For how long?—I have been a shepherd since I commenced to work.

42,451. What stock of sheep did Rodel carry in your earliest recollection?—I saw 500 Cheviot ewes on it, besides cattle and horses.

42,452. Would it, to-day, carry so much as that?—No.

42,453. What would it carry to-day?—About 400.

42,454. What stock of cattle used to be on it in your earliest recollection?—Fourteen milking cows besides followers, and two pair of horses. Tarbert, Harris.

42,455. What stock of cattle is on it to-day?—The farmer has not much on, but about a dozen cattle of all kinds, including one-year olds and two-year olds. Norman Macdonald.

42,456. Is there half the stock of cattle to-day that used to be on it in your recollection?—No.

42,457. And is the stock of sheep far less to-day than it used to be in your early days?—It has about 200 sheep on it now.

42,458. Is that owing to the soil deteriorating?—Yes, the soil is going back, because the grass is not growing for want of manure and cultivation.

42,459. Do you believe that the best use that could be made of that land now would be to break it up into small holdings?—It would improve the soil, and it would improve the country.

42,460. It would improve the land itself?—Yes.

42,461. And it would improve the people?—Yes.

42,462. Do you know Ensay island?—Yes.

42,463. Is that suitable for small tenants?—First-class.

42,464. Would you like to see that island broken up into small holdings?—Yes, indeed.

42,465. Do you believe it would be good for the country at large?—Yes.

42,466. Do you know Pabbay?—Yes.

42,467. What kind of an island is that?—A good island: there is not a better island between this and Australia.

42,468. *Mr Thomas Wilson, Solicitor, Lochmaddy, agent for the proprietors.*—What stock of every description is upon Rodel at the present moment belonging to any person,—not merely to the tenant, but grazing on Rodel, whether let to others or not?—That is more than I can tell, unless I count them.

42,469. *Mr Gordon.*—Have you any reason to suppose that there is not a full stock upon the ground?—There is not a full stock on the ground.

42,470. Neither belonging to the tenant nor to any other person?—Well, I cannot say much about that, because the place is open, without fence or dyke.

42,471. Do you know Glen Strondeval?—Yes.

42,472. Is that the part of Rodel to which you referred as being suitable for holdings?—Yes.

42,473. The remainder of the farm is pretty steep, is it not?—No, it is not very steep.

ALEXANDER MACLEOD, Cottar, Obe, Harris (54). Alexander Macleod.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter).

42,474. *Mr Gordon.*—Were you appointed a delegate to speak for the township of Obe?—I was.

42,475. How many cottars do you speak for?—Seventeen.

42,476. Are there seventeen cottars in the crofting township of Obe?—Yes.

42,477. Have you any stock?—No.

42,478. Have the cottars in the township stock, as a rule?—No.

42,479. How do you make your living?—By the sea.

42,480. You are a fisherman?—Yes.

42,481. Do the other cottars fish?—Every one of them.

42,482. Is there a general desire among the cottars to get crofts?—Yes.

42,483. You have heard the evidence given by the other witnesses to-day?—Yes.

42,484. Do you agree with what they have said?—I believe there are some places that would be suitable, and fishermen would occupy fishermen's crofts; some would take large crofts and others small ones.

42,485. Would the cottars be able to stock the crofts if they got them?—A good many of them would; perhaps there are some who could not.

42,486. You have heard about the land on the farm of Rodel, and the other farms along the west coast?—Yes.

42,487. Would the crofts which your neighbours

prefer be crofts where the tenant could prosecute fishing, or crofts on which they would like to have employment for themselves and their families throughout the year?—If they got big crofts there would be no occasion for fishing, and those that would turn out fishermen would be content in a small croft.

42,488. Are you acquainted with the crofts round Harris?—Yes, but not at this end.

42,489. Do you know the west coast of Harris?—Pretty well.

42,490. Are there any harbours there that would suit fishermen?—There are no safe harbours on the west coast until you go into Obe.

42,491. The best harbours are at Obe, and upon the east side of the island?—Rodel and Obe are two good places, and Strond also.

42,492. So that, if any fishermen's crofts are formed, it would be advisable to have them in the neighbourhood of these two good harbours?—There are some among us who would take big crofts, and others who would take smaller ones.

42,493. But it would be advisable to have the smaller crofts near a good harbour?—Yes.

42,494. Now, speaking for yourself, what size of a croft would suit you, provided that you carry on your occupation of fisherman?—I know some that carry on crofting and fishing, who had four cows and some sheep, and these men are pretty well off.

42,495. But, suppose the available land was rather limited, would it not be of advantage to you as a fisherman to have a croft that would give you potatoes, and keep a couple of cows and a few sheep?—That would answer me very well.

42,496. And would that answer any of the other fishermen?—No, those who have big strong families, with a lot of boys, would not be pleased with a croft that would content me.

DONALD MACKENZIE, Cottar, Strond (56).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

42,497. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a cottar at Strond?—Yes.

42,498. Did you hear the evidence given by the other witnesses?—Yes.

42,499. Do you agree generally with what they stated?—With part of it.

42,500. Can you tell us what they said that you do not agree with?—I will tell you that. I object to the first witness who spoke, in that he only maintained deer forests all the time he was speaking.

42,501. Do you think the whole of the farms in this island should be broken up into small holdings for crofters?—Where they are convenient to the sea to be broken up, I would like to see them broken up.

42,502. Are you a fisherman yourself?—Yes.

42,503. Have you any land at all?—Not an inch.

42,504. Have you any stock?—Nothing.

42,505. Would you like a croft yourself?—That is what brought me here.

42,506. Are the other cottars in your township desirous to get land?—Eleven of them are here to-day for that purpose.

42,507. Is there any land in the neighbourhood of Strond that could be got for fishermen's crofts?—Yes, where my father and myself were removed from.

42,508. Where was that?—Borosdale, South Strond,—between Strond and Rodel.

42,509. Is there any old arable land on Borosdale?—Yes, there were seven crofts.

42,510. And is the land suitable, in your opinion, for making into crofts again?—As good as ever, if not better.

42,511. Would that be convenient land for any of the harbours on that side of the island?—Very convenient to the best anchorage in South Harris.

42,512. What size of a croft would you like?—Between 2 and 3 acres, and some sheep.

42,513. And that would give you milk and potatoes, and perhaps a little oats, and enable you to carry on your fishing at the same time?—Yes.

42,514. Is that the sort of croft you would like as a fisherman?—Yes, if I could get it there.

42,515. Do you know the island of Killegray?—Yes.

42,516. Is there any land in that island suitable for crofters?—I do not know a better place.

42,517. Are there any harbours in Killegray?—Yes.

42,518. Is there any safe anchorage in or about the island?—Yes, as safe as necessary.

42,519. Do you know the island of Pabbay?—Yes.

42,520. What sort of an island is it?—A good island.

42,521. Are there any harbours that would suit for a fishing station on Pabbay?—No.

42,522. Do you know Eusay?—Yes.

42,523. Are there any harbours on it?—You could get a good anchorage at Ensay any day.

42,524. Is the island under cultivation generally?—No, it is in the hands of the proprietor.

42,525. Does he labour the land?—Yes, he farms it.

42,526. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is there a good deal of arable land on Ensay that is at present grazed?—Yes, outside the parks.

42,527. And is the greater part of the arable land under pasture, or is it cultivated?—It is the smaller part of Ensay that is cultivated, and the rest is grazed.

42,528. Is it the case that there is a good deal of arable land there that is pastured which might be profitably cultivated by crofters?—Yes, it was always cultivated before.

42,529. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Seeing that there are so many cottars in the neighbourhood of Rodel, I should like to know if they ever applied to the estate for small holdings?—I don't know if they ever did.

42,530. Did they feel the want of land very much?—Yes.

42,531. Can you tell us the reason why they did not apply for land?—I will tell you that; it is because the proprietor was near hand, and living there.

42,532. Who lives there now?—No one lives there now; it is tenanted by Mrs Macdonald.

42,533. When did Lord Dunmore live there?—A long time ago.

42,534. How many years?—About twelve years.

42,535. Have not the cottars had plenty time to think about applying to the estate for a small holding?—There was no proprietor after that,—the estate was under trustees, and if they had asked for land they would not have got it.

42,536. How do you know the trustees would not have given it?—How would they give us land when they would not even give us a place for a house if our house was to fall on our heads?

42,537. Is it a fact that the estate authorities were refusing stances?—The last witness was refused a stance for a house after making several applications.

42,538. Were others refused house stances?—Every one that asked for one was refused.

42,539. Is it a belief among the cottars that there would be no use applying for land or even for a house stance?—Yes, because they were asking it and could not get it.

42,540. Asking what?—Asking land and could not get it.

42,541. Off whom were they asking land?—Off the trustees.

42,542. Is it the cottars who were asking the trustees?—Yes.

42,543. Where are the cottars living who were asking the land?—Where I am living, in Strond.

42,544. How long is it since they made this application?—About a year or eighteen months ago.

42,545. Was it by letter?—Yes.

42,546. Have you a copy of the letter?—No.

42,547. To whom was the letter addressed?—I don't know.

Tarbert, Harris.

Donald Mackenzie.

42,548. Who wrote it?—I don't know that either.

42,549. Do you know who signed the letter?—No. I was from home myself, but I heard among the people that there were letters written.

42,550. Is there any one here present, from whom you heard that application was made by cottars in Strond to the trustees for land or for house stances?—I don't think there are any of them here. [*Mr Thomas Wilson.*—I may say that I never received such a letter, or heard of it.]

Kenneth Maclennan.

KENNETH MACLENNAN, Crofter, Finsbay (51)—*examined.*

42,551. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at Finsbay?—Yes.

42,552. How many crofts are there in your township?—Four crofts and six crofters.

42,553. Are they small crofts?—Yes, small crofts.

42,554. Are you a fisherman?—Yes.

42,555. And you hold the land in connection with your occupation as fisherman?—Yes.

42,556. I suppose the land in your township is like what we see on the shore here, very hard and poor ground?—It is mostly all the same.

42,557. Is there a desire among the people in your township to get bigger and better crofts?—Yes.

42,558. Is it fishermen's crofts that you would like, or crofts of a larger size which would keep you working for the year?—Some would like to get larger crofts to occupy their whole time.

42,559. Are there any of the men living in your township who would prefer to go to such a croft even if he could not fish?—Yes, I believe there are.

42,560. You have heard the evidence given to-day, with reference to the suitability of the land on the west side of the island for that class of croft?—Yes.

42,561. Do you agree with what was stated?—I agree with all that was stated.

42,562. Would you yourself be inclined to leave the sea if you got a pretty large croft that would occupy all your time?—I would.

42,563. Would you be able to build a house upon it and to stock it?—I think I could, with a little assistance.

42,564. Is your family strong?—No, they are pretty young yet.

42,565. Supposing you required help, from what source would you expect to get it?—From the Government.

42,566. You would expect to get some money in the form of a loan?—Yes.

42,567. Which you propose to pay back by instalments in the form of rent?—Quite so.

42,568. Can you give me any idea of the size of the croft that you have in your mind?—About £8 or £10 worth.

42,569. Do you think a holding of that size would occupy you most of the year?—I think it would.

42,570. I presume there is no industry carried on beside you except fishing and some cloth-making?—The women make the cloth, and the men generally go to the fishing.

42,571. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you think there is sufficient land in the island to accommodate the crofters and cottars?—I think there is, if all the arable land were broken down.

42,572. Do you think that, if the land held in large farms were made available for occupation by crofters, it would be taken up by the people of the island?—Oh, I think it would.

42,573. You think they would be benefited by getting a loan, but, without a loan, do you think they would be able to take up the land, and to occupy it to profit?—Not every one, in the case of those big crofts.

42,574. Would the whole of the land, do you think, be taken up if it were offered as crofts?—I think between north and south they would occupy it all.

42,575. And do you think they would profitably occupy it without getting a loan from Government?—Not those big crofts.

Tarbert, Harris.

Kenneth Maclennan.

42,576. In the case of big crofts you think help would be needed?—Yes, by most of them; that is my impression.

42,577. Why do you think so? Have not a number of the crofters got stock already?—Yes, but not enough; and they would have to build houses.

42,578. But, if they got to the better land, would not their stock improve and increase?—Oh, very likely.

42,579. Don't you see that when these people came to the land on the east coast they got no help, and still they were able to provide for themselves in some way?—Yes, but they were paying very small rents.

42,580. Were the rents small, do you think, that were charged?—Small compared with £10, but rack rents for all that.

42,581. You think they were paying more than the land was worth?—Yes.

42,582. But, if they got the better land, would they not be able to get on much more comfortably than on the east?—Much better.

42,583. Have you any idea when this township of Finsbay was formed?—No.

42,584. Was your father in the place before you?—Yes.

42,585. Have you any idea where he came from?—From Taransay.

42,586. Had he land in Taransay?—No.

42,587. Had he any land before he came to Finsbay?—No; it was there he settled first.

42,588. Was he put on a vacant croft there?—Yes; when the township was divided into six crofts he got half a share.

42,589. It was re-divided at the time he came?—Yes.

42,590. So the holdings were decreased when your father was placed there?—Yes, they were.

42,591. *Mr Munro.*—Supposing that the Government declined to advance money to enable you to take additional land, would that operate as any hindrance to your taking it?—I know it would to some.

42,592. Would it in your own case?—No.

42,593. I think you hinted that you would require some Government assistance to enable you to take a croft?—Yes, a big croft.

42,594. Don't you think it would be wiser for you, and for other crofters, to look forward to taking additional land depending upon your own resources entirely?—Yes, but it is not easy to get a big croft after having a small one.

42,595. But, when the people of this island had big crofts before, they got no assistance from anybody?—But there were too heavy rents then.

42,596. If the rents are lower to-day you surely ought to be able to take a croft much more easily?—Oh yes.

42,597. Now, supposing money were advanced to you, how could you repay it?—We would repay it out of the stock.

42,598. You think you could do that, and spread the repayment over a number of years?—Yes, I think we could.

42,599. *Mr Donald Macrae, Balallan Cottage, Plockton.*—What township is on the south side of Finsbay?—Borsham.

42,600. And what township is on the north side of it?—Ardvey.

42,601. What land forms your boundary on the hill?—Borvebeg and part of Borvemore.

42,602. Were there small tenants in Borvebeg and Borvemore at one time?—Yes.

42,603. Had they the whole grazing to the boundary you have to-day?—Yes.

42,604. There were no deer forests then?—No.

42,605. And the crofters who had the old townships had the full benefit of the hill, from the top of Feadach down to the sea?—Yes.

42,606. Had they as good a bargain of the land then as you have to-day in Finsbay?—I daresay they had.

42,607. They had good land, any way?—Yes.

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42,608. They had something for their money?—Yes, they had the hill pasture.

42,609. Does the deer forest trouble your township in any way?—Not our township, but it troubles Manish, Flodabay, and Geocrab.

42,610. Are there delegates from these townships here to-day?—I believe so.

42,611. What trouble does the deer forest give them?—There is a deer fence between them and the forests.

42,612. And does that fence allow the deer to come down on the crofters' land?—No, there are only three deer outside the fence, so that they do not trouble them.

42,613. Is there a fence on the march between the deer forest and the townships?—Yes.

42,614. Do the deer come in across the fence?—No.

42,615. Where does the trouble come in?—When this new fence was erected all these townships were mostly grazing their sheep upon the other side, and they lost the grazing they had.

42,616. The sheep had enough sense to know a good bite of grass when they found it?—Yes.

42,617. And they were going where they could get a good bite?—Yes.

42,618. Have these townships any hill grazing?—They complain of not having it.

42,619. And this expensive fence is put up between them and the deer forest?—Yes.

42,620. When was it put up?—Three years ago.

42,621. Even supposing the townships you mentioned were to get more hill grazing, is it possible for them to add to the arable land?—Yes, it is.

42,622. Is there any land that they could reclaim and add to the arable land?—If they would shove their old dykes out to the hills again, it could be done with great labour.

42,623. But it could be done?—It could be done.

42,624. What would they prefer,—to get more hill grazing where they are, and shove their dyke further out, and with great labour add a little more to their arable land; or shift over to the west side of Harris?—I think they would rather shift over.

42,625. They look to that for a relief?—They do.

42,626. Is it possible for the people on the east side of Harris to live in decency and comfort?—No, it is impossible.

42,627. Have they enough to eat in a good year?—Enough to eat, and more than enough.

42,628. Now, supposing that for one year or two years running the fishing were to prove a failure, and the potato crop were to fail, could the people face that?—No, if it was not for the help they get from the merchants they could not.

42,629. Is the land on the east, where the crofters are, worse for potato disease than the *machair* lands on the west?—Some parts of it are far worse.

42,630. Is the *machair* land on the west better in every sense?—In every sense.

42,631. *Mr Gordon.*—Is there more mist or mildew on the east side than on the west?—I don't know, but it is worse for the potato disease at any rate.

42,632. Is the fog more general on the east?—The country is only a narrow strip, and generally when there is a fog it is the same on each side.

lexander ampbell.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, Crofter, Scadabay (45)—*examined.*

42,633. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at Scadabay?—Yes.

42,634. How many crofters are there in your township?—Six crofts.

42,635. Are any of them divided?—Yes, some of them are divided.

42,636. How many families are on the six crofts?—Nineteen families.

42,637. What is the average size of the crofts?—The souming is four cows and twenty sheep.

42,638. And, I suppose, most of them have their full stock?—Not this year; there was a great failure this year, owing to the inclemency of the weather.

42,639. Are the crofts rather poor?—Yes, some are very poor. Tarbert, Harris.

42,640. The land is hard and rocky?—Yes.

42,641. Was your father born there?—Yes, and my grandfather. Alexander Campbell.

42,642. It has been a crofting township for many years?—Yes, for two or three generations.

42,643. Is it a good fishing station?—It used to be pretty good when the fishing was carried on with success, but it is a failure nowadays.

42,644. What kind of fish do you generally get?—Herring and lobsters.

42,645. You do not go to the white fishing?—No.

42,646. Is there any fisherman in the island who has a big enough boat to go to Canna or the other places for white fishing?—Oh, yes.

42,647. Where are they, in the south end?—And in the north end.

42,648. And do they prosecute the white fishing with success?—I understand you mean the salmon fishing.

42,649. No, but the cod and ling fishing?—There is any number of boats capable of going to the east coast, but there are not many in the township where I live that could go so far as Canna.

42,650. There are not many in your township who fish there?—No.

42,651. Is that for want of boats?—They had boats, but they gave them over; there was no use continuing it, for it was ruining them, labouring and spending money on nets for no return.

42,652. I referred rather to line fishing?—They are not accustomed to line fishing.

42,653. There are not many who fish for cod or ling?—No.

42,654. You have heard the evidence given by the previous witnesses?—Yes.

42,655. Do you agree generally with what they said?—I agree with every word of it.

42,656. Would you, speaking for yourself, be inclined to move to another part of the country if you got a better croft?—I would be very glad to move to any part where I could get a horse to carry the burden instead of me.

42,657. You have no horses in the east?—No, the cultivation is mostly all done by spade. [*Mr Wilson.*—There are no horses between Diraclett and Finsbay. They use the *cas-chrom* to some extent, but it is mostly a system of common spade husbandry, with lazy beds and the creel.]

42,658. Is there in your district a general desire to get crofts?—Yes, if they could work them with any other agricultural implement besides the spade.

42,659. But do you think yourself it would be for their advantage to move away from the fishing-ground?—I know it would; the fishing is no help to them nowadays. I have seen it fetch as low as 2s. 6d. per cran.

42,660. For herring?—Yes.

42,661. But, at the present moment, the price of herring is twenty times as much as that; it is 50s. for the last month?—Yes, but with fifteen or a score of crans on an average it would go down to that figure. That is what we generally saw.

42,662. No doubt the fishing in recent years has not been very remunerative; but fishing is still carried on successfully in many parts of Scotland?—It has been very unsuccessful here, this year.

42,663. The herring fishing, you mean?—Yes.

42,664. And, consequently, you would prefer to get a croft where you could be occupied the whole or the greater part of your time on the land?—Yes, that is the desire of the people.

42,665. *Mr Thomas Wilson, Solicitor, Lochmaddy, agent for the proprietors.*—Do you know that Quidnish, which had been under crofters in olden times, and was afterwards made into a tack, was in 1884 or 1885 brought back into crofts?—I know it was.

42,666. And there were sixteen cottars placed on crofts there?—Yes.

Tarbert, Harris.

Alexander Campbell.

42,667. Also ten on Diraclett, and four on Ceann-Dibeig?—Yes.

42,668. That was done about the same time?—I don't remember.

42,669. Just before the Crofters Act was passed?—Yes, I know that.

42,670. And Hermetra and Tahay island were added to Bernera at the same time?—Yes.

42,671. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—With regard to these new tenants put into Quidnish, do you believe that they paid their rents regularly since they got these lands?—I cannot say, I am sure. [*Mr Wilson.*—I will put in a statement showing exactly how all the 'fair rents' stand down to this date. (*Mr Macrae*).—Are the payments satisfactory on the whole? (*Mr Wilson*).—I think the payments are pretty satisfactory all over Harris.]

42,672. *Mr Maccallum.*—There was a township formed in Quidnish?—Yes.

42,673. Were houses built for the people by the proprietor?—No, they built the houses themselves.

42,674. And they took up the land very readily without any houses being provided for them?—Oh yes.

42,675. Was there much of a reduction in the rent charged to them from the rent formerly charged to the farmer?—Mr Wilson knows better about that than I do.

Norman Cunningham.

NORMAN CUNNINGHAM, Crofter, Scalpay, Harris (58). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

42,676. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter at Scalpay island?—Yes.

42,677. How many crofters are there in your township?—About forty crofters, and between fifty and fifty-two cottars.

42,678. Were you appointed a delegate at a public meeting to speak on behalf of the cottars?—Yes.

42,679. Is your township greatly overcrowded?—It would be overcrowded by the third of the number in it. There are about 500 people on an island scarcely two miles long.

42,680. Are the crofters mostly engaged in fishing?—Every one that is there follows the fishing.

42,681. Do the crofters complain of the cottars keeping stock on their land?—Yes.

42,682. How many stock have the crofters got?—Not much.

42,683. Have you a souming for the township?—No, I cannot tell.

42,684. Do all the cottars keep stock?—No.

42,685. Do any of them keep stock?—A few.

42,686. Have you any idea how many cattle are on the island?—No, I cannot tell.

42,687. Is the pasture of the island very bare?—Yes, very.

42,688. Are there any horses on it?—No, they would be of no use there.

42,689. Are there any sheep on the island?—Very few.

42,690. What sort of land is it; is it rocky?—Peat banks and bogs.

42,691. Is Scalpay an old crofting township?—Not very old; fifty-one years.

42,692. Were you born on the island?—No.

42,693. Where did your father come from?—My grandfather came from the west of Harris.

42,694. Do you know what part he came from?—From Tolmachan.

42,695. How is the land there occupied now?—There is nobody there now; it is deer forest.

42,696. Do you know yourself what kind of land it is? Have you ever been on the ground?—I have walked over the ground.

42,697. Was there an old township where your grandfather was?—Yes.

42,698. Do you know how many crofts there were there?—Three or four.

42,699. Were there crofts along the whole south coast of North Harris at one time?—Yes, there were.

Tarbert, Harris.

Norman Cunningham.

42,700. Do you know when North Harris was cleared of crofters?—About seventy-nine years ago.

42,701. Who was proprietor of North Harris at the time?—Macleod's Trustees. [*The Secretary.*—Scalpay was an old tack, and in 1764 the whole population of the island was twenty-four. According to Heron, whose work on the Hebrides was published in 1794, Scalpay was then inhabited by two or three families—from fifteen to twenty souls.]

42,702. And you say that the population of the island is now upwards of 500?—Yes.

42,703. Are you at times subject to a scarcity of food in the island?—Yes.

42,704. For how many people would the island be sufficient to grow bread and potatoes?—Scarcely fifteen.

42,705. Then, if anything were to be done to relieve the island of its present overcrowded condition, a large number of the crofters, as well as the cottars, would have to be removed to some other place, in order that the remainder could live comfortably?—Yes.

42,706. Is there any other land in North Harris to which you think they could be moved?—I do not know, except along the coast of North Harris.

42,707. Tell us any place in North Harris where the surplus population of Scalpay could be put?—Teilinish, Tolmachan, Meavaig, Brandarsaig, Claismol, and Husinish, all on West Loch Tarbert.

42,708. Could a good many crofters be accommodated in that part of the coast, do you think?—I cannot tell how many could be put comfortably there.

42,709. But these are old townships?—Yes.

42,710. *Mr R. F. Matheson, Factor for North Harris.*—You said there were three or four crofters at Tolmachan: I would like to know whether these were really crofters, or merely cottars paying rent to a tacksman?—They paid to the proprietor.

42,711. You say you would place crofters along the coast from Teilinish to Husinish. Are you satisfied that the ground there is quite suitable for cultivation?—I believe it is, and that the people who were there lived very comfortably.

42,712. Is the land suited for cultivation and of sufficient depth?—I am sure of it.

42,713. Do you know if there is any spare land at Bunveneadar for new crofts?—Yes, on this side of the river.

42,714. How many crofters would it take?—If I was seeing it I would soon tell that.

42,715. Would you be better off with a holding than as a fisherman?—I was a fisherman for forty years, and I have nothing to show for it to-day.

42,716. Is it not simply because you are partly a crofter and partly a fisherman that neither the fishing nor the crofting has been successful with you?—I don't know. The fishing is very uncertain; it is just a lottery.

42,717. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you find that it is the people who have no land who succeed best at fishing?—No, they never will do so well without land.

42,718. You have had a good experience of the matter, and that is your decided opinion?—Yes.

42,719. So that, in order to the successful prosecution of the fishing, you think that the people must have land?—Yes, and I would not be right without some land.

42,720. If they were situated in the places you mentioned, in North Harris, would they be within the reach of good fishing ground?—Yes, I have fished on that ground myself.

42,721. If they get these holdings I suppose they would like also to have the grazing on the hill above?—Yes.

42,722. Is that a good grazing?—Yes.

42,723. Was it grazed before?—Yes.

42,724. What sort of stock was on it?—Only sheep and deer.

42,725. Were the sheep that were on it good?—Yes.

42,726. Is the pasture better or worse than the pasture you have in Scalpay?—There is no pasture in Scalpay.

42,727. So you have no doubt that it would be a great benefit to be removed from Scalpay to Tolmachan and the other places you mentioned?—I am sure it would. Tarbert, Harris.

42,728. All these places are now included in the deer forest?—Yes.

JOHN MACLEOD, Cottar, Ardhasig, Harris (75) —*examined.* John Macleod.

42,729. *Mr Gordon.*—Are there many crofters in your township?—Not many; I think nine altogether.

42,730. Do you mean nine crofts or nine crofters?—Nine crofters in, I think, four crofts.

42,731. Were you appointed a delegate at any public meeting?—Yes.

42,732. And you appear here for the township of Ardhasig?—Yes.

42,733. Can you tell us whether your township is greatly overcrowded?—The crofters are always complaining of the cottars being a burden to them.

42,734. How many cottars are there?—There are only four cottars and two widows.

42,735. Have you got a souming?—No.

42,736. What is the average stock kept by the crofters in the township?—We agree among ourselves whatever we keep.

42,737. But what is the number on an average?—I think those who pay full rent keep four cows.

42,738. Have you any horses?—No.

42,739. Any sheep?—Yes, from 30 to 40.

42,740. That is a fair sized croft?—That is a full croft.

42,741. How are the crofters employed when not working on their crofts?—They must be idle when they have nothing to do on them.

42,742. Are they fishermen?—Yes, every one is a fisherman.

42,743. Do they go to the herring fishing?—Yes.

42,744. Have you got boats suitable for the herring fishing?—Yes, now; they are getting larger boats now.

42,745. And are the crofters in fairly comfortable circumstances?—Yes, I do believe they are.

42,746. They are pretty well off?—Yes.

42,747. Have the four cottars any stock?—No, very few sheep.

42,748. The crofters cannot have much cause to complain of them if they have no stock. Is there any land in your neighbourhood that would be suitable for an extension of your crofts?—Not in our neighbourhood, except what was mentioned already in the deer forest.

42,749. Would it be an improvement if you got some additional grazing ground?—Certainly.

42,750. Could that be got convenient to your township in a part of the forest?—The nearest part of the forest would be convenient.

42,751. Did your township ever have that grazing?—Some of it, but the factor took it from them.

42,752. Was any of your former grazing taken from the township and added to the forest?—Yes.

42,753. When did that take place?—A good many years since.

42,754. Have you any idea of the extent that was cut off your pasture?—Yes, a good many acres.

42,755. Three hundred or four hundred acres?—I daresay more than that. This bit of ground was promised to them before the Crofters Commission if they would pay the arrears; so the people asked me to speak for them to-day for this piece of ground.

42,756. Did they pay the arrears?—I think they did.

42,757. Did they apply to the Crofters Commission for an extension of their holdings?—Yes, at that time.

42,758. And did the Crofters Commission grant it?—Yes, conditionally on their paying the arrears.

42,759. The Secretary suggests that, possibly, you may be mistaken about that; he is not quite sure that there was a formal application made, though possibly something was said about it. You think this part of the ground, for which you intended to make application, would be a great convenience, and of use to your township as an extension of your grazings?—Oh yes.

42,760. Is there any arable land in your neighbourhood?—One bit; they call it Totavore.

42,761. Is that at the mouth of the bay?—The end of the bay.

42,762. You think some land suitable for new holdings could be got there?—Yes, a little.

42,763. You heard what the last witness said about the former townships to the west of it?—Yes.

42,764. Do you agree with what he stated, in regard to the land?—Yes, but he did not mention it all.

42,765. But you agree with what he did mention?—I do.

42,766. You think new holdings could be got there?—Yes.

42,767. Suitable for crofts?—Yes, splendid. The people who were there before lived very comfortably.

42,768. You do not remember their being there, do you?—No, I was not born at that time.

42,769. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is there a crofting township on Bunveneadar?—Yes, there are three crofters there, also a gamekeeper and a cottar.

42,770. Could they be benefited by an extension of grazing from the forest land?—They are crowded very much with the fence, these poor people.

42,771. Do you think it would be an advantage for the township to get a part of the forest for grazing?—Certainly.

42,772. Is the grazing above the township there as good as the hill grazing you have?—Yes, fully better.

42,773. Is that a new township?—Yes.

42,774. When was it formed?—Eight or nine years ago.

42,775. But I suppose there was an old township there some time ago?—Yes.

42,776. Do you know how many were in that township in former times?—Four.

42,777. Had they more land than the present crofters have?—No.

42,778. Had they not more grazing?—Yes.

42,779. Had they the liberty of sending their sheep to the hill above?—To the top of the hills.

42,780. Those that are there now have not that privilege?—No, they have a couple of hundred yards above the corn.

42,781. And there is a deer fence there?—Yes.

42,782. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Is the whole of that coast, from the head of the bay on the west side right on to the Harris boundary, marked out with the remains of old crofting townships?—All along the coast of Harris, east and west.

42,783. Take the west first. What is the character of the grazing, say, from the coast line right up to the mountain tops, along the whole of the west coast?—You will get some of the best grazing on the top of the hills, fully as good as that on the shore.

42,784. Is it very excellent grazing all over?—All over.

42,785. Is it much better than the grazing about the base and the west of Harris?—Three times better.

42,786. There is no comparison at all between them?—No.

42,787. If tenants were placed there, is it on arable land they would mainly depend, or on the hill grazing?—If they were able to stock it they would be more comfortable by the hills.

42,788. Is it mostly on the grazing that they would depend?—Yes.

42,789. Was it on the rearing of cattle and sheep that the old tenants principally depended?—Yes.

42,790. And very little on crops?—Very little.

42,791. Do you know any better grazing in the Highlands than the grazing in the deer forest?—No.

42,792. Do you remember when the land was used for grazing before it was made into a deer forest?—No, I do not, because it is nearly eighty years since the sheep were cleared.

42,793. Do you remember a stock of sheep being on those mountains where the deer are to-day?—I

Tarbert, Harris.

John Macleod.

remember perfectly well when Mr Macrae, tacksman of Husinish, sent to the market about 1400 wedders from that place every year, besides cattle and other classes of sheep.

42,794. Does not that show to you that if small tenants were placed along the coast there the hill would be able to supply them with a sufficient stock to keep them very comfortable?—Certainly; I have no doubt at all about that.

42,795. The estate authorities put a few crofters there into some of the townships already?—Yes.

42,796. Name one of them?—I could mention them all. There is Bunveneadar.

42,797. How many did they put there?—Three.

42,798. When?—About eight years ago. Then again there is Loch Leosavay.

42,799. How many did they put there?—Two.

42,800. And there were never tenants there?—No. In Govick they put three tenants.

42,801. How many years ago?—Eight.

42,802. Were there any tenants there before?—Yes.

42,803. How many?—The same number,—three.

42,804. What is the next place you can name?—Beadarsaig near Husinish.

42,805. Did the estate put two there eight years ago?—Yes. Then in Dirascal, on Loch Resort, there were three put, and in Luachair two; and they are there still.

42,806. Give us now the names of places where there were tenants before, and where there are no tenants now?—Bunveneadar, the half of it is unoccupied; Teilinish, Tolmachan, Meavaig, Brandarsaig, Cliasmol, Leosavay, Tusinish, Cravadale, and Amhuinn suidhe, where my grandfather once lived.

42,807. Were the places into which the estate put crofters eight years ago, better than the places you mentioned last?—Three times better.

42,808. Are the places where there are no crofters as good as those where there are?—Every one of them better than the places where they put the crofters; that is to say, if they get the grazing of the hills.

42,809. Now, look at the places into which they put crofters. Did they give the crofters the run of the hill up to the top, as the old tenants had?—No.

42,810. They bounded them in with a wire fence?—Yes.

42,811. And then they spread two or three crofters over a long stretch of the coast, where there might have been seven or eight?—Just so.

42,812. And if any cottar wants a holding in that place they will say that it is already occupied?—Yes.

42,813. They spread them along the coast instead of putting them near one another, and giving them the hill to the top?—That should be the case.

42,814. Can you name me any one of the places to which they put crofters, where they put only two or three instead of six or seven?—No, I don't know, because they would put all there that it would hold.

42,815. But would not some of these places hold many more if they were to get the hill also?—Assuredly.

42,816. Are you perfectly satisfied that the whole stretch of coast on the west could be occupied from the one end to the other, if the people were to get the hill right to the top?—To be sure; there is no doubt about that.

42,817. Take now the Loch-Seaforth side. Did they put crofters there?—Yes.

42,818. Eight years ago?—Yes.

42,819. Will you name the places?—Yes, at Marnig, Scaladale, and Bowglass, at the boundary.

42,820. Did all these new crofters build their own houses and steadings without any help?—I believe some of them got some help, but others had to put up their houses themselves. I do believe that Lady Scott helped them with cattle.

42,821. I have no doubt Lady Scott has been doing well by them?—No doubt about that.

42,822. And I have no doubt they will handsomely acknowledge that; but were they cottars before that?—Every one of them.

42,823. Now, did these experiments turn out a great blessing to the people?—A great blessing.

Tarbert, Harris.

John Macleod.

42,824. Have they improved in their condition very much?—I am sure if they would get as much again to-day they would take it.

42,825. They are able now to take more land?—Yes, if they could get it.

42,826. Large self-supporting crofts?—Yes.

42,827. And to stock them?—To be sure.

42,828. Is the principal complaint they have just now that they are confined too much to the shore with deer forest fences?—Yes, that is the only reason they have to complain.

42,829. Deer forest fences are a great curse when they keep the people down on the shore and cut them away from the hill?—They make the poor sheep run down to the shore when they ought to be on the hill.

42,830. There is a time when sheep cannot thrive on the shore, and when the natural place for them is the hill?—They are starving there on the shore in the winter time.

42,831. *Mr R. F. Matheson, Factor for Lady Scott.*—You say that the crofters or the cottars, placed along the boundaries of the deer forest, are much better off to-day than they were before they were placed there?—Yes.

42,832. Are you certain of that?—To be sure.

42,833. Were you here at the sitting of the Crofters Commission last year?—Yes, I was.

42,834. Did you hear one man, who was a cottar in Scarp, and who got a holding down at Dirascal, say that when he got that holding he was only £5 in debt, and that his debt had increased to £30. He said that on oath to the Commissioners, and told them that his condition was not at all better than when he was a cottar in Scarp. Did you hear that?—Whatever I may hear, I may say this; there is not a cottar here that got land eight years ago who would not give thanks to any one for it. I am quite sure of that.

42,835. You were asked if you thought the crofters at Bunveneadar would be the better of an extension of their grazing?—To be sure.

42,836. You know that, three years ago, about 500 acres of hill ground was added to their holdings, besides what they got when settled there?—Certainly, that is right enough; but that is a place that tenants should have themselves.

42,837. I understood you to say that all the new crofters were fenced in from the forest?—So they said themselves.

42,838. But you said so yourself?—To be sure, I know it.

42,839. Name the new crofters who are fenced in from the forest?—Maruig, Ardvourlie, and Scarpa. By Ardvourlie I mean Bowglass.

42,840. Bowglass is not fenced in. Is Dirascal fenced in?—Yes, there is a fence round it.

42,841. Round the arable land, but not round the hill grazing. Luachair is not fenced, is it?—Yes.

42,842. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you know the townships you are speaking about?—Yes.

42,843. Is there a river on the south march that acts as a fence as far as to keep in the stock at Luachair? Is not the Ulladale river the boundary of the township?—I don't know. I don't think they come out so far as that river. [*Mr Matheson.*—The river is not large enough to act as a fence.]

42,844. *Mr Maccallum.*—Is it, or is it not, the case that these people are confined to the shore, and that they have not the grazing up to the top of the hills?—Yes, in Bunveneadar at all events.

42,845. You know yourself to a certainty that that place is confined to the shore?—Yes.

42,846. And is there, to your knowledge, a fence there?—Yes.

42,847. Is it your decided opinion that the other new crofts also are confined in the same way,—that they have not the right to the hill tops?—Maruig, at all events, on Loch-Seaforth is so confined. None of them have a right to the hill tops, whether fenced or not.

42,848. Now, do you know whether these townships

suffer in any way from the deer?—That was the reason, I believe; the people of Dirascal could not keep their crops from the deer, and I understand Lady Scott was at the expense of putting up a fence to keep the deer in.

42,849. Do you know whether she put up that at her own expense entirely, or whether there is any interest charged to the crofters?—At her own expense, I believe.

DUNCAN MACLEOD, Crofter, Ardhasig (76).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

42,850. *Mr Gordon.*—We understand from the previous witness that you can tell us about an application that was made to Lady Scott for an extension of grazing?—We applied for the hill pasture that was taken from us long ago.

42,851. Did you make an application in writing for the extension of grazings?—We did apply for that which belonged to our township originally.

42,852. Did you apply in writing?—Yes, in writing, to her ladyship. She wrote back saying that we could not get it.

DONALD MORRISON, Crofter, Mol-na-Herradh, Harris (62).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

42,853. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes, at Bowglass.

42,854. Is Bowglass a new township?—Yes.

42,855. How many crofters are in it?—Two.

42,856. When did you go there?—Nine years ago, last spring.

42,857. Have you got good crofts there?—No.

42,858. Is there better land for crofts in other parts of North-Harris?—Yes.

42,859. Where?—Supposing the other places are more rocky and boggy, the land there is better than we have in our crofts.

42,860. Are these existing crofter townships?—Yes.

42,861. Did you hear the evidence given by Norman Cunningham?—Yes.

42,862. Do you agree with him as to the suitability of the lands that he spoke of?—Yes.

42,863. Did you hear the evidence given by John Macleod, cottar, Ardhasig?—Yes.

42,864. And do you agree with what he said?—Yes.

42,865. Have you anything to add further than what he stated?—Only that there would be nothing more useful to us than the land if we could get it.

42,866. You approve of getting new holdings?—Yes, I can prove that it would be to the benefit of the crofter to get more lands. I went to Bowglass with only five sheep and one cow; I have to-day got twenty-one sheep with lambs, and four cows.

42,867. What rent do you pay?—Previously I was paying £2, but 10s. was recently added to it.

42,868. Are you satisfied with your present rent?—Yes, if it had been left as Lady Scott made it originally.

42,869. What do you complain of?—When I got the croft Mr Brydon was factor, and I asked him to point out the boundaries of the croft. The ground-officer came and pointed them out.

42,870. When was your rent raised?—Last Whitsunday.

42,871. Was it Lady Scott that raised your rent, or the Crofters Commission?—I cannot tell.

42,872. Did you apply to the Crofters Commission to have your rent fixed?—Lady Scott summoned us to the Commission.

42,873. And the Commission raised your rent by 10s.?—Very likely they did: and, moreover, when Mr Taylor came from Skye, and went over the croft, he took from me fully half of what I got originally from Lady Scott. That was not arable land but pasture. We were then told by Mr Matheson, at Ardvourlie Lodge, that if we would take the island of Seaforth for our sheep, we would get some cows and fence it in, but we would not take that island. We refused to take it, only I for one would take what I got from the ground officer. Tarbert, Harris.

42,874. *Mr Maccallum.*—You stated that your croft has been diminished since you went there by the taking away of half your pasture?—Yes; we were not aware of this till a few days ago, when it was marked out for fencing us in. Donald Morrison.

42,875. Were your boundaries pointed out to you when you went there, or soon after?—The boundaries were pointed out, and we knew them then, but we did not know them at first.

42,876. You are now given to understand that the extent of hill grazing is much less than was pointed out to you at first?—We are sure, if the fence goes round us, as pointed out just now, that we won't have half the pasture we had originally.

42,877. Who is it that has now pointed out to you the line of fencing?—Mr Matheson and his two head keepers, and Lady Matheson's factor as well.

42,878. And do you consider that the land within the old boundaries pointed out to you was suitable for grazing?—Yes, much better than what is left us.

42,879. Why is the fence being put up just now?—I had only five sheep when I went there first, but they have now increased to twenty-one, and I believe that is the cause of my being fenced in.

42,880. At present is there any fence at all between you and the deer forest?—Nothing just now.

42,881. But it is now proposed to put up a fence, which you think will deprive you of half your pasture?—Yes.

42,882. Is that fence to be put up at the expense of the proprietrix?—Very likely it will be mutual between the two.

42,883. Is it to be a deer fence?—Only a sheep fence; deer can go in and out as they like, but it will confine the sheep.

42,884. How do you account for the taking away of part of your pasture?—Because my stock got too numerous.

42,885. Would it be a shorter fence than would be required by taking more of your grazing away?—We believe that is the cause of it,—that it will cost less money to bring the fence round this way: it will only cost half of what it would if made round the original pasture.

42,886. *Mr Gordon.*—Is this fence being erected on Lady Scott's property, or is it on the march between Lady Scott and Lady Matheson?—Part is on the boundary, and then it bends down to the sea and forms a boundary between me and Lady Scott, and locks me in between the two ladies.

42,887. Is the part of the pasture, which you complain of losing now, on Lady Matheson's side of the fence?—No, it was not on Lady Matheson's, not a blade of it.

42,888. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Would you describe the boundary of the land given to yourself and to your neighbour, as stated to you in presence of Mr. Brydon by the ground officer when you got the land?—Not then, but to-day I can point it out.

42,889. Tell us the boundaries as given to you by the ground officer in Mr Brydon's presence?—I asked where the original march between myself and Lady Matheson was, and Mr Brydon answered that I myself knew the ground better than he did. Then the ground officer said that there is not a foot on the ground but I could tell and point out and walk over, and I said that is quite right. The river Mol-na-Herradh to Clach-an-topain, from there to the turf marks at the top of Luachair; then I asked where was the march between myself and Lady Scott, and it was Arie Vigndale. [*Mr Gordon.*—I must point out that he has gone nearly a mile into Lady Matheson's estate with the march which he first described. The hill of Luachair is half a mile within Lady Matheson's estate, measuring from the nearest part of the boundary.]

42,890. You got this croft nine years ago?—Yes.

42,891. Were you a cottar before then?—I was, for twenty-one years.

Tarbert, Harris. Donald Morrison.

42,892. Did the getting of the crofts very materially improve your condition?—Yes, made it three times better.

42,893. And did you, during these years, pay the rent that was fixed upon you by the estate authorities?—I never had a penny of arrears.

42,894. Did you build the house yourself?—Yes, four of them.

42,895. Do you believe if cottars, situated as you were for these twenty-one years, were to get the same opportunity of taking up land in North Harris they would thrive as well as you did?—Yes, provided they were industrious and energetic. If they were hard-working they would be worth twenty times what they are now.

Robert Finlayson Matheson.

ROBERT FINLAYSON MATHESON, Tarbert, Harris (37), Factor for Lady Scott.—*examined.*

42,896. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you wish to give us any evidence on behalf of the estate, Mr Matheson?—Yes, I have a report prepared by Mr Taylor, Land Surveyor, Ebost, and signed by both him and myself.

42,897. Kindly read the report?—

Report upon the Deer Forest and Farm of Husinish on the estate of North Harris, the property of Lady Scott.

The forest extends to 34,753 acres, and is bounded 'on the north and north-east by the Lewis and Crofting 'Townships, on the north-west by Husinish Farm, on 'the south-west south and east by Crofting Townships 'and 4 miles of sea coast.

'The forest is composed principally of rough 'mountainous land, better suited for the purpose for 'which it is now used than any other, being mostly high 'hills varying in height, as follows:—1486 feet, 1807 'feet, 2153 feet, 2165 feet, 2229 feet, 2392 feet, 2439 'feet, and 2622 feet above sea level. Until about 'seventy years ago the land now afforested was used by 'the tenants of the west side of South Harris, islands of 'Bernera, Pabbay and Taransay, the property of the 'trustees of Lord Dunmore, for summer grazing for 'horses, and about this time was formed into two sheep 'farms, on which deer were also kept along with the 'sheep. Over forty years ago the present deer forest 'was formed. The hills now under deer had at no 'time been in possession of crofters, but, while used as 'sheep grazings, there were about eight cottars, two or 'three of which were situated at or near the site of 'the present Castle, three or four at Loch Meavaig, and 'two at Bunaveneader.

'Some years ago Lady Scott removed twenty-five 'families from the most congested parts of the estate, 'viz., island of Scalpay, island of Scarp, and Tarbert, 'and settled them on the most suitable land in the 'forest, and along the sea shore; in our opinion very 'much to the detriment of the forest.

'These lands were given to the present tenants as a 'home, and to relieve the congested parts mentioned, 'but it is evident, on looking at the nature of the soil in 'the different townships, that profitable cultivation need 'not be looked for, as indeed is the case all over the 'estate, small patches between the rocks being all that 'can be cultivated, and that in the most primitive 'fashion. Maruig, adjoining the east boundary of the 'forest, was, until 1885, let as a sheep farm, but on that 'year possession was resumed by Lady Scott, and the 'land given to six tenants, five of whom were taken from 'the Island of Scalpay, along with another four families 'from the same island, who were settled on new crofts 'at Ardvourlie in the forest.

'Of the six tenants who got the farm of Maruig, 'one was a shepherd on the ground with stock, one 'was a crofter from Scalpay who also had stock, and 'the other four were cottars from Scalpay, whom Lady 'Scott supplied with a cow each, or money to purchase 'one. Malcolm Macdonald got £10 to assist in build-'ing a house.

'Thirteen families were also taken from the Island 'of Scarp and settled on new crofts in the forest as 'follows:— Tarbert, Harris.

'Luachair, on shore of Loch Resort, two cottars from 'Scarp. Robert Finlayson

'Dearscal, on shore of Loch Resort, three cottars from 'Scarp. Matheson.

'Lady Scott fenced those five crofts off the forest at her own expense.

'Betersaig, on sea-shore, west side of Forest, two 'cottars from Scarp.

'Govic, on sea-shore, three cottars from Scarp. 'Fence erected at Lady Scott's expense.

'Losebay, on sea-shore, two cottars from Scarp.

'Buniveneadar, on sea-shore, one crofter from Soay 'island, and two cottars from Tarbert. Crofts and hill-'grazing fenced off forest by Lady Scott.

'The twenty-five tenants at present on the forest 'have all been placed there by Lady Scott, as already 'mentioned, for the purpose of relieving the most 'congested portions of the estate, and have in their 'possession nearly all the low-lying grazing, formerly 'forming part of the forest. There are very little 'signs of former cultivation in the forest not now in 'possession of crofter tenants, probably not more than '20 acres, and most, if not all, this was cultivated by 'the eight cottars, while the land was occupied as two 'sheep farms. After a minute and careful inspection 'of the forest, accompanied by Mr Matheson, factor, 'we are unable to point to any part that could be 'profitably brought under cultivation by crofters, and 'we are further of opinion that the portions already 'given by Lady Scott, although the most suitable in the 'forest, cannot be cultivated to a profit, and are more 'grazing than agricultural holdings, and appear to be 'used as such.

'There are from 800 to 1000 deer on the ground, of 'which about 60 stags and 30 hinds are shot annually.

'*Husinish Farm.*—This small farm, which is in Lady 'Scott's possession, extends to 1067 acres, of which 'about 10 acres are arable, and part of which her lady-'ship gives to the cottars of Scarp rent free for the 'purpose of planting potatoes, the other portion being 'kept under cultivation by the shepherd.

'There is at present a stock of about 240 sheep kept 'on the farm, and which are used for the purpose of 'supplying table mutton while Lady Scott and friends 'are in the island; a less number would not be sufficient 'for this purpose.

'According to the crofter idea, as brought out in 'evidence before the Commission, of the quantity of 'stock necessary to keep a family and pay a "sober" 'rent, this piece of grazing would scarcely be sufficient 'for two crofter tenants, and the arable portion not 'more than one tenant. We do not consider it likely, 'however, that the Commission would recommend hold-'ings of this size to be broken up, as the value of it, as 'at present occupied, is about the amount for which the 'Crofters Act allows fair rents to be fixed.

(Signed) R. F. MATHESON,
Factor for Lady Scott.
(„) JOHN TAYLOR,
Land Surveyor.

EBOST, SKYE, 6*th May* 1893.

42,898. You are of opinion that the new holdings, on which twenty-five families were placed, take up the greater part of the low ground which is suitable for cultivation by crofters?—I am.

42,899. You heard what the witnesses, Norman Cunningham and John Macleod, cottar, said with regard to some other old townships on the north shore of West Loch-Tarbert. They pointed out that there were some five or six old townships, which they considered suitable for re-peopling, and that in all of these the ruins of the former houses are still visible. Do you know whether that is the fact or not?—Well, the ruins are not visible to me: I did not see any ruins of old houses there, though there may be signs of cultivation there.

42,900. Do you think it would be possible to settle some crofters on that part of the forest?—I, for one, do

not think that the soil is really suitable for cultivation; there is no depth of soil there.

42,901. You have heard it stated, and I can perfectly believe with truth, that there is a great congestion in the island of Scalpay?—Yes.

42,902. Do you admit that that is the case?—Yes.

42,903. What would you suggest as a remedy for that congestion?—You would have either to migrate or emigrate them.

42,904. Is there any land in North-Harris to which you think they might be migrated?—No.

42,905. You do not think there is any land there?—No.

42,906. Is the land in the neighbourhood of these old townships that the witnesses referred to rocky ground, or is it better pasture than the east side of the island?—Just much about the same as the east side; it is not *machair* land, but just what you see about Tarbert.

42,907. More or less rocky?—Rock and moss.

42,908. There is not much dry green land?—Very little green sward.

42,909. Do you find that in the new townships recently created the men are fairly comfortable?—Some of them.

42,910. The place to which the last witness referred, who spoke of having his stock increased from five sheep and one cow to twenty-one sheep and four cows?—Bowglass.

42,911. He appears, according to his own statement, to have very considerably improved his condition during the last nine years?—He and his neighbours have.

42,912. Have they been specially industrious?—They have.

42,913. More so than some of the others?—Yes.

42,914. They have not been so prosperous as he is?—No.

42,915. What sort of fishing is there on West Loch-Tarbert; is it a good fishing station?—West Loch-Tarbert itself is not; the best fishing is out in the Atlantic.

42,916. There are some sheltered bays there?—Yes.

42,917. Is the anchorage pretty good?—Amhuinn-suidhe is the best.

42,918. Is Soay Sound a good anchorage?—Between Soay and the mainland the anchorage is good.

42,919. How is the island of Soay occupied?—There are two crofters on it.

42,920. Who, I suppose, occupy the island pretty fully? They require all the land for themselves, no doubt?—Yes.

42,921. *Mr Maccallum.*—You say that the extent of the deer forest is 34,753 acres. Now, can you tell me how much was given to the twenty-five crofters who were settled along the borders of the forest?—Over 6000 acres.

42,922. And there still remains the acreage you have mentioned as deer forest?—Yes.

42,923. Do you consider that this experiment has been successful?—In some cases it has, but not in all.

42,924. Do you think any one of the twenty-five settlers regrets the change?—There was one, if not two, before the Crofters Commission here last year, who would gladly become cottars again instead of being crofters as they are now. They would go back to Scarp again rather than remain there.

42,925. Is that what you say with regard to them?—No, that is what they said.

42,926. Apart from these two, do you think that the remainder of the twenty-five have, upon the whole, improved their condition by this removal?—I did not know them before they were settled there, but, so far as I can see, I would say that the majority have improved very much.

42,927. It was an interesting experiment, and no doubt made with a view to improving them, and it is satisfactory to hear that it has been upon the whole successful. Now, do you think there is any more land in the forest similar to the land that has been utilised by those twenty-five?—There is very little. In the report have read we have mentioned what we think would be suitable for cultivation,—a little over 20 acres, even if it could be all put together and taken from the different townships along the coast, the south shore.

42,928. Let us take the places mentioned. There is Tolmachan?—Well, Loch-Meavaig was mentioned in the statement.

42,929. You consider that that is as good as the land that has been already allotted?—No, it is not at all so good as the Maruig township.

42,930. But, taking it as a whole, it is very much of the same character as the land which has been allotted?—Well, yes, down that way, on that side.

42,931. We had one intelligent witness to-day who said that these old townships mentioned on the coast which are still in the deer forest, were, in fact, superior to the land that you have given over to crofters?—I do not consider that the case.

42,932. But you heard that witness?—Yes; I think that was John Macleod.

42,933. And you hear the desire of the people to be settled on these places?—Well, I heard it to-day.

42,934. Now, I suppose, you think that if you could settle some other twenty-five crofters in the forest, and improve their condition, that would be a much better use of the land than to keep it as a deer forest?—I don't know; the deer forest brings in a lot of money to the estate, and a number of people are employed about it who earn a good wage.

42,935. But you did not destroy the forest entirely by the crofts you took out of it?—It has hurt the letting value of the forest, without doubt.

42,936. But don't you think the interests of twenty-five families must be put before the interest of the proprietrix to a certain extent,—of one person?—I think the interests of the proprietrix should be looked to as well as those of others.

42,937. I know that, and that she made this experiment of her own accord. But don't you think the interest of twenty-five crofters is a very important matter, and that if it were possible to settle other twenty-five on the forest that would put the forest to a better use than it is put to at present?—If it were possible without hurting the forest; but you could not settle other twenty-five families on what remains of the forest on what one could say is suitable for cultivation.

42,938. But, no doubt, they would depend greatly on the pasture?—Yes, but you would require to give them good sized holdings all the same, to make them comfortable.

42,939. Let us condescend upon some number; what number do you think might be favourably settled from Bunaveneader till you come to the next crofting township?—I could hardly find room for two at Meavaig.

42,940. How many would you say at Tolmachan?—It is not there, but at Maruig; I would hardly find room for two good holdings.

42,941. Could you not get two holdings there of the same character that you have in the other place?—Not so large.

42,942. What is the next place?—Brandarsaig; I could put one there.

42,943. And the next place?—Cliasmol, where there is room for one.

42,944. And the next place?—That is all.

42,945. You could find four holdings in all without interfering at all with Amhuinn-suidhe where the lodge is?—That would bring them pretty near the lodge.

42,946. But still it would retain the place where the lodge is?—It would have to be fenced off.

42,947. Could not these four be placed there without interfering with its value as a deer forest?—No.

42,948. Did you not hear the evidence to-day to the effect that a much more considerable number than that used to occupy these places?—Yes, I think I heard that there were eight, or some such number; but they included a place called Teilinish, which is now in the occupation of the Bunveneadar crofters.

42,949. Then, with regard to this new township of Bunveneadar, are the people not very much confined?—No, I think not. I think they have 600 acres of hill grazing. It was extended three years ago, when they complained of the deer getting into their ground, and

Tarbert, Harris.

Robert Finlayson Matheson.

the estate complained of their sheep trespassing into the forest. There was a fence put round them, and a large extent of hill grazing was then added. We did not keep the fence to the actual boundary between the township and the forest, but kept a long way outside it, and added 400 or 500 acres to the grazing.

42,950. What did you say the acreage of Bunaveneader was?—Five hundred or six hundred acres.

42,951. I see it is given in the blue book as 402 acres?—But there may be over 100 acres of outrun. [*The Secretary.*—The whole extent is 572 acres between arable and outrun.]

42,952. Can you give any reason why the people of Ardhasig should not be benefited by getting an extension of grazing from the forest?—We left that entirely with the Crofters Commission.

42,953. We are not talking about the Crofters Commission now; I am only asking your opinion. Don't you think they would be benefited?—They have a good extent of hill grazing for the number of crofters there are and for the stock they can keep.

42,954. Would you just give me a definite answer, please; I do not want to press you in any way, but do you think they would be benefited by an extension of their grazing from the deer forest?—No doubt they would.

42,955. Is the pasture ground that is not included in the forest above Ardhasig as good as the common pasture which they have at present?—It is much about the same.

42,956. Is it steeper?—No, it is not so steep, but as a grazing it is much about the same.

42,957. Would not you go the length of saying that it is somewhat superior to what is in the township?—I would not say that the nature of the grass is superior. I would say that the grazing of the township is far superior to that inside the fence: I mean the hill grass is inferior to what the crofters hold. I don't believe there is finer mutton raised between the Butt of Lewis and Barra Head than what comes off Ardhasig hill.

42,958. And the forest is quite contiguous?—Yes.

42,959. Is it not very natural to conclude from that that the forest would also be good for sheep?—No, I think the grazing on the Ardhasig ground is better than the grazing on this part of the forest that you are talking about.

42,960. But the two places are quite contiguous?—Yes, but still there might be a great difference in the pasture all the same.

42,961. But do you say that there is that distinction, and that the distinction is just where the march is; that on one side of the fence there is excellent sheep ground, and on the deer forest side very poor ground for sheep?—I would not even go to the march of the forest, not past the main road, and there is a good bit of grazing between the fence and the main road. [*Mr Gordon.*—The best of the pasture of Ardhasig is to the south of the main road?—Yes, there is very fine grass between these boulders, whereas, on the other side of the road, it is a sort of bent.]

42,962. But the land they hold is, to all appearance, steep and black and rocky?—Steep and rocky.

42,963. And yet it raises excellent sheep?—Yes.

42,964. And you heard a statement made to-day that, when the forest was under sheep, excellent wedders were sent from it, and in great numbers every year,—I think between 1400 and 1800?—Yes, I heard that.

42,965. What is your comment upon that?—I have no comment to make; that was many many years ago, and I cannot say anything about it now.

42,966. Don't you think now that these hundreds of wedders were of far greater value than the sixty stags the forest now produces?—I don't know; that is a matter of opinion.

42,967. What do you think the more valuable, the sixty stags or the 1400 to 1800 wedders?—I believe stags sell higher than wedders.

42,968. Are they more valuable?—They must be when they fetch a higher price.

42,969. Is that your only reason? Am I to conclude from the answer that you are giving that you consider the sixty stags are better?—Yes, taking the estate as at present.

42,970. The sixty stags are better?—As at present.

42,971. The sixty stags are more valuable to the country as a whole?—Yes; I believe they are in this way: that they are the means of circulating a great deal of money in the country, and I don't believe that should you plant four or five crofters along these townships they would circulate so much money as the letting of the forest does.

42,972. The forest creates a circulation of money?—Yes.

42,973. But the place itself is wasted and rendered unproductive, is not that so?—You cannot say that it is wasted when it is the means of circulating money.

42,974. But circulation does not mean production. I said that it was at present unproductive: it is utterly unproductive now?—As a deer forest, or in what sense do you mean?

42,975. Unproductive; what is produced by it?—It is unproductive, looking at it from an agricultural point of view.

42,976. Or from a pastoral point of view?—When I say agricultural I mean that to include pastoral.

42,977. It is waste then and unproductive, whereas, formerly, there was a large number of wedders and a large number of Highland cattle produced, there are no such products now?—Not there, except what the new crofters have.

42,978. And the land is well fitted for sheep,—it must be?—Oh, I suppose it is.

42,979. Now, that being so, would you not like to see people settled along the coast having whatever arable land there is, and the grazing up to the hill tops?—I should like very much to see the people thriving in the best possible way.

42,980. And is there not a great scarcity of land?—There is a great scarcity of land down there.

42,981. I mean among the crofters,—so far as the crofters are concerned?—Well, yes, the land is scarce enough for them.

42,982. On the island of Scalpay, for instance?—That is over-crowded.

42,983. There is this great extent of land perfectly well-fitted for sheep-raising and for cattle-raising, and still you hold that the land is put to the best purpose when it raises sixty stags?—It would be a very expensive matter to carry on sheep-raising and cattle-raising without agricultural land attached for the maintenance of the cattle.

42,984. No doubt, it is evident to anybody that there is not very much of arable ground,—that has not been asserted by anybody; but they held that it was good grazing, that there were patches there that they would readily take up, and that these are very much superior to the land which they occupy. Do you differ from them there? Taking the forest generally, are not the patches you find there superior to the patches they have in Scalpay?—No, I will not admit that.

42,985. Do you know Scalpay well?—Yes, I do.

42,986. What soil is there in Scalpay?—There is clay soil in Scalpay. Of course there is mossy soil too, and gravelly soil.

42,987. You have heard a great complaint from these people that they have, for the most part, merely peat hags and bogs. Do you agree with that?—It is moss.

42,988. You have come here to-day, of course, in order to help the Commission to find out whether there is any land that could be profitably occupied by crofters, and you say that, in your opinion, there is nothing of that character in North-Harris?—I mentioned the places already where you could put any crofters.

42,989. And this report has been prepared by Mr Taylor?—Yes.

42,990. Of course it is prepared in the interest of one party, is it not?—Well, it was prepared as information for the Royal Commission.

42,991. But in the interest of one party, and with the view of protecting the rights of one party?—With the view of protecting the rights of the estate.

42,992. It is altogether that that led to the prepara-

Tarbert, Harris. — Robert Finlayson Matheson.

tion of this report?—But it is a true report, all the same.

42,993. I am not questioning that, but only how it came to be made. It was made with the view of protecting the estate rights?—It is made in the interests of the proprietor.

42,994. And not in the least with the view of benefiting the crofters?—We mentioned all that we thought would be beneficial to the crofters; what land is arable, and where we thought crofters could be planted; and if we had seen more such land, I expect we would have mentioned it.

42,995. I don't doubt it, but still this paper was prepared, more with the view of defending the present position of matters than with the view of finding out whether there was land available or not?—I won't say that it was prepared with the view of justifying the present position of matters, but in a manner to assist the Royal Commission.

42,996. Did you go with a view really to find out land for crofters?—We went with a view to give my own opinion as to what would be suitable for crofters, and if there was anything suitable for crofters, to state so, and whether any part of the forest could be profitably used for cultivation.

42,997. And you went the length of engaging a paid expert, along with yourself?—Yes.

42,998. To give the estate view of the matter, and not at all the crofter view?—To give our own view of it: the crofters were quite able to give their view.

42,999. You thought it was necessary to get in a trained and paid expert to show that there was no suitable land in North-Harris?—I should think so; especially in order to give the areas correctly.

43,000. But it was not necessary to get an expert to give you areas. Don't you think now that there is a great deal of land occupied by the crofters just now, and profitably occupied by them, that is not so good as the land which is included in this forest?—It is just a case of six and half-a-dozen: the land is much the same all over North-Harris, except Maruig. [*Mr Gordon.*—Is not the forest higher ground?—It is higher, but, so far as agricultural land goes, the land is just the same all over North-Harris.]

43,001. Then, do you say that crofters never had the benefit of the good grazing in North-Harris?—No, I do not say that.

43,002. They had the benefit of it in former times, and they have been deprived of it?—I mentioned in the statement the townships that had the benefit of the grazings of the North-Harris deer forest,—the islands of Bernera, Pabbay, and Taransay.

43,003. These were crofter lands?—These were crofter lands, and had the use of the forest in summer for grazing purposes.

43,004. And we have also had it that the coast in several places was occupied by the resident tenants; we have had that from every witness to-day, and I suppose you are not in a position to contradict it?—I will not contradict what older men than myself say.

43,005. *Mr Munro.*—How long have you been in the island of Harris?—For seven years.

43,006. Where were you before coming here?—In North Uist.

43,007. You are a Highlander yourself, I suppose?—I am a Lowlander by birth.

43,008. During the seven years that you have resided in Harris I presume you have had frequent opportunities of forming a sound opinion as to the character of the people of the island?—Oh yes.

43,009. Tell me this, if, generally speaking, you find them to be a sober, hardworking, honest, law-abiding class of people?—Yes, most law-abiding and most peaceful.

43,010. You could commend them as men of good character in every respect?—Yes, I would have no hesitation in doing so.

43,011. You are aware that there is a good deal of discontent in the island?—In some parts of it.

43,012. But there is a general anxiety on the part of the people to become possessors of the land?—Yes, there is a general desire.

43,013. And their failure to obtain access to the land produces discontent among them?—Yes.

43,014. There is also a good deal of poverty amongst the people, is there not?—Yes, in Scalpay especially.

43,015. And I think you suggested, as a remedy for this discontent and poverty, emigration?—Yes.

43,016. Would you not consider it a great misfortune to the country to be deprived of the services of the class of people whom you have now described?—Possibly the country might feel it, but I think it would benefit those who would go away. In 1888 we assisted some families to go from here to Pelican Lake, and these would never desire to come back to Harris again: they are well off to-day.

43,017. Do you think there is any general desire among the people themselves to emigrate?—No, I don't think there is.

43,018. How comes it that whenever there is any discontent among the crofters, the remedy generally suggested not only here but elsewhere is that of emigration?—Speaking of North-Harris alone, we cannot see that we could relieve the congested parts to such an extent as would benefit any of them, or at least more than a dozen people altogether.

43,019. I suppose you are aware that there has been a great deal of discontent for many years back amongst large farmers as well as amongst crofters?—Yes.

43,020. Did you ever hear it suggested, as a remedy for the discontent amongst large farmers, that they should emigrate?—Yes, I have heard it remarked.

43,021. Would you consider it a good thing for the country that large farmers or industrious crofters should be made to emigrate as long as there is land here for them to cultivate?—If they could get good land, and the markets were good here, it would be just as well for them to stay at home, possibly, some of them. But they have better opportunities of benefiting themselves abroad than at home. I, myself, for one, if I could, would sooner go abroad than stay in the Highlands.

43,022. You never heard it suggested, I am sure, that factors should emigrate?—Oh yes, I have.

43,023. Did they ever act on the advice?—I don't know; I think some of them have.

43,024. You have told us that there are over 34,000 acres in the deer forest?—Yes.

43,025. That land was formerly occupied as sheep farms?—I believe it was.

43,026. How many sheep were upon these farms?—Really, I cannot say.

43,027. Roughly speaking, give us an idea?—I cannot say indeed; but I should say 10,000 sheep.

43,028. And the place is now exclusively given over to, I think you said, sixty stags?—That is the average number shot annually.

43,029. Now, is it not a great loss to the country to have these stags substituted for the 10,000 sheep that were reared there before?—It may be, but I don't think one would make much of a fortune to-day for sheep, as prices go.

43,030. But did not the sheep contribute something to the national wealth?—Possibly they did.

43,031. Can you point out a single item that a deer forest contributes in any way to the national wealth?—There is a good deal in the way of licences to be paid in connection with a deer forest.

43,032. That is simply a distribution of wealth, not a creation of it. You are intelligent enough to make some distinction between the distribution of wealth and the creation of wealth?—Perhaps I did not catch the drift of your question exactly; I was thinking rather of the Treasury at the time, and how the question affects it.

43,033. Now, apart from the landlord of the deer forest, is there any person at all that benefits by it?—Those employed about the forest.

43,034. But would it not be better for this island if that land were given over for small sheep farms, for pasture?—Well, it might be.

43,035. Reference has been made here to-day to the tweed industry of the island. I suppose the crofters and cottars pursue that industry all over generally?—Yes, it is their mainstay.

Tarbert, Harris.

Robert Finlayson Matheson.

43,036. One of the cottars stated here to-day that they were obliged to buy their wool from the merchants. Would it not, in your opinion, be of distinct advantage to the cottars if they got sufficient land to rear sheep upon to enable them to produce their own wool?—Even as it is, I don't think, should they get more land to stock with sheep, there would be a sufficient quantity of wool in the whole parish to keep up the industry, because there is a large quantity of wool imported from Leith and Glasgow every year, notwithstanding the number of large farms on the island.

43,037. Does that not arise from the fact mainly that sheep have been displaced to make room for deer?—Possibly that may have to do with it to a certain extent.

43,038. If you restored 10,000 to 20,000 sheep to the island, would not that enable the people to have sufficient wool raised on the land to make the tweed from?—Yes, I admit that.

43,039. How does the average of land in sheep farms compare in quality with the average of land under crofts?—In Harris the arable land in the farm is far superior to the arable land of the crofting townships.

43,040. So that, in that case, it would be a distinct advantage to the crofters to have the sheep farms broken up and restored to them?—If they had a sufficiently large holding to support them entirely without prosecuting the fishing, yes.

43,041. But, if he can manage to exist at all upon his present inadequate holding and poor land, surely he might live comfortably if he had a fair holding of good land?—I say yes, if he did not prosecute the fishing and carry on the croft at the same time,—if he were not a crofter fisherman. If he had a holding, which would keep him going all the year round, to maintain his family off that holding, then it would no doubt benefit the crofter and cottar.

43,042. You say then that a crofter cannot successfully cultivate a croft and be a fisherman at the same time? The two things are incompatible?—Yes, he neglects the one to attend to the other.

43,043. What, in your opinion, is the reason why Lady Scott is averse to breaking up these farms and giving them back to crofters?—There are no farms on Lady Scott's estate.

43,044. Supposing you could not let the deer forest as a deer forest, to what purpose would you devote it?—I cannot say.

43,045. You would let it again as a sheep farm, I suppose?—We might.

43,046. Would you let it to crofters?—I believe myself that Lady Scott would do so if she was in possession: if it was given up as a deer forest I believe Lady Scott would let it to crofters.

43,047. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—In that report dealing with admitted congestion in certain parts, I noticed that you put migration before emigration as a solution of the difficulty?—I think I said so, not in the report, but in answer to a question put. I said migration or emigration.

43,047*a*. When you used the word 'migration,' had you in view Lady Scott's estate, or did you take a wider view?—I took a wider view; in fact I went over to Skye.

43,048. But, without going so far away, say that we had only half a day,—had you Lord Dunmore's estate in view?—No, I really was thinking of Skye at the time.

43,049. Well, I thought of Lord Dunmore's estate at the time, and I should like to ask you a question in regard to it. I have no doubt you know the west side of Lord Dunmore's estate?—I have been down the west side, but not very often.

43,050. But you have a very good idea of the general character of the place?—A fair idea.

43,051. In your opinion is that land, along the whole length of it, practically such land as crofters or small tenants could be placed upon with a reasonable hope that they would thrive?—You could make very good large holdings of them.

43,052. You think then that that is a subject where you have a big stretch of *machair* land for cultivation and a good extent of hill beyond?—You think that that land is suitable?—Most of it is really suitable for cultivation.

Tarbert, Harris.

Robert Finlayson Matheson.

43,053. Now, with regard to the experiments you alluded to, Lady Scott tried those experiments with a genuine desire to benefit the people?—Yes.

43,054. And is her ladyship satisfied that, in the main, the condition of those twenty-five people has been improved?—I believe she is.

43,055. And the people themselves, on the other hand, have stated that their condition has been materially improved,—you have heard them say so?—The majority have been improved, I think.

43,056. I am hopeful that you can state that Lady Scott found them grateful for what has been done voluntarily by her?—Oh yes.

43,057. And also that they have paid their way,—that is, in all the cases where they have succeeded?—I believe they have paid their way to the best of their ability.

43,058. I noticed that in your statement you used the word 'cultivation' very much. Did you consider that in the remit to the Royal Commission, while there is a reference to cultivation, there is also the phrase 'or otherwise advantageously occupied by small 'tenants'?—I don't remember it; I have no doubt it is there, but I don't remember it.

43,059. So that, in your report, you had specially in view the possibility of cultivation by small tenants?—Cultivation.

43,060. But let us for a moment take the other alternative to which our attention is directed by the Remit: 'otherwise advantageously occupied.' That, you will admit, refers to using the land for pastoral purposes?—I would understand by that that it was land used for sheep-runs.

43,061. Or sheep and cattle?—Yes.

43,062. And you have no reason to doubt the statement that the deer forest on this estate exported annually about 1400 wedders when it was a sheep farm?—I don't doubt it; I just take the facts as they are given to me.

43,063. And, of course, the stock was a famous and excellent stock?—I believe it was.

43,064. Did you consider what is known as the club-farm system of managing hill stock?—I have nothing to do with the like of that, so I cannot speak of it.

43,065. Supposing that we had a perfectly free hand to deal with the deer forest, without being hampered by tenants or by considerations of proprietors, do you think, from the geographical character of the country, it would not be possible to establish small tenants in small groups, with hill grazing to a considerable extent, and a common stock under one management? Would that not be a feasible and practical way of using the deer forest area?—I daresay it might be done.

43,066. The pasture is good?—It is fair pasture; it is not a milk-giving pasture, I must say.

43,067. But it is a stock-producing pasture?—It is good for sheep. [*Mr Gordon.*—Is it better for wedder ground than for ewes?—Yes, it is.]

43,068. Now, would it not be possible to extend the hill grazing of the crofting townships that you have settled without any serious damage to the deer forest, and very much to the benefit of those crofters?—The question would be, who is to go to the expense of erecting the boundary between the grazing on the one hand and the deer forest on the other.

43,069. But, putting that difficulty aside, it would be an advantage?—But you could not put that difficulty aside, you must be protected. Should you or I be a crofter there we should have to protect ourselves, and the proprietor would also have to protect himself.

43,070. But you have already stated that the most of these crofting townships are not protected at all by a fence?—There are some of them not protected by a fence.

43,071. And still they thrive?—Oh, they thrive, but it affects the deer forest all the same. It would very much reduce the letting value of the forest.

43,072. You have in view, I understand, to put up fences about these townships?—Only in the case of the tenants at Bowglass; that is the only one in view.

43,073. And another on this side of it?—No, that is the only one we have in view to erect in the meantime. Lady Matheson is putting up half of it.

43,074. In your opinion, would it not be an advantage to the other crofting townships if they were allowed more extended boundaries, so that they could carry a larger stock of sheep?—I think they have a very good stock of sheep for the rent they pay.

43,075. That may be, but would it not be an advantage for them to have more extended boundaries and the right to keep a large stock?—I don't know. They have a very good stock, and a very good area of grazing for the rent they pay. If they were to get more it is possible they might be more dissatisfied. I think they would be more content as they are.

43,076. Without boundaries?—No, but without more extension.

43,077. Have they more sheep stock than they are entitled to have?—Just about what they should have.

43,078. What average is it?—I think thirty sheep and followers go to a full croft.

43,079. How many full crofts are there that are entitled to have that stock of sheep?—Those new crofts are all looked upon as full crofts.

43,080. Are these all entitled to have thirty sheep and followers?—Yes.

43,081. How many cows?—I forget the exact number at the present moment, but I have an impression that it is four.

43,082. What lands in Skye had you in view when you used the word emigration?—A great many: I did not fix my eye on any particular estate. Tarbert, Harris.

43,083. But you know that there are big stretches there of very suitable and available land?—Yes. I should like to add, in reference to the Bowglass tenants, that the march has never been altered since I came to Harris. The fence, if erected along the line of march now fixed upon by Lady Matheson's chamberlain and myself, will add on the Bowglass side about 20 acres of hill grazing, and take from the Lewis side about 5 to 8 acres. Robert Finlayson Matheson.

43,084. *Mr Gordon.*—I could quite well understand that the witness who spoke of it had made a mistake as to the boundaries, although perfectly honest and perfectly desirous of telling the truth?—Yes. The North Harris estate will thus have to pay a rent to Lady Matheson for the bit of additional grazing within the fence.

43,085. That is to say, that Lady Matheson, in order to maintain her rights, demands a rent?—Yes.

THOMAS WILSON, Solicitor, Luskintyre, Harris, Agent for South Harris (38)—*examined.* Thomas Wilson.

43,086. *Mr Gordon.*—You produce certain statements?—Yes: I produce (1) a statement showing the area, &c. of tacks and deer forests in South-Harris, and (2) a statement of particulars as to crofting lands.

The statements are as follows:—

(1) SOUTH-HARRIS ESTATE.

STATEMENT of Particulars showing the Area, &c., of Tacks and Deer Forest on the Estate, Rents, &c. thereof, as at 28th June 1894.

Name of Farm, &c.	Tenant.	Area.	Rent.
		Acres.	
Borve, Bernera,	Rod. Campbell,	1680	£80 0 0
Borve Islands, viz., Torogay, Greanan, Finnan, Opsay, Vaccasay, Hermetray, Narstay,	John Campbell,	219	30 0 0
Killegray and Islands,	John Stewart of Ensay,	399	70 0 0
Rodel and Islands,	Mrs Jane Macdonald,	2454	117 0 0
Northton and Kylis,	Roderick Macdonald,	4329	300 0 0
Island Copay,		14·2ro.	
„ Fierellan,		11·2ro.	
Scarristaveg,	D. Macdonald's Representatives,	1013	261 1 2
Taransay,		3353	
Scarristavore,	Mrs Jane Macdonald,	2979	145 0 0
Shillay Islands,		109	
Borve-beg,	Duncan Macrae	1991	83 13 6
Sursay Island,		109	7 0 0
Luskintyre,	Thomas Wilson,	236	30 0 0
Deer Forest,	Col. G. A. Percy,	12,780	150 0 0
Borve Lodge, fishings and shootings,		18	250 0 0
Nishibost and Shilibost,			85 0 0
Rodel House, shootings and fishings,			300 0 0
		31,695	£1908 14 8

HARRIS, 28*th June* 1894.

Certified correct.

THOMAS WILSON,
Agent for Earl of Dunmore's Trustees,
Proprietors of South Harris.

Tarbert, Harris.

Thomas Wilson.

(2) South-Harris Estate.

Statement of Particulars, showing the Area, &c., of Crofting Lands on the Estate, Fair Rents, and Arrears of Fair Rents as at 28th June 1894.

Township.	No. of Crofters.	Extent of Holdings. Arable.	Extent of Holdings. Pasture.	Common Pasture.	Fair Rents.	Arrears of Fair Rent.
		ac. ro. po.	ac. ro. po.	*Acres.*		
*Deiriclate,	10	35 – 13	246 1 25		31 14 0	6 14 0
*Ceann-Dibeig,	4	11 2 30	97 – 13		11 17 0	0 0 0
Meavaig,	6	28 3 21	196 3 4		18 16 0	12 11 0
Drinishadder,	12	39 – 32	772 1 18		30 8 6	9 8 0
Scadabay,	7	21 1 20	260 3 5		17 14 0	4 8 0
Grosebay,	8	27 3 24	334 – 32		23 1 0	15 7 0
Cluer,	11	31 3 25	386 – 15		25 4 0	16 8 0
Kylis Stockinish,	10	27 2 3	273 2 7		21 7 0	11 18 0
Leacklee,	7	22 – 29	118 3 11		23 12 0	10 19 4
Ardvey and Bayhead,	3	7 1 35	87 1 5	15,750	7 10 0	0 0 0
Lickisto,	4	8 2 24	30 2 36		7 12 0	0 0 0
Geocrab,	12	36 2 34	227 1 33		31 0 0	17 7 0
Ardslave,	6	14 2 3	121 3 11		12 4 0	5 10 4
Manish,	8	25 2 18	147 1 3		19 13 0	3 13 6
Flodabay,	5	18 – 38	152 3 2		14 11 0	1 11 0
*Quidinish,	14	40 2 1	780 – 39		38 13 0	16 14 6
Ardvey-Finsbay, and Finsbay,	13	27 – 13	200 3 37		20 14 0	9 14 4
Borsham, and Bayhead,	7	23 – 30	365 1 10		11 10 0	10 13 10
Obe,	14	42 1 3	111 – –	2795	25 13 6	34 10 0
Strond,	21	79 2 38	125 2 14		85 19 0	34 14 0
*Bernera,	20	74 2 17	693 – –	455	95 17 0	48 11 0
	202	644 1 11	5729 2 –	19,000 5·729·2 644·1·11	574 10 0	271 12 10
			Total acreage	25,373·3·11		

Note.—In 1884–5 the Proprietors of South Harris Estate, with the view of relieving congestion, cut up the Tacks of Deiriclate, Cean-Dibeag, and Quidinish, and formed new holdings upon which cottars were given crofts. There was thus created 28 holdings, viz.—

Deiriclate,	10 Holdings.
Ceann-Dibeig,	4 „
Quidinish,	14 „

At the same time, with the view of enlarging the holdings of the crofters of Bernera, there was added the islands of

Hermitray,	124 acres.
Taghay,	132 „

for which no additional rent was charged.

Tarbert, Harris,
28*th June* 1894.

Certified correct.

Thomas Wilson, Solicitor,
Agent for the Earl of Dunmore's Trustees.
Proprietors of South Harris.

[Adjourned.]

FIFTIETH SITTING.

INVERIE, KNOYDART, July 5, 1894.

Present :—

GEORGE GORDON, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*.

GILLIES MACKISSOCK, Inverie (54)—*examined*.

43,087. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter here?—No, I have not a bit of land at all.

43,088. You are a labourer?—Yes.

43,089. Are you a fisherman?—Sometimes.

43,090. Were you appointed a delegate at any meeting, or do you appear for yourself alone?—I was appointed a delegate.

43,091. At a public meeting?—Yes, at a meeting amongst ourselves at Inverie.

43,092. There is no crofting township at Inverie, is there?—No; Inverie has been under sheep, the hills above the village, until lately.

43,093. Where is the nearest crofting township?—Rhidarroch.

43,094. Is that upon this estate?—Yes.

43,095. Are there crofters there just now?—No, not one.

43,096. Was it an old crofting township?—Yes.

43,097. Do you know how many crofters were there?—I think seven or eight.

43,098. Can you tell us of any other crofting township on the property?—Yes; Dune was another crofting township.

43,099. How many crofters were there?—Fourteen or fifteen.

43,100. When was that latter place cleared?—About 41 years ago.

43,101. And when were they removed from Rhidarroch?—The same year.

43,102. Where were they removed to?—To America.

43,103. They were cleared off the estate?—Yes, they were summoned off the land.

43,104. Did they get any assistance to emigrate?—Yes, they got their passage paid.

43,105. Did they leave this country of their own accord, or were they evicted?—They were evicted.

43,106. Are there not descendants of these people still on the estate?—A few of them; I am one of them myself.

43,107. Was your father evicted at that time?—Yes.

43,108. Did he go to America?—No.

43,109. Is he still alive?—No.

43,110. Is there a general desire among the people in this neighbourhood to get crofting land?—I think so.

43,111. What is the usual occupation of the men here?—As a rule they work for the proprietor.

43,112. At ordinary estate work?—Yes, now and again when they get it.

43,113. And how do they manage to make a living otherwise?—They plant a few barrels of potatoes.

43,114. And do they maintain themselves partly by fishing?—It is very little fishing they do.

43,115. Do they go to the east country for the herring fishing, or to Stornoway?—Not in these years; they used to go there. I used to go to Stornoway myself.

43,116. But you have not been going recently?—No.

43,117. Is there any part of the population who devote their time mainly to fishing?—No.

43,118. You have nothing in this part of the country of the nature of regular fishing?—No, not regular, but within a month's time some will be going to the herring fishing.

43,119. But there is no white fishing carried on here?—No.

43,120. Can you tell us of any other available land besides the two places you have named?—The next township is called Airor; it is occupied by crofters at present. The next township is Samadalan.

43,121. Are there any crofters there now?—Not one, only a shepherd.

43,122. How is the land occupied?—It is under sheep and deer.

43,123. To whom do they belong?—To the proprietor.

43,124. How many crofters were there formerly?—Thirteen or fourteen, I fancy.

43,125. When was it cleared?—At the same time,—about 41 years ago.

43,126. Did the former residents in that township go to America also?—They were evicted, 332 persons.

43,127. Do you think there is land there suitable for crofter holdings?—It is as suitable now as it was then, at any rate, when the people were living on it.

43,128. Do you know anything about the circumstances in which the people were who occupied these crofting townships?—They were crofters and fishermen combined.

43,129. Did they do more at the fishing in those days, do you think, than the people do now?—I do believe they did.

43,130. Can you give any reason why the fishing should be abandoned to some extent?—The price has fallen so much within the last few years.

43,131. But the means of selling the fish are better now?—They could sell them at what they would fetch.

43,132. How did they dispose of them in former times?—They used to dispose of them in a different way: vessels from the south used to come and buy the fish fresh from the fishermen, but they do not do that now.

43,133. *Mr Maccallum.*—The last place you mentioned was Samadalan?—Yes. There is another crofting township after that called Niogart.

43,134. Is that between Samadalan and Inverguseran?—Yes.

43,135. Do you know how many families were there?—I could not give the number of families, but it would not be less than twelve, at any rate.

43,136. Then, what is the next place in which there were crofters?—I do not remember crofters being in any other township except what I have mentioned.

43,137. Do you know Croulick?—Yes, there is a shepherd there, but he has no sheep; I think the stock has been cleared off the land.

43,138. Is he a gamekeeper?—I could not say with certainty what he is now.

43,139. Would that be a suitable place for crofts, do you think?—It would.

43,140. Do you know Lee?—Yes: there is one crofter there, I understand.

43,141. Then, did you mention Sandaig?—No, I did not mention it.

43,142. Sandaig is on the Sound of Sleat, is not it?—Yes, or rather on Loch-Nevis side.

43,143. Just at the entrance to Loch-Nevis?—Yes.

43,144. Is that a good place?—It is suitable enough for crofters.

43,145. How many crofters were there, do you know?—One man used to have it till it was annexed to Scotas Farm to make it larger.

43,146. When was it added to Scotas Farm?—About 40 years ago.

43,147. Have you any idea of the number of crofts that might be formed at Sandaig?—It would make four or five.

43,148. Was there a large population down there before?—In 1853, 332 persons went to America, and that was, I may say, nearly the whole population of the crofting townships.

43,149. These were evicted?—Yes.

43,150. About Sandaig,—was it principally there

Inverie, Knoydart.

Gillies Mackissock.

that the people were located?—When I remember first, one man had Sandaig.

43,151. But before the evictions?—Before the time of that man, I could not say how many had it, nor how many were in the place.

43,152. Is it there that the Catholic Chapel is?—Yes.

43,153. Would not that show that there must have been a population there?—Yes, the people used to go from here and from Inverguseran to Sandaig.

43,154. Are there people there now that would fill the chapel?—Not, nor a quarter of it.

43,155. You did not tell us anything about Kilchoan?—Kilchoan has been a sheep farm since I remember.

43,156. And is there land on Kilchoan that would be suitable?—Yes, very suitable for crofts.

43,157. Where is that part of it that would be suitable for crofts on Kilchoan Farm?—Adjoining the sea and adjoining the Kilchoan River.

43,158. Do you think the whole of it would be suitable for crofter occupation?—Yes, the whole of it.

43,159. Do you know Caolas?—Yes.

43,160. Were there crofters there in former times?—I remember the time when there were five or six inhabitants there.

43,161. Had they crofts?—Well, they had the land somehow between them; they were relations.

43,162. Paying rent?—Yes, certainly.

43,163. Are there any crofters there now?—There is only a shepherd and fisherman, or a fisherman and crofter there; his small piece has, I believe, a couple of cows this year.

43,164. And what of the hill,—how is it occupied?—The hill is rugged and very rough, but it is good enough for sheep for all that.

43,165. Is it under sheep at present?—There are a few hundred sheep on it at present.

43,166. In what tack is it?—It has been annexed to what they call Carnoch tack for a good many years back.

43,167. Then what about Carnoch itself,—is it a farm?—It used to be a sheep farm; it is a deer forest now.

43,168. Were there crofts there?—I do not remember crofts being there; it was always under sheep since I remember till lately.

43,169. When was it made a deer forest?—Sheep and deer used to be mixed on it since I remember.

43,170. But the sheep have been cleared off altogether?—Yes.

43,171. And it is now a deer forest entirely?—Yes.

43,172. Then, give us your idea about what time it was made a deer forest and the sheep cleared? [*Mr William Mackay.*—In 1890–91.]

43,173. Has there been other land afforested in Knoydart lately?—Yes, Barrisdale.

43,174. Was that a sheep farm?—Yes, it used to be a sheep farm, ten or twelve years ago.

43,175. Was that a place where there were people?—One man used to have it, and a few other inhabitants in the place.

43,176. Barrisdale was an estate by itself?—Yes, a farm by itself.

43,177. And do you know anything of the number of followers that the man had who had that farm? Do you remember old Macdonald of Barrisdale?—I remember when the Macdonalds were there, but I could not say how many inhabitants he had on the place,—six or seven shepherds, I fancy, and four or five other houses on the place.

43,178. But Macdonald of Barrisdale was an important man, was he not? He sided with Prince Charlie and fought under his standard?—I understand one of the family was in favour of the Prince and another of them against him.

43,179. At all events they were men of importance who had followers?—Yes, exactly.

43,180. Are there men now who would fight on either side? Are there people who would be of any consideration in that respect now?—I believe there are.

43,181. Is there a population there now where you could raise a number of soldiers?—Not one now.

43,182. So that a great change must have come over this place?—Yes. There is not a man, I fancy, fit for the army in that tack altogether, except perhaps one or two.

Inverie, Knoydart.

Gillies Mackissock.

43,183. Has there been any other land afforested in the place recently?—Yes.

43,184. What land do you refer to?—There is such land alongside the river here called Glen-Meadail and Glen-Dulochan.

43,185. What tack was Glen-Meadail in?—It was annexed to Kilchoan.

43,186. Do you remember its ever having been a separate farm by itself?—No, I only remember a shepherd being there.

43,187. Would it be a place suitable for a small farm by itself?—Yes, some people would have a fancy for it.

43,188. You think it is suitable for occupation by small holders?—Yes.

43,189. And what about Glen-Dulochan?—There is not so much land for cultivation in it.

43,190. Glen-Dulochan has been afforested also?—Yes.

43,191. That was once part of Scotas Farm, was not it?—Yes.

43,192. How is Scotas proper occupied, the low part of the farm?—The low part of it, since I remember, had always sheep on it.

43,193. Has it sheep on it now?—Yes.

43,194. Is there a full stock of sheep on the lower part?—I don't think so.

43,195. Then, do you think that they are making way for the deer on the lower part of Scotas also?—Well, I believe they are, on the whole estate.

43,196. Then, there is another large farm, Inverguseran, is there not?—Yes.

43,197. Is the whole of it under sheep now, or has some of it been afforested?—Some of it has been afforested; some shepherds that were there have left the estate altogether.

43,198. Where were these shepherds?—One of them was in a place called Folach.

43,199. Is he away from there now?—Yes.

43,200. Do you know of any other shepherd that has left?—Yes, the shepherd in Glen-Meadail left, and two shepherds in Glen-Dulochan left.

43,201. But any other on the Inverguseran tack besides Folach?—Croulick belongs to Inverguseran.

43,202. There was a shepherd there?—Yes: the man is there yet, but he has no stock.

43,203. Was there a shepherd at Samadalan?—Yes, he is just now in Kyles, Loch Nevis.

43,204. Is there a shepherd at Samadalan just now at all?—I cannot say whether there is one living in that house or not, but it was at this time that the man who was living there went to Kyles, and I don't know whether another one has taken his place or not.

43,205. Can you tell us the number of cottars there are at Inverie?—There are twelve or fourteen of them, I fancy, between Sandaig and Inverie; they are a little scattered here and there.

43,206. How many of these have cows?—Only two of them, I think, and they only got these cows about this term.

43,207. Where are they grazed?—They are grazed on the hill side and about the roads.

43,208. How do the remainder get milk for their families?—Sometimes they get none at all; they are often without it.

43,209. How do you account for their not having cows? Is it because they don't care to have them?—No, they would not get the land. I myself was speaking to Mr Baird and to Mr Bowlby for a small piece of land,—half an acre or a quarter of an acre,—but I could not get an inch.

43,210. Do you know if any of the other cottars have been asking for land, or for grazing for cattle?—No; a good many years back they gave up the hope of getting any at all, and, therefore, they do not think of going to ask it.

43,211. And their only hope is that they may get it

by some new legislation, is that so?—That is so; that is the idea they have.

43,212. You think there is plenty suitable land all along the coast?—It is suitable for crofting from Barrisdale to Loch-Nevis side, and from Kyles to Barrisdale all along the coast.

43,213. That is just the whole coast of Knoydart?—The whole coast of Knoydart.

43,214. But would you say that about Sandaig the land is particularly suitable?—Yes, and Kyles more so. Rhidarroch is a suitable place for crofters too.

43,215. And all along the coast?—Yes, all around the coast.

43,216. I suppose the lochs on both sides of Knoydart are famous for herring?—Yes, there is good fishing in Loch-Hourn as a rule.

43,217. And you are in expectation of having a railway to Mallaig?—Yes, people, as a rule, are.

43,218. Would that be a great help to the fishermen here, if there were fishermen's crofts formed?—Yes, undoubtedly it would.

43,219. Do you think what the effect on the fishing would be, supposing the railway came there, and fishing crofts were formed all along the coast?—I believe they would take to the fishing far better than they are doing, because the herring often lie on their hands unsold, or they get almost no price at all.

43,220. And do you think an important fishing industry would arise on Loch-Nevis?—Some years it would be very good; a good many people could do well at it.

43,221. Then besides the herring fishing, is there good white fishing?—Ling is pretty good some years, but it is not certain.

43,222. I suppose the great drawback to the prosecution of the fishing was that they could not be sent readily to market?—Yes, that is so.

43,223. Do you know whether many people have got employment by the afforestment of this land? You tell us that a number of shepherds have been put out of occupation; can you tell us the number of new gamekeepers who have got occupation?—There is one gamekeeper in place of four shepherds perhaps.

43,224. Are you aware whether the number of gamekeepers has been added to considerably since the sheep farms have been afforested?—Very few; two or three at the most. In fact, they are not gamekeepers; some of them are what they call stoppers.

43,225. What distinction do you make? Do they get work all the year round?—They are employed part of the year to keep men from going on the hill, or to keep men from fishing for salmon.

43,226. Are they paid for that by the year, or are they only paid for the time their services are required?—While their services are required.

43,227. You tell us there was once a very large population in this district and that they were evicted?—Yes.

43,228. Did any of them remain in this place itself after they were put out of their holdings?—Yes, they stopped on the estate in spite of them. I am a member of one of the families that stopped on the estate in spite of the proprietor or the proprietrix.

43,229. How was that done?—They managed it for four months, I may say, sleeping out under the shelter of walls and gardens and one place or another; because if they put up any sort of a house, no matter how small or of what shape, it would be broken down in three or four days' time. So from the middle of July of that year until about the middle of November they were living in that state. Then they got a sort of relief in the shape of tents, which they used for three years.

43,230. Who provided these tents for them?—The people of Glasgow and Edinburgh, I fancy, sent them home; and then again they would not be allowed to put them up in any place on the estate, but only on a small bit of ground that was attached to the Catholic Chapel at Sandaig.

43,231. Did some of them put up a sort of shelter for themselves below high water-mark?—Yes, they always kept near the places where they had had the crofts and houses, taking shelter about the walls of the houses they had in the best way they could.

43,232. So that the evictions were attended by a great deal of cruelty and suffering?—Yes. It was so hard that some days they could not get up a spark of fire to cook a bit of meat of any sort, and they had to do without anything to eat that day.

43,233. And do you know the occasion of their removal? Why was it that they were removed?—For the rich farmer who wanted to get the land.

43,234. Then, it was to make way for the sheep farmer that they were removed?—That was the reason, so far as I know.

43,235. Have you anything further to add?—That is all I have to say.

43,236. *Mr Munro.*—I think you mentioned that you made application to the proprietor for some land, and were refused?—Yes, I was refused by the two proprietors, one after the other, Mr Baird and Mr Bowlby.

43,237. About what time did you apply to Mr Baird for land?—I should say about three years ago.

43,238. Did you apply in writing, or verbally?—I spoke to him on the road; I spoke twice to him.

43,239. And he point blank refused you?—Yes.

43,240. Did Mr Bowlby give you a similar answer when you spoke to him?—Mr Bowlby said he would have no more to say to me.

43,241. When you asked for land?—Yes, just so.

43,242. *Mr William Mackay, Solicitor, Inverness, Agent for Mr Bowlby.*—Do you remember the time you are speaking about when these evictions took place?—Yes.

43,243. Who was the proprietor then?—Mrs Macdonald of Glengarry.

43,244. It was before the Glengarrys sold the estate?—Yes, they sold it soon after.

43,245. The estate was sold, I daresay you remember, in 1857?—I cannot say that I remember the date.

43,246. To Mr James Baird, and the Bairds held it ever since, until last year, when Mr Bowlby bought it?—Yes.

43,247. At the time of the evictions you would be about 12 years of age?—About that.

43,248. You said a part of Samadlan was under deer?—Sheep and deer were mixed, because, as a rule, the deer come down among the sheep.

43,249. But it is a sheep farm connected with the farm of Inverguseran?—Yes.

43,250. It is used for the wintering of Inverguseran very much, is it not?—I fancy the stock is there during summer the same as during winter.

43,251. Yes, but it is kept there principally during winter and on Knoydart?—It may be, but I know that the stock is there summer and winter.

43,252. Oh yes, it is not kept off it?—That is so.

43,253. You have no idea yourself how many people lived on Sandaig?—No, I could not say the number of people who lived in each township separately.

43,254. But the Roman Catholic Church being there does not prove that there were many people on the holdings of Sandaig, does it?—Well, I remember being in the church myself, and I remember seeing it full of people, and some even outside who could not get room in it.

43,255. But these people came from other districts as well,—from Inverie and from Kyles and up Loch-Nevis side and from all round Loch-Hourn?—From Inverguseran to Inverie.

43,256. And up Loch-Hourn side also?—Very few used to come from there, because the distance was so great.

43,257. But that was the only chapel in the whole property?—Yes.

43,258. And it was placed there for the convenience of the people on the whole estate?—Yes.

43,259. Not for those at Sandaig alone?—No.

43,260. Then, as to Macdonald of Barrisdale,—you don't know that he was not a proprietor himself?—No, I know they were paying rent to Glengarry.

43,261. But you don't know whether there were any

Inverie, Knoydart. Gillies Mackissock.

people living upon his farm at the time of Culloden except his own servants?—Anyone that would be living on their estate would be doing something, but they were not working permanently.

43,262. The mere fact that he was out with Prince Charlie does not prove that he had a number of followers on his own place. Do you know that he was Colonel of the whole regiment raised from a larger extent of land than the estate of Knoydart?—Yes.

43,263. So that he would naturally be followed not by his own people merely but by all the Macdonalds also from the estate of Glengarry?—That is quite likely, but I could not say with certainty.

43,264. You say there is not a full stock of sheep on Scotas Farm just now?—I do not believe there is.

43,265. Do you know they have to send a great many to winter every year?—I know they are sending some away, but I know the land would keep nearly double what they have on it.

43,266. But don't you think Mr Cumming here, who is a good sheep farmer, would put more on if he could keep them?—I cannot say whether he is a good farmer or not.

43,267. You have got no authority for saying that they are preparing to clear Scotas of sheep?—No, it is only people's ideas.

43,268. That is your own idea?—Yes.

43,269. But you have no authority for saying that that is the case?—No, I have not.

43,270. And you may be wrong, as I think you are?—I don't think that I am.

43,271. You seem to have a very strong opinion on the subject?—Yes, I have.

43,272. There are about 12 or 14 cottars?—Yes, between Sandaig and Inverie.

43,273. You know that some of them got some land this last Whitsunday?—Yes.

43,274. Five of them?—Five, I believe.

43,275. And they are all entitled to a cow and a follower?—No, they are not; there are only two or three of them that have a follower.

43,276. They may not all have them yet, but don't you know that they are entitled to them?—They have not the land to keep them, unless they are allowed to run them out among the sheep.

43,277. Don't you know that it is among the sheep that these five cottars have their grazing on the farm of Scotas?—Yes, I believe that is so, but they could not think of keeping both the cow and the follower, because when the winter came, they would have nothing to support the cow.

43,278. Don't you know that I give them some ground for hay,—what they themselves consider sufficient?—They have not got it yet.

43,279. Oh, they have; let me tell you that I gave it to them some three or four weeks ago?—Will they cut wintering for their cows on it?

43,280. Most certainly.—I heard some of them saying to-day that they could not support the cows.

43,281. Well, but, of course, you know they were very pleased when I was there?—That might be.

43,282. Can you let me have any idea of the number of shepherds who were removed?—Yes, I believe I could count every one of them, and give you their names.

43,283. Just give me the number?—There was John Macinnes from Folach, Malcolm Cameron from Glen-Dulochan, another who left Glen-Meadail—I don't know his name, as I was not acquainted with the man, and others. I should say five or six were removed.

43,284. Since when?—Since three years ago. There were 20 shepherds removed altogether.

43,285. Do you know how many keepers and watchers there are now?—Seven, I fancy.

43,286. Seven keepers?—Seven keepers.

43,287. And how many watchers, do you know?—Two watchers.

43,288. All the year round?—I don't know whether they will be kept all the year round.

43,289. Well, they are kept all the year round; and do you know that during the shooting-season a good many people are employed as gillies and assistants otherwise?—Last year there were none so employed here.

Inverie, Knoydart. Gillies Mackissock.

43,290. There was no shooting last year: but take the year before last?—I could not say.

43,291. Would you believe that there were six gillies during the whole shooting-season, as well as grooms and other servants?—Yes, I quite believe that.

43,292. You have no house on this estate at all?—No.

43,293. You live at Morar?—Sometimes I do.

43,294. You have got your family there?—I have no family at all; I have only a wife.

43,295. And she has got a house there?—No, she has not, but a brother of hers has.

43,296. And you are as much in Morar as here?—Not altogether.

43,297. When you come here you just go and squat down with your sister?—Yes. I used to pay the rent of her place.

43,298. But you know that she does not pay any rent now?—No, she did not pay it this year.

43,299. She has not been asked to; she sits rent free, don't you know that?—Yes.

43,300. *Mr Maccallum.*—You know the farm of Scotas?—Yes.

43,301. I notice that the late proprietor, Mr Baird, in his examination before Lord Napier's Commission, states that there are the remains of a number of small cottages on the farm of Scotas. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

43,302. Then, you were asked by Mr Mackay some questions regarding Macdonald of Barrisdale, and whether he had a considerable number of followers. Now, on that point, Mr Baird, before the Napier Commission says, 'Undoubtedly he had a very considerable 'number of followers.' Mr Mackay may think himself a higher authority, but Mr Baird, who owned the property, stated that Macdonald of Barrisdale undoubtedly had a very considerable number of followers. Do you agree with Mr Baird?—I know that the men belonging to Glengarry, who were living on this estate, were under Macdonald of Barrisdale at that time.

43,303. You have every reason to believe that at one time there was a very considerable population on Barrisdale?—Oh, no, because Barrisdale is not a very large place for a large number of people to live on the farm itself.

43,304. But there were more than you would find now?—Yes, six or seven times as many.

43,305. Then, you say it is the belief in the place that Scotas is in the way of being cleared for deer?—I believe it is.

43,306. The afforesting has been going on bit by bit, is not that so?—Yes, getting larger and larger every year.

43,307. And you have no reason to think that they are going to stop now?—I have not.

43,308. And you think that the stock is being diminished in order to make way for deer?—I believe so. The stock has been reduced from 30,000 to less than 4000 sheep.

William Macinnes.

WILLIAM MACINNES, Crofter, Airor (64).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

43,309. *Mr Gordon.*—You have been elected as a delegate for Airor?—Yes.

43,310. Are you a crofter?—Yes.

43,311. How many crofts are there in your township?—Five in each end of Airor. There were ten crofts at one time in Airor, but the number is now reckoned at eight.

43,312. Are any of the crofts sub-divided?—No.

43,313. What size of crofts are they?—Some of them have two acres, others one and a half acres.

43,314. What rent do you pay?—I pay £4, 14s.

43,315. What stock do you keep?—I am entitled to have four cows.

43,316. Have you any sheep?—I have ten sheep.

43,317. Is there a common hill ground?—Yes.

43,318. On which the sheep and cattle are kept?—Yes.

Inverie, Knoydart. William Macinnes.

43,319. Do you live mainly by your croft?—No.

43,320. What is your ordinary occupation?—So long as Mr Baird was here I carried the mails from Knoydart to Isleornsay. I believe that is now discontinued, and they get their letters from Mallaig.

43,321. Do the rest of the people in the township live on their crofts, or are they fishermen?—They fish, and go about for labour everywhere; they are yachtsmen and sailors.

43,322. Your crofts are too small to maintain a man and his family without other work?—The crofts are so small, they would not maintain one man for a year.

43,323. Is there a general desire among the crofters of your township for larger holdings?—Yes.

43,324. And is there land in your neighbourhood which could be applied for the purpose of increasing the size of your crofts?—Yes.

43,325. Did you hear the evidence given by the last witness?—Yes, I heard a part of it.

43,326. Did you hear what he said about the townships that he named?—Yes.

43,327. Do you agree with what he stated?—I did not understand properly what he said, as he spoke in English.

43,328. Do you know the lands that were formerly occupied by crofters?—Yes.

43,329. Did you hear the townships which the last witness mentioned?—Yes.

43,330. Do you remember seeing these townships occupied by crofters?—Yes.

43,331. Do you remember the evictions?—I do.

43,332. Do you consider that these townships could be again re-peopled by a crofting population?—Yes, I think they could.

43,333. You think the land is suitable for crofters?—It is bad soil, but it would be good if tenants got it.

43,334. If the railway came to Mallaig, would this bay be a good place for crofting fishermen?—Yes, during the fishing season.

43,335. That railway would assist them in procuring a livelihood?—It would help every man who was following the fishing.

43,336. *Mr Maccallum.*—You consider the crofts you have too small?—Yes.

43,337. Have you made application to the proprietor for an extension?—Yes, and the landlord spoke to us on the subject also.

43,338. You mean that you spoke to the late proprietor, Mr Baird?—Yes, we applied to Mr Baird for more land, and he gave us a reduction of rent.

43,339. And did he give you more land?—No.

43,340. Did he give any reason for refusing to give the land?—He gave no reason, he said he would consider the matter.

43,341. Did he hold forth any hope that he would do it?—He was very desirous to please us in anything we put before him.

43,342. But, with regard to this particular application, did he lead you to believe that before he disposed of the estate he would grant you an extension?—Yes.

43,343. And that expectation was not fulfilled?—No.

43,344. Then, since the new proprietor came, have you made any application to him?—Yes.

43,345. And what reply did you get?—He called on us when he left the shooting in Lochalsh last year, and he went to inspect the land we had been asking for. He said we would get it, and he asked when we would require it. We said at that minute if it could be given us. He replied that his factor, who was attending a sale in the south at the time, would come to give us the land as soon as he came home. The factor came home, and was about a fortnight at home, but he did not go to see us. We then sent word to Mr Bowlby that the factor had not come to Airor. When the factor returned from the next sale, he came to see us, and he asked us what rent we would give for the land we applied for. We asked him to state his rent and we would state ours. He said that we could not get the land in any case at that time; we could not get it till Whitsunday. Whitsunday came, but we did not get the land. The factor went over the ground himself at that time, when he was speaking to us, but we did not agree; we could not give the rent they asked for the place. They cut up lots off the land we had applied for, and we asked the adjoining land of Neigart. If they had given us that along with the low lands we would have given the rent they asked.

Inverie, Knoydart. William Macinnes.

43,346. What was the extent of land you did ask, and the rent the proprietor proposed to ask for it?—Mr Mackay said that there were about 10 acres of arable land in what we applied for, and about 800 acres of pasture which was in pieces. It was £18 of rent for the whole thing.

43,347. How many crofters were applying?—Six. We had to remain in the poor ground we had, and we would not get any reduction.

43,348. You consider the rents of your present crofts too high?—Yes.

43,349. Have you applied to the Crofters Commission yet? [*The Secretary.*—There is an application from this township to fix Fair Rents, but it has not yet been dealt with.]

43,350. What rent did you offer to the proprietor for the lands you wanted?—£12.

43,351. Then, are these negociations at an end now?—Yes; we could not agree.

43,352. You failed to get an addition to your holdings from both proprietors?—Yes.

43,353. And have you taken steps to apply to the Crofters Commission for an extension of holdings as well as for a fair rent?—Yes.

43,354. Who is acting for you in the matter?—Mr Macgillivray in Arnisdale was lodging the application for us; and we wrote to one in Edinburgh once or twice about it.

43,355. In your opinion the land that you have applied for is suitable for an addition?—It is beside us; it bounds with us.

43,356. In what farm is it situated?—It now belongs to Inverguseran.

43,357. Is it part of Samadalan?—It is Samadalan itself that we applied for.

43,358. Now, you stated that the land in the townships mentioned by Mr Mackissock was not very good?—We know to our cost that it is not good.

43,359. How does that come about?—The soil in our own township is not good, and we know that when the other townships were in cultivation they were not good, though some of them were better than others.

43,360. In your opinion then are the other townships quite as good as your township of Airor?—Yes, and better.

43,361. And you consider it a great advantage to you to have a croft even in Airor, which is, by no means, the best place in Knoydart?—It was useful to me hitherto, but it will not be of much use now.

43,362. You mean that it alone will not support you, I suppose?—Yes.

43,363. But if you prosecute the fishing, for instance, in the neighbourhood, would it not be an advantage to you to have a croft?—Yes.

43,364. *Mr William Mackay, Solicitor, Inverness, Agent for Mr Bowlby.*—Do you know what is the extent of your own arable land?—No, but I think it is about two acres.

43,365. I have got a survey made on 18th April 1887, and your name is down as having three acres of arable land. Do you think that is correct?—I don't think the whole croft is three acres in extent.

43,366. But it may be?—It may be.

43,367. You think that the townships to which you have referred could be re-peopled by crofters?—I think so.

43,368. Do you remember how many crofters were on Samadlan?—No.

43,369. Have you any idea?—I think there were about twelve.

43,370. Do you want them to come back again to the same holdings?—Those who were there would not come home, supposing I sent for them; they are now in a home where they have no need of a croft.

Inverie, Knoydart. — William Macinnes.

43,371. Would you like to give it to their descendants?—I would be willing to give it to any one to whom it would do good and who wanted it.

43,372. You mentioned that you did not find the croft useful now. You do not get prices for your cattle?—No.

43,373. Or for your sheep?—No.

43,374. And the death-rate is very high upon Airor?—No.

43,375. Is it not very high upon the whole of Knoydart?—It cannot be great now, for they have cleared off the worst of the sheep.

43,376. But there are a great many sheep on Knoydart yet; is not the death-rate very high?—It is not so high as it used to be, for there is not a sheep stock there.

43,377. The rate may be the same, although the number of the flock is less?—There is no place with a sheep stock that has not a death-rate.

43,378. You do a little at the fishing, do you not?—Yes.

43,379. Do you remember that Mr Baird gave you herring nets?—He never gave me a net.

43,380. Well, to some crofters?—I believe he did.

43,381. Don't you remember that?—I remember hearing that some people got nets.

43,382. The crofters on Airor are very well off, are they not?—Yes, but how? They go far and near, and even abroad, to earn money for the families they leave at home. It is not the crofts at Airor that maintain the people.

43,383. Don't you think it is better for them to do so than to remain at home even upon larger crofts?—I think they could not stop at home yet, even if they had bigger crofts: it would not do.

43,384. Some of them have built slated houses?—Yes, but if so, it was not by means of the produce of the crofts.

43,385. *Mr Maccallum.*—What sort of holding would you like for yourself? Would you be willing to remove from the small croft you have and take a small farm, if such a thing were available in Knoydart?—Yes, if I could live on it.

43,386. Do you mean by that, if it were of a size that you could live on and at a fair rent?—Yes.

43,387. Do you think now that some such farms could be formed in Knoydart here?—Yes.

43,388. Several of these, you think, could be formed, and also smaller crofts for fishermen; is that your opinion?—Yes, that is my opinion.

43,389. Then with regard to the houses that have been built, the slated houses at Airor,—have they been built since the passing of the Crofters Act?—Yes.

43,390. How many new houses have been put up at Airor?—Two.

43,391. And have these been put up by the earnings of the crofters' families in the south?—Yes.

43,392. *Mr Gordon.*—If you had got the extension to your crofts which you applied for, would you have been content?—Yes. We thought we were to get it, as Mr Bowlby promised it to us; but now we have not got it, there is nothing for us but look for another place which we can get.

43,393. But if you had got it at the rent of £12, which you proposed yourselves, would you have been content with it as an addition to your crofts?—Yes.

43,394. *Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the reafforesting, is it the opinion of the people that all the sheep farms in Knoydart are in process of being converted into deer forests?—It is very likely; judging from the way in which the work has been begun, the probability is that that is the way it will end.

43,395. Is Scotas Farm stocked to its full capacity, do you think?—I cannot be sure.

43,396. Have you any opinion with regard to the matter?—Parts of what used to be the Scotas Farm have been cleared of sheep, and that is not stocked.

43,397. But as to the lower part of it which is still under sheep, do you think it is fully stocked?—I think there is nearly as much as it will carry on the low ground.

43,398. *Mr William Mackay, Solicitor, Inverness.*—Do you know how many acres of pasture you eight crofters have between you?—I don't know. — Inverie, Knoydart. — William Macinnes.

43,399. Would you agree with me that there are 1000 acres?—I don't know anything about it.

43,400. Until 1887 your rent was £6, 5s.?—Yes.

43,401. How long were you and those who were before you paying that rent?—Since 59 years.

43,402. In 1887 it was reduced to £4, 14s.?—Yes.

43,403. And that is your rent still?—Yes.

43,404. Your people were not originally from Knoydart?—No.

43,405. Your father came, I think, from Skye?—Yes.

43,406. And all the crofters in Airor with one exception came from Skye about the same time?—Yes, the parents of the present crofters.

43,407. And they all settled there about the time of the evictions?—They came there before the tenants were removed from Knoydart.

43,408. They were strangers at the time of the evictions?—Yes.

43,409. And they were not removed?—No.

43,410. Your father got land which was before then in the possession of natives of Knoydart?—Yes.

43,411. *Mr Maccallum.*—But do you know whether the old natives of Knoydart were removed in order to make way for the colony that came from Sleat?—No.

43,412. *Mr Gordon.*—I would like to make this point quite clear. According to the previous witnesses, the evictions took place 41 years ago: according to you, your father came from Skye 59 years ago: in other words the people of Skye were in Knoydart 18 years previous to the date of the evictions?—One or two families left before the general clearances; these left of their own accord. It was the land occupied by one of those who voluntarily left the place, that my father got, but the other colonists from Skye were in Airor before the general clearance. It was one Angus Macdonald who emigrated to America, who had the land my father got.

Neil Macinnes, Airor (71). — Neil Macinnes.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

43,413. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter?—I have a croft in Airor.

43,414. Did you hear the evidence given by the last witness?—Yes.

43,415. Do you agree with what he stated?—Yes.

43,416. Have you anything further to add to the statement he made?—No, but I wish we could get what we applied for. I built a slated house at my own expense, myself and my sons, and my croft is the smallest in the township. It is my sons who are maintaining me, and I am not owing one penny to the landlord or factor, neither did my father before me.

43,417. Is there a general desire for larger holdings?—If we got what we applied for we would be happy.

43,418. You would have been content if you had got the addition you asked for at a fair rent?—Yes.

Jonathan Macinnes, Crofter, Airor (31). — Jonathan Macinnes.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

43,419. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter in Airor?—Yes.

43,420. Did you hear the evidence given by Mr William Macinnes?—Yes.

43,421. Do you concur in what he stated?—Yes.

43,422. Have you anything to add to his evidence?—No.

43,423. *Mr Maccallum.*—What occupation do you follow?—I cannot follow any occupation: I must stop at home working the little croft.

43,424. Are you a fisherman?—Yes, I fish.

43,425. Do the crofters or their sons get employment in the forest?—No.

43,426. *Mr Munro.*—Where does the shooting

tenant get his gillies from if the crofters' sons are not so employed?—Any place he chooses to get them from. I don't think they would give the chance of employment to any from the district if they could avoid it.

43,427. *Mr Wm. Mackay, Solicitor, Inverness, Agent for Mr Bowlby.*—Were you not a gillie yourself for a time?—I was for one year.

43,428. When was that?—Two years ago.

43,429. There was no shooting last year?—No.

43,429A. And you don't know but you may get employment this year?—I am quite sure I will not, if they can get it elsewhere.

43,430. Who told you that?—No one told it to me, but it is my own opinion of the people who are in the management.

43,431. Is it not the same management now that it was two years ago? The local factor is the same, is not he?—If so, he would not give me a chance.

43,432. Don't you know any of the other Airor people who ever get employment on the estate as gillies or as servants?—No: they might be there for a month on day's pay, that is all.

43,433. Do you know Angus Macinnes?—Yes, he is there generally.

43,434. He was out with me one day to the head of Loch-Nevis, and he told me he was in the service. Is not he from Airor?—Yes.

43,435. Is he a brother of yours?—No, a cousin.

43,436. Then, why did you say there was not one?—I did not think of him at that time, but I am quite sure that there is no other one from Airor.

43,437. Perhaps if you thought a little longer you could remember more?—I am quite sure I would not. They would be very sorry to give us any chance of employment.

43,438. Do you know a man called Donald Macdonald who was a shepherd at Scotas?—Yes.

43,439. Is he a native of Airor?—It was from Airor he was.

43,440. So that there is no difference made so far as the people of Airor are concerned between them and the people of the other townships?—Yes, there was. Ever since we applied to the Crofters Commission they have turned against us as much as they could.

43,441. Do you know that Mr Bowlby was not aware until I was here three weeks ago that you had gone to the Commission? Or even Mr Cumming?—I am quite satisfied that Mr Bowlby would do rightly, but the man who is acting under him would not allow him to do so. I produce two letters from Mr Bowlby as follows:—

'Gilston Park, Harlow.
11*th November* 1893.

'The Airor Crofters,—

'I have your letter of the 7th inst., and have 'written to Mr Cumming to see you and arrange terms 'for you to rent the land from Martinmas, if possible.

'(Signed) E. S. Bowlby.'

'Gilston Park, Harlow,
7*th December* 1893.

'To the Airor Crofters,—

'In answer to yours of the 5th inst., I have 'put the matter of letting you the land entirely in Mr 'Cumming's hands, and have told him to arrange it with you as soon as possible. He has been away with 'sheep and has been ill since he came back, which may 'account for the delay. If you cannot come to an 'arrangement with him, the matter must wait until my 'return to Inverie after the winter. I can do nothing 'more at present.

'(Signed) E. S. Bowlby.'

43,442. *Mr Gordon.*—Would you have been content if you had got the land therein referred to as an extension to your present croft?—Yes.

43,443. Was it before or after the receipt of that letter that you applied to the Commission?—It was after that. [*Mr Mackay.*—No, it was before. It was in Mr Baird's time.]

Hugh Macmaster, Crofter, Airor (40). Inverie, Knoydart.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Hugh Macmaster.

43,444. *Mr Gordon.*—Are you a crofter in Airor?—Yes.

43,445. Did you hear the evidence given by the previous witnesses?—Yes.

43,446. In particular, did you hear the evidence given by Mr William Macinnes?—Yes.

43,447. Do you concur in the evidence he gave?—Yes.

43,448. Have you anything further to add?—No.

43,449. *Mr Mackay.*—Do you want more land?—I applied along with the rest.

43,450. You had a larger croft at one time than you have now?—Yes.

43,451. Did you give up the half of it of your own accord?—It was my mother and my brother who occupied it at that time, and they gave up the one-half. My brother could not keep it.

43,452. That was in the year 1889?—I believe it was.

43,453. And that land is now in the hands of Donald Macdonald and Donald Campbell?—Yes.

William Mackay, Solicitor, Inverness, Agent for Mr Bowlby of Knoydart (46)—*examined.*

William Mackay.

43,454. *Mr Gordon.*—Have you any statement to submit?—Yes. 'The present estate of Knoydart forms 'the most western portion of the old property of the 'Macdonalds of Glengarry. It was purchased by the 'late Mr James Baird in 1857. He was, on his death 'in 1876, succeeded by Mr John Baird, who possessed 'it till 1893, when it was purchased by Mr E. S. 'Bowlby, the present proprietor.

'The property is included in what was known in 'ancient times as "Garbh Chriochan"—"the Rough '"Bounds." It is exceedingly mountainous, 21 eleva- 'tions being over 2000 feet. Of these four exceed '3000 feet. The mountains are very steep, and the 'glens, as a rule, very narrow.

'The estate extends to about 67,000 acres, approxi- 'mately made up as follows:—

	Acres
Deer forest,	47,500
Lochs and rivers,	620
Farms, including sheep and cattle grazings,	17,540
Crofters' holdings and cottars' potato and hay ground,	1,200
Plantations,	130
Policies, &c.,	10
	67,000

'In addition to the ground possessed by the cottars 'above referred to, each of them has the right to graze 'a cow and its followers on one or other of the farms, 'or in the deer forest. They also occupy slated 'houses and gardens belonging to the proprietor. 'They have all for many years past been employed on 'the estate.

'The crofters and their sons are employed as fishermen, 'sailors, yachtsmen, shepherds, gillies, or labourers. 'There are rich herring fishing grounds in Loch Hourn 'and the Sound of Sleat; and with the view of helping 'the crofters in connection with the fishing industry, 'Mr John Baird, in 1885, supplied several of them 'with nets, at a cost of £83, 13s. 10d., exclusive of 'carriage from Glasgow.

'Ever since Mr James Baird acquired the estate in '1857, the proprietor's expenditure upon it has been 'very heavy. Between 1882 and 1893 alone, the ex- 'penditure on permanent improvements amounted to '£24,330, exclusive of the wages of shepherds, farm 'servants, keepers, and other servants, and the ordinary 'maintenance outlays. The great bulk of this ex- 'penditure went to people resident on the estate. Mr

Inverie, Knoydart. — William Mackay.

'Bowlby has, since he entered into possession, continued the expenditure, his outlays in days' wages 'between 1st August 1893 and 30th June 1894 'amounting to £1052, exclusive of the wages of 'keepers, shepherds, and other servants.

'There is in the forest no arable land, with the 'exception of a few patches which are cultivated by 'keepers and cottars. The arable lands on the farms 'are not sufficient to produce winter fodder for the 'proprietor's horses and cattle, and they have always 'been under the necessity of buying in large quantities 'of hay, corn, and other feeding stuffs.

'WILLIAM MACKAY.

'Knoydart, *5th July* 1894.'

In addition to this statement, I should like just to refer to one or two things which have come up to-day. In the first place, as to the accusation made against Mr Cumming here to the effect that he has changed in his conduct towards the Airor crofters since it became known that they had applied to the Crofters Commission, there is no foundation whatever for such a charge. As a matter of fact, for some time now the affairs have been in my hands principally, and it was I who met the Airor crofters, with whom I found it impossible to come to an agreement. Neither Mr Bowlby nor Mr Cumming, nor indeed I myself, was aware that they had applied to the Crofters Commission until the last day of my visit to Knoydart, about three weeks ago, when, on going over some papers handed to me, including the particulars of the estate, just as I was waiting for the steamer, I found a notice which had been served upon Mr Baird before he sold the estate, informing him of the application by the crofters. I showed it to Mr Bowlby and Mr Cumming, and explained what it meant. That happened *after* my interview with the Airor crofters. Even now I have not the slightest objection to their application; it has not altered my feelings towards them, or Mr Cumming's or Mr Bowlby's. The next matter I should like to refer to is what I may call the suspicion to which the first witness Mackissock gave expression, as to the prospects of afforesting. Mr Bowlby has at present no intention of extending the forest. He did extend it to some extent last year, and he then went to considerable expense in enclosing it. If it was his intention to clear more ground, he would certainly have done it then, when he was fencing, and he would not go to the expense of the double fencing which would be necessitated by a further extension of the forest. I may mention that Samadalan, part of which we thought of giving to the Airor people, was never in the possession of the Airor crofters. There was an old crofting township upon it, apparently very many years ago, to judge from the remains of houses; but for many years it has been attached to the farm of Inverguseran. Both itself and Niogart, another place mentioned by the crofters, really form the principal part of the low ground of Inverguseran Farm; and although Mr Bowlby agreed to let these crofters have a portion of Samadalan which he intended to enclose, at a fair rent, it was very reluctantly that he did so, for the reason that the working of the farm would thereby be very greatly interfered with.

43,455. Which farm do you now refer to?—Inverguseran Farm. Niogart and Samadalan form the principal wintering ground for the farm. The rest, as you will see for yourselves when you go over it, is, with the exception of Glenguseran, a very high country.

43,456. You know the township of Airor?—Yes, I do.

43,457. Do you think the crofts there are of a sufficient size at present?—Well, I think they are, in the circumstances, for this reason, that you cannot make crofts at Airor or anywhere on this estate sufficiently large to maintain a family.

43,458. Why not?—Because there is no ground. For example, on the whole of Samadalan there is only an area of about 10 acres of what is known as old arable land. The bulk of that is not really worth turning over

Inverie, Knoydart. — William Mackay.

43,459. What sort of land is Inverguseran?—There are about 20 acres under crop there: but that is, of course, under cultivation.

43,460. And the arable land of Samadalan?—That is old arable land, except perhaps a field of, I daresay, about two acres, which is in the occupation of the shepherd.

43,461. Did you say Mr Bowlby unwillingly agreed to give that land to the crofters?—For the reason that it very much damaged the farm of Inverguseran.

43,462. But that is not quite in accordance with the letter which was read?—That may be, but I assure you it is the case. He says he is most anxious to please them, but he would very much prefer not to give this land.

43,463. I shall just read the first letter, which is addressed to the Airor crofters:—'I have written to 'Mr Cumming to see you and arrange terms for you to 'rent the lands from Martinmas first.' That is *simpliciter*, 'I am quite agreeable to give the land'?—No, I think not. It does not say whether he is agreeable or not: it simply says he is going to do it.

43,464. The second letter says:—'In answer to 'yours of the 5th inst., I have put the matter of letting 'you the land' (he does not say, 'which I am unwilling 'to give'). 'I have put the matter of letting you the 'land entirely in Mr Cumming's hands, and have told 'him to arrange it with you as soon as possible.' Therefore, according to this letter, it was left with Mr Cumming to give them the land and to arrange the terms?—That is quite the case, at that time.

43,465. Then follows an explanation of his absence, and the letter goes on to say 'If you cannot come to 'an arrangement with him [*i.e.* Mr Cumming], the 'matter must wait until my return to Inverie after the 'winter. I can do nothing more at present. E. S. 'Bowlby.' It is evident from these two letters, in Mr Bowlby's own handwriting, that he was quite of a mind to give the land?—But he made up his mind very unwillingly.

43,466. Upon what basis did you fix an £18 rent for this piece of hill ground?—Well, there are about 800 acres of hill pasture, I believe; that is worth 1s. an acre or £40. We got an offer of £29 for it two or three years ago.

43,467. It must be very good crofting ground surely?—That is my opinion. We got another offer at the same time from one of the Airor crofters of £24. [*J. Macinnes.*—No, sir, you did not.] Yes, we did.

43,468. It may be worth more to one man than to the township as a whole?—Well, if you will allow me, I shall continue my explanation of how I arrived at the figure £18.

43,469. You have quite satisfied my mind,—if it is worth £40, it must be worth £18?—Well, I thought it was worth 1s. an acre, but I said make it 6d. an acre, or £20 for the 800 acres, including about 10 acres of old arable land. There were six applicants for the extension, so to make it even money I said we would make it £3 each, or £18.

43,470. Then, if the crofters offered £12, the whole difference between you and them was £1 a-piece. Now, £1 might be a good deal to the crofters, but £6 would not have been very much to Mr Bowlby. Would it not have been better to let them have the ground?—Well, I advised him not to do so.

43,471. I have no reason to inquire why you did so: but looking at the whole circumstances and Mr Bowlby's writing that he would give the land, and giving directions to Mr Cumming to settle the matter, I cannot help expressing the opinion that it is a pity it was not arranged?—I may say that Mr Cumming's view was that the rent should be £24.

43,472. Possibly it should: I could quite understand that it would be worth £24 to one man, but it might not be worth more than £12 to the six. Now, do you agree with the evidence we have heard that a part of this estate is suitable for crofters' holdings?—No. I went over the whole estate; and, in my opinion,—of course, you can take my view for what it is worth, but

I cannot spot a single place where you can put down a crofting township with any degree of comfort at all.

43,473. Is there no place about Sandaig Bay where you think a small colony of fishermen crofters could be located?—I don't think they would be comfortable there.

43,474. In view of the new harbour at Mallaig, would it not be a very favourable position for crofting fishermen?—The people who are here already say that they do not get fishing. I don't see why they do not, because people come from all parts of the country to fish in this neighbourhood. But if you settle other people, and they simply do as the people at present do, they won't fish.

43,475. I must say it is a pity they don't. Is there no part of the land between this and Sandaig Bay which you think could be occupied with low ground?—Well, there is the farm of Scotas, which is not available, as it is under cultivation: it has about 12 acres of arable land.

43,476. Have you any reason to doubt the evidence given by the first witness as to the number of people who were at one time located on the estate as crofters?—I should very much doubt that there were 330 persons removed.

43,477. That would mean about 60 families?—Yes. You will find if you examine the lands that there are comparatively few remains of houses. Nor has there been any clearance of the remains, for the reason that the land has not been cultivated since the clearances.

43,478. Do you think the present condition of the land is less favourable to its occupation by a population of that number than it was when they were removed?—I think so, and for this reason, that crofters are not now satisfied with living in the same way in which their forefathers lived 40 or 50 years ago.

43,479. But is not the condition of matters improved by the greater frequency of transport to the south, first by steamers and afterwards probably by a railway?—So far as facilities for transport are concerned, no doubt that is the case; but they don't bring good prices.

43,480. They can more readily realize the wealth of the ocean now than they could 50 years ago?—But they don't go to the ocean.

43,481. But suppose they did?—Well, I should say if they went to the ocean they should stick to the ocean and have their houses simply as their homes, with enough ground for a cow, so that the family could have milk.

43,482. But they say they have not got the ground?—Yes, they have. They have ground for a cow.

43,483. The first question I put to you is whether it would not be a suitable location for fishermen with a cow's grass in the neighbourhood of Sandaig Bay?—Oh, there is no doubt they could be planted there, but they would not be comfortable. In fact, I very much doubt whether you could get people to go there when it really came to the touch.

43,484. *Mr Maccallum.*—You stated that there was no knowledge of the application to the Crofters Commission till three weeks ago, and, therefore, there could not have been any ill-feeling on the part of the estate management?—Yes, I stated that as a fact.

43,485. I don't doubt that at all; but would it not be also quite within the knowledge of Mr Cumming that the people were holding meetings with regard to the matter, and taking steps to apply to the Commission?—I think it is very likely that he may have heard that they were holding meetings, if meetings were held, but judging from my intercourse with Mr Cumming, he has got a very kindly feeling towards the people.

43,486. Yes, but he takes a peculiar way of showing it?—I don't know that.

43,487. For example, take the case of the valuation put on this ground. It was left in his hands to give them this land, but he would not agree, and because of a difference of £6 he let them off without granting it?—Don't you think it was his duty to act honestly to the proprietor as well as to the tenants?

43,488. But I say he takes a peculiar way of showing his good feeling towards them?—He takes the ordinary Christian way of acting honestly.

43,489. Would not the knowledge that the people were holding meetings in order to put their case before the Crofters Commission have just the same effect as a regular application?—I don't say that even an application would have any effect upon him in his dealings with the crofters.

43,490. But you give this want of knowledge as a proof that his good feeling was not at all affected?—I gave it as a fact.

43,491. You give it as a proof that he could not have been affected, because he never knew of the application; and it is a proof, if we take that particular application?—Yes.

43,492. But would not the knowledge of a movement among the people have just the same effect as a regular application?—I daresay it might.

43,493. And was it not quite well known that they were taking steps to get their case laid before the Commission?—I don't know that it was. Mr Cumming himself says 'No.'

43,494. They held public meetings: are you prepared to deny that?—I have never heard that they held public meetings. There was a meeting held here and addressed by Balallan, but that was not a meeting of the Airor crofters, but of those on the whole estate of Knoydart and on the estate of Morar as well.

43,495. Do you think the thing was kept perfectly private, so that it did not reach Mr Cumming's ears, that they were to make an application?—Well, he says he was not aware that they were to make an application.

43,496. Does he say he was not aware that they were making preparations to appear before the Commission? [*Mr Cumming.*—I was aware that they were making preparations, but it is not long since I knew even that; it is but a very short time ago.]

43,497. It was a matter of notoriety. Then there is a very large area under deer now? [*Witness.*]—Yes, 47,500 acres.

43,498. And you give an assurance that there is to be no more afforesting?—No, I don't. Do not misunderstand me, I give no assurance whatever. I say there is no intention at present of extending the forest area, but I give no undertaking or assurance. I don't know what may happen within the next ten years.

43,499. By far the greater portion of the estate is under deer?—Oh yes; 47,000 acres out of 67,000.

43,500. How long is it since the sheep were cleared to make way for deer?—The first land afforested was, I understand, Barrisdale, and the sheep were cleared about the year 1884 or 1885, when Mr Baird was the proprietor. Then the upper portions of Scotas were cleared about 1890 or 1891. Then again last year Mr Bowlby took a slice off Kilchoan and a slice off Inverguseran and enclosed the whole.

43,501. Can you give us any idea of the number of sheep maintained by the ground now afforested?—No, I cannot.

43,502. You do not know the number of sheep taken over by Mr Baird?—No, but I know he lost heavily thereby. [*Mr Gordon.*—Is it a deer fence that encloses the forest?—It is a sheep fence. So that the deer practically have the run of the place?—Yes.]

43,503. All this afforesting has gone on since the time of Lord Napier's Commission?—I don't know when it was begun.

43,504. I think you said 1885, and the Napier Commission was before that. Did not that Commission report that no land opposite the sea and under an altitude of 1000 feet should be afforested? Was not there a recommendation to that effect?—The report of the Napier Commission will speak for itself: if that is contained in it, of course it is their report.

43,505. But are you aware of it?—No, I don't know that.

43,506. They made a recommendation with regard to afforesting?—They did, but I do not remember the figures.

43,507. And this deer forest includes low land,—it includes land by the sea?—It does not include any arable land by the sea. It includes very steep land

Inverie, Knoydart. — William Mackay.

along the shore. I believe you know the mountainous nature of the land, which rises sheer up from the sea.

43,508. Is not Carnach arable?—Carnach is level, but it was never arable land. About two acres there were once cultivated, and they are now cultivated and in the possession of the keepers.

43,509. Do you say there was no large cultivation at all in the land that is now under deer?—No. There are a few patches, but these are in the hands of shepherds; and there are two places in the hands of crofters or cottars in the forest.

43,510. Is Glen-Meadail in the forest?—Yes.

43,511. And Glen-Dulochan?—Part of it is in the forest.

43,512. Don't you think there is old arable there?—It is cultivated.

43,513. All the old arable?—Yes. Of course, you will find old 'lazy-beds' on the hill sides, but I should say it is centuries since they were used.

43,514. The marks of cultivation still remain?—Yes, here and there.

43,515. Can you give us any idea of the effect that the re-afforesting has had on the valuation of the land? What was the rent of the old farms?—The valuation is now higher.

43,516. If you include the rent of the farm and the value of the shootings when it was under sheep, are you prepared distinctly to say that the valuation is now higher?—The Valuation Rolls will show that.

43,517. I thought you might perhaps be able to quote the figures?—No, I have not the figures at hand.

43,518. My own impression being that the valuation of the forest nowis lower?—The valuation of the lands is higher, I know,—considerably higher.

43,519. The sheep valuation was over £4000 at one time?—I really cannot give you the figures.

43,520. Then there was a high valuation on the shootings at the same time?—There is no grouse shooting.

43,521. But it was a deer place before?—No.

43,522. Are you aware that before it was afforested, there were gamekeepers there, and are you prepared to give us any evidence as to the number of stags that used to be shot every year upon the sheep farms?—Mr Baird, I understand, shot about twenty or twenty-five stags on the sheep farms. But I don't think that ever appeared in the Valuation Roll. There was no shooting rent in the Valuation Roll.

43,523. It was not let, but it was a valuable shooting?—Well; he used to go out on the farms and shoot.

43,524. And he had a great number of guests with him?—I suppose so.

43,525. There was a very important deer shooting here before it was ever afforested?—Twenty or twenty-five stags; that was his number, I am told.

43,526. In any case it afforded a great deal of sport, and would be considered a very valuable shooting?—You would not get it let,—that is my experience.

43,527. Even taking it at your own figure, which I suppose you give as a fair estimate, a deer forest on which you can shoot twenty to twenty-five stags a year must be worth something?—Well, I know that in a certain case I altogether failed to let a deer forest in which there were sheep. Sportsmen will not look at a forest where there are sheep.

43,528. Why not?—Because the sheep disturb the deer.

43,529. They want to have them there tame, do they?—No, they want to have it clear of sheep.

43,530. So as to get an opportunity to shoot their game without any trouble?—No, but a sportsman may be getting a good stalk, and at a critical moment a sheep comes in the way and he loses his shot.

43,531. But is not that hazard an element in the sport?—No, I think not.

43,532. You think everything should be to the advantage of the sportsman; but would that be fair to the stag?—I think it would: I don't think the sheep should come in and help the stag.

43,533. Don't you think it is the general impression that when the land is completely cleared, the deer become so tame that, in fact, they afford no sport at all?—I do not think so. In the shooting season they are extremely wild.

Inverie, Knoydart. — William Mackay.

43,534. Although the ground is cleared?—Although the ground is cleared.

43,535. Do you think it is for the benefit of the country at large, and for the benefit of the crofters, that land which might be occupied as fishermen's crofts, for example, should be swallowed up in deer forests?—I gave my opinions on that point very fully in my evidence at the Kintail sitting, and it is perhaps unnecessary to go over the same ground again; but I believe it is the case with this estate just as with Kintail, that we could not do better for the people than we are doing. Many of the cottars get employment on the estate, and I think that is better for them than if they had crofts, from which they would find it difficult to extract a livelihood.

43,536. Have the cottars on this estate now got cows, the bulk of them?—Some of them have.

43,537. What proportion of them?—There are five that have got cows since last Whitsunday, when I came up here.

43,538. But before that time?—They had not before that, except two, I think, in the forest, who have got two cows each.

43,539. That is quite a recent thing?—Quite recent.

43,540. Now, do you know of any place better suited for crofters than the coast from here to Airor, and then from Airor up to Inverguseran?—The farm of Scotas is suitable, if you are going to give arable land to the crofters.

43,541. Do you speak of cultivated land on Scotas?—Yes.

43,542. But is there not very little of it cultivated?—Ten or twelve acres,—I think twelve acres.

43,543. Any person in the bay can see that there is a very large extent of arable land above that?—If it is arable land, it is arable land, you may take my word for it, which they would not cultivate now.

43,544. Why not? There is depth of soil. Is any of the land occupied by the crofters on Airor like it?—I think so.

43,545. Would you allow them to go over to Scotas?—No, I would not.

43,546. Is it not really your opinion, if you have seen the lands, that the land of Scotas is very much better than the crofters' land at Airor,—in fact, that there is no comparison between the two?—I think it possibly is better; but the Airor people happen to be at Airor. But if they were away from it they would never return to it.

43,547. Would you give them the chance?—I would give them the chance to go away to-morrow.

43,548. But to go to Scotas?—No.

43,549. It is perfectly evident, is it not, that the land at Scotas is very much superior to the land held by the Airor crofters?—I don't know that it is; but even if it were, that does not prove it to be good land.

43,550. That means then that the Airor land is not good?—Oh, I say it is not good.

43,551. Now, considering the quality of the land and the situation generally, do you know of any place better suited for crofters than the places I have mentioned—Scotas, Rhidarroch, Sandaig, and Dun?—I say portions from here to Scotas are quite suitable, but these portions are already under cultivation and are not available.

43,552. Do you know of any place occupied by crofters better than that?—Yes, there are places where crofters now are, which are more suitable.

43,553. Where?—All over the Highlands.

43,554. There may be, but where is it?—For example, Glen Urquhart, for which I have already given evidence, is much more suitable for crofters.

43,555. Will the crofters there have the advantage of fishing, which can be had here?—No, but they have the advantage of good land and proximity to markets.

43,556. I have no doubt the land in Glen-Urquhart is more fertile; but keeping to the west coast, do you know of any other crofting land that is better than this?—Well, I have not gone into the matter; I should like to have the pleasure of going round the west coast with

you in the 'Marmion' and seeing the various bays, before making up my mind on that point.

43,557. But besides that the land is superior to that held by the Airor people and that held by the vast majority of the crofters on the west coast, are they not particularly well situated with regard to the fishing in such a place as that?—Would not people, if they were settled on such lands, be particularly well situated for fishing?—There is no doubt they would, but the crofters who are there now do not fish,—they make no use of the facilities which are at their disposal already.

43,558. But if they had greater facilities of disposing of the fish when caught, such as they look to,—*e.g.*, if the Mallaig railway were finished, don't you think they would fish?—I don't think they would, and I don't think they ever did.

43,559. What is the use of having the Mallaig railway at all, then?—I don't think there is much use in it, so far as the fishing is concerned, except what you get in from the Outer Hebrides, and that fishing is mostly worked by strangers.

43,560. I suppose the principal object of the promoters of the Mallaig line is to encourage and develop the fishing?—Yes, I believe that is one of the objects.

43,561. And this is just at the harbour proposed to be made at the railway terminus?—Yes, but you will find that the great bulk of the fish that will go by the Mallaig line will come from the outer seas, and will come from boats worked by east coast people and English people.

43,562. You think that the west coast people are quite unfit for fishing?—No, no, I don't think so; but I think they would be very much better fishermen if they had no crofts at all. If they were exclusively fishermen, they would make capital fishermen, but they are a blend between the crofter and the fisherman, and the result is that they do not work either of these occupations to advantage.

43,563. Your cure would be to take away the croft altogether?—If there were sufficient land for them to become small farmers, I would not object to that, but I object to their being hybrid. I do not refer to Knoydart specially, but to the whole of the west coast, including Skye and on to Sutherlandshire. I consider the combination of crofting and fishing to be the weakness of the system.

43,564. You think they cannot succeed because they have crofts,—not because they are not fit, but because they have land?—There is no doubt that is one cause of their failure.

43,565. Do you find that the people who have no crofts at all are better fishermen than those who have on the west coast?—Yes. I know cases in Kintail and Lochalsh and Lochcarron where people without any crofts are away the whole time, earning large sums of money, and they are never a penny in arrear with their rents.

43,566. Do you make this statement with regard to the west coast generally, that the landless cottars are better fishermen than the crofters?—They are better fishermen in this way, that they are able to be constantly at it.

43,567. Is that your idea?—That is my knowledge.

43,568. We have now had a great many crofter fishermen before us, all through Barra, North and South Uist, and Harris, who all say they would be the better of having crofts, and they give exactly the opposite version from you,—they say that the man who has a croft is always the most successful fisherman. Are you astonished to hear that?—I am, very much astonished.

43,569. And they tell us that the people who have no land are much more subject to poverty and destitution than those who have land?—Well, that is not my experience.

43,570. Where did you gather your experience?—In Lochcarron and elsewhere.

43,571. You find cottars there who are more successful fishermen, do you?—Yes, because they go to the east coast and elsewhere to fish.

43,572. And the crofters are unsuccessful, is that so?—I don't say they are unsuccessful; but the crofter only goes about his own place to fish, while the man who has not got a croft goes away all the year round, except a month or two, to get his livelihood. [*Mr Watson, Surveyor.*—There are very few cottars in Lochcarron, and none of them fishermen.]

43,573. Can you give us the number of cottars to whom you refer?—I cannot give you the number, but I know there are some. There are several about Kishorn.

43,574. I am at your mercy in this matter, because I do not know the particular place, and therefore, you should give us the particulars?—Take the east coast—

43,575. I do not take the east coast at all; I only want to know your own experience with regard to the cottars, whether they are in more comfortable circumstances because they have no land: that is the point I wish to find out. It is a matter that has come before this Commission so often, and the complaint made that the cottars are in a most miserable condition, and that they cannot follow the fishing to such advantage as those who have crofts?—It is ridiculous to say that they cannot follow it. They have got no croft to work; therefore they have got more time for fishing.

43,576. They have nothing to fall back upon in the event of a failure in the fishing?—They have got good earnings.

43,577. If the fishing fails they are obliged to get everything from a distance,—they have no milk and no potatoes at home?—All cottars have potatoes.

43,578. I am not aware of that?—At least I am talking of those that I know: all the cottars I know have potatoes.

43,579. They have not land of their own; some of them have stock, but the greater number of them have not; and the evidence constantly has been,—unanimously, in fact, by these people, that they would be better off with crofts?—Well, you know, there is a general desire for land, which it is difficult to account for.

43,580. Would not you say that the cottars on the whole are very much worse off than the crofters?—No, I don't think so at all.

43,581. And do you think it would be no advantage to these people to get land, the cottars throughout the western islands?—There is no doubt but it would be an advantage for them to have a little piece of land if they are all working on the estate, as the people here are, and if they have not any. In Knoydart, for instance, we have given them little plots.

43,582. But they have been landless till then?—They had gardens, you know; just gardens.

43,583. Then you are not prepared to say, are you, that what has led to the want of success on the west coast is that the fishermen have land? You are not prepared to hold that?—Yes, I am prepared to say that the crofter cannot be a good fisherman, for the reason that he has to stay at home very often working on his croft when he might be more profitably occupied in fishing. He cannot go far enough a-field.

43,584. Against that, might I just point out that we have a denial from the people themselves that it interferes with their work, and they state also that it is a great comfort to them, and that, in fact, they could not prosecute the fishing at all and have a home with any comfort unless they had land?—I quite believe they say that.

43,585. I want to place it most distinctly before you, so that you see bit by bit how it works out, that if you deprive them of the land, for instance, they have no milk for their families,—how are they to be supplied? Are there dairies?—They earn it.

43,586. But how could they buy it, supposing they did earn it?—There are shops all over the country.

43,587. Shops selling milk?—They can easily get milk to buy. Here, for instance, if you go along there in the morning you will meet half a dozen coming along with their milk.

43,588. Do you think the people of Knoydart would say that it is easy for them to get milk?—I cannot say what they would say.

43,589. You have no experience of that. Are there dairies throughout the Highlands where the cottars can get milk?—There are small farms where they can get milk.

Inverie, Knoydart.

William Mackay.

43,590. There are not many small farms in the Highlands?—Oh, but there are such farms.

43,591. Are not the farms, generally speaking, sheep farms?—With cattle on them. There is not a sheep farm but has a farmer, or manager, or shepherd, who has two or three cows and who would be delighted to sell milk.

43,592. Then, how was it that this first witness has been refused?—I never heard of that until now from himself: I don't know that. But he does not live on the estate, he has no house on it.

43,593. But his mother's house is on it, and is it not the case that when he was away he used to assist his mother and sister?—I cannot tell you, I never saw the man before.

43,594. But there is no doubt about his being a native?—You cannot ask me that, because I don't know him at all: I never saw him until this morning.

43,595. Then you say there has been an expenditure of something like £24,000 during the last few years on permanent improvements?—Yes, from 1882 up to the time when Mr Baird sold the estate in 1893, he spent £24,330 in permanent improvements.

43,596. Was that expended at all upon crofters' holdings?—I don't think there was much on crofters' holdings.

43,597. Any at all?—Yes, a considerable sum was spent in fencing.

43,598. A great deal was spent in fences for the land under deer?—A good deal.

43,599. In preparing for putting the land under deer?—I daresay the deer fences may have cost £2000 or £3000 perhaps.

43,600. A great deal has been spent on fences occasioned by the deer?—I cannot tell you the amount.

43,601. The farm of Inverguseran is in the hands of the proprietor, is it?—Yes, and has been for a great many years.

43,602. Is there land there such as would suit for small farms?—No doubt.

43,603. A club farm, for instance?—I don't know that there is. If you take in crofters, you destroy the whole. You cannot have a sheep farm without low ground, and the hills are so high they would not be of much use to crofters.

43,604. You know that crofters do have sheep?—Yes.

43,605. Could they not utilise the hill perfectly well?—Yes, if you make very large farms.

43,606. If it were to be worked as a club farm, you could have several on it utilising the hill?—Mr Gordon and I had an argument at Glen-Urquhart upon the subject of club farms. I then gave it as my opinion that club farms are a mistake, and I think so still.

43,607. But there is no reason why it should not do here?—I gave my reasons very fully then, and I refer you to my evidence at Glen-Urquhart, which was based upon experience of 20 years.

43,608. Is it your opinion that it is the best use to put the land of Knoydart to, under deer?—Yes, it is.

43,609. Now, Mr Baird, the proprietor, when giving evidence to the Napier Commission, said 'It is not 'my desire to raise the value of the property by what 'I consider to be an injury to it,' *i.e.*, to put it under deer when it can support sheep. Do you agree with him, that it would be an injury to put it under deer when it could support sheep?—No, I do not.

43,610. Well, that was the opinion expressed by the proprietor?—But he himself did not act on that opinion.

43,611. That may be; but that is the opinion given in answer to a question. 'It is not my desire to raise 'the value of the property by what I consider to be an 'injury to it.'—Well, all I can say is, that if he expressed that opinion, he did not act up to it. He preached but did not practise.

43,612. And do you think it is perfectly right to place under deer, land that would support sheep?—Yes, under certain circumstances.

43,613. Even although there is such a large number of people in the Highlands crying out for land?—Yes.

43,614. And a great number of people who, in their own opinion at any rate, would be benefited by getting a share of it?—I don't believe they would benefited by getting a share of this deer forest.

Inverie, Knoydart.

William Mackay.

43,615. No doubt your deer forest did support sheep before, and you say it would be the best thing to put it under deer, and perfectly justifiable?—I know it did support sheep, and I know that for the last ten years there has been an enormous loss on the sheep farms.

43,616. In face of the great cry for land, and the great number of landless cottars in the Highlands, you hold that it is better under deer?—I hold that most distinctly, and I hold that from their own point of view it would be a great mistake to put cottars there.

43,617. They lived there before?—They did not.

43,618. They lived in Knoydart before?—No, not in the deer forest: I doubt if there were ten crofters living in the whole of what is deer forest now. They lived all round this coast, which is not under deer.

43,619. Even that is uncultivated. You made a statement that the land has not been cultivated since they left it?—What is worth cultivating now, is cultivated.

43,620. That is, what is worth cultivating to a large farmer?—Well, the proprietor would cultivate very much more than he does if there was the land for it. He is obliged to bring hay and corn from Glasgow.

43,621. But small cultivators would cultivate a great deal more?—Not to advantage.

43,622. But you know that they themselves believe they would?—I don't think they would now. They did in the olden times, when they had nothing else to do.

43,623. And they made a living off it?—They made a wretched living.

43,624. Is it your opinion that the people in the Highlands led a miserable life until deer foresting came in?—No, but they led a miserable life until the beginning of this century.

43,625. They led a miserable life, I daresay, at the time of the potato famine?—No doubt, and in most years.

43,626. That is not the traditionary account?—Tradition paints the past in beautiful colours; but look at the books we have containing the first records of travel in the Highlands: look at the documents we have, showing that the people were starving, and dying of hunger. There is no doubt about it, the people in the past lived most miserably.

43,627. When the people got into difficulties at the time of the potato famine, did proprietors do anything at all for them?—Do you mean here?

43,628. Yes. Was the only thing done to help them, to put them out?—I really cannot tell you: I know nothing about that.

43,629. Don't you think they were very hardly treated at a time of destitution, in being put away?—I cannot express any opinion about that, for I don't know the facts.

43,630. Was there not destitution in other parts of Scotland as well as the Highlands?—Not so much.

43,631. But there was destitution?—Not much. It was in the Highlands that the potato famine told most. [*Mr Gordon.*—I do not think there was much in the east country.]

43,632. When the potato famine came, I suppose the people were unable to pay their rents?—I don't know: I am taking the story from these people here to-day.

43,633. But you know that is what happened generally throughout the whole country?—But they were giving evidence just now as to the estate of Knoydart, and I don't know anything at all about how the famine affected it.

43,634. You don't know anything about the evictions?—No.

43,635. But you know that large sheep farms have become unlettable in the Highlands?—I know that.

43,636. Now, when they have become unlettable, I suppose there are two alternatives, to make them into small farms or to turn them into deer forests; is not that so?—Yes.

43,637. You cannot suggest any other alternative?—Or to keep them in the proprietor's own possession, as we are doing here.

43,638. You have made them deer forest, have not you?—Not the whole.

43,639. Now, would you not rather give a trial to the small farm system than go at once to the deer forest?—My firm have given a chance to the small farm system on the farm of Compass, in Foyers. We advertised that large sheep farm to be let in small holdings, and we did not get a single tenant to take one of the lots. It was advertised for months. [*Mr Gordon.*—What kind of stock is kept on the farm,—is it wedder or ewe?—The lower part is ewe stock, the higher part wedder; but it is principally wedder, I should think.]

43,640. It has been offered publicly?—Yes: that was about ten years ago.

43,641. Had the tenants to take over the stock at valuation?—Yes, they had to take the stock from the outgoing tenant at valuation.

43,642. You are aware that these valuations of stock frequently give rise to difficulty?—I know that; but that difficulty meets you all over the Highlands.

43,643. But not in the deer forest?—But you put it as an alternative. You would not expect the proprietor to take over a sheep stock at valuation, then to clear the sheep at a loss and then to let the ground for sheep.

43,644. I do not suggest that. I only say that there is a great deal of land under deer, where that difficulty as to the taking over of stock by valuation does not occur at all?—Of course, there is that difficulty in the case of sheep farms. Then there is the other great difficulty, the building of houses. In the case I refer to we made an offer of houses. We said we will build the houses if you will give us a fair rent; or we will allow you to build houses. But they would not build the houses themselves on any account.

43,645. Did you, in this offer that was made, value the farm and divide it into suitable portions?—We did.

43,646. And they had just to accept these portions at the valuation put upon them?—Oh, no. We made up our minds what would be a reasonable rent for each portion, including interest on money expended on buildings in the event of our erecting the buildings; and we called for offers. We did not get more than one offer, if I remember well, and it did not come near our figure. I fancy it would hardly pay the interest on the building expenditure.

43,647. Don't you think it would have been quite a different thing if a farm like that were offered under conditions like these:—that the rent would be fixed by an impartial arbitrator, and not left simply for the proprietor or his factor to fix?—Well, it would be, possibly, as far as the fixing of the rent is concerned.

43,648. Would it not encourage the people to come forward, if they knew that the rent would be so fixed?—But in addition to the rent, the people would have either to erect suitable buildings themselves, or to pay interest on the cost of buildings erected by the proprietor.

43,649. But would it not encourage the people to know that the rent would be fixed by impartial and skilful arbitrators?—It might, to some extent, but I don't think that would get over the difficulty of the expenditure on buildings.

43,650. Had they not a prejudice against rents fixed by the proprietors?—We don't fix the rents; we take in offers.

43,651. But you can refuse any offer that does not reach your limit?—We are not bound to accept a rent if we do not think it suitable.

43,652. And the people may think it useless to apply because you may have a reserve rent, and won't accept less?—My experience is that they won't think it useless to offer. They try to make the best bargain they can, and quite right too.

43,653. Now with regard to this misunderstanding about the granting of the extension to the Airor crofters; you failed to come to an agreement with them, I think?—I may mention that the ground was not to be an extension of their present holdings; it was to be let to them as a separate holding, part of the old holding of Samadalan.

43,654. You were not willing to give it under the Crofters Act?—These were our conditions. They would not be under the Crofters Act even if we were willing.

43,655. Could not the Crofters Commission grant them an extension?—Yes, they could, but that is not what we were doing. I valued it at what I thought was a very low figure: I offered it to them at £18. If I had offered it at £10, I am satisfied from their behaviour that they would have offered me exactly half that amount.

43,656. You think they are very unreasonable?—I think they were very unreasonable that day.

43,657. Then they must have changed?—You know they have changed very much within the last few years, because there is all this land agitation going on.

43,658. But I do not take it from you that this land agitation has done any harm to the people?—No, but they have got the idea that they ought to get the land for nothing.

43,659. They did not ask it for nothing?—Practically.

43,660. You disagree with the people and disappoint them for the sake of the small sum of £6?—I did not disappoint them.

43,661. They are disappointed?—Well, I did not disappoint them.

43,662. But I speak of the estate management, and they are disappointed undoubtedly, because they got a letter saying that the proprietor was willing to give them the land, and left it to the factor to give it. Is it not perfectly natural that they should feel disappointed at not getting the land?—Well, I am disappointed with them, for they could have had it at the moderate figure put upon it.

43,663. But that does not make their disappointment any the less?—At all events I did not disappoint them.

43,664. Had you anything to do with the settlement of this matter?—I had everything to do with the final fixing of the rent.

43,665. By not giving it to them at £12 you have disappointed them?—I offered it at £6 less than Mr Cumming's valuation, which was £24.

43,666. Don't you think now, that in regard to such matters as this, it is always an advantage to have an independent arbitrator?—I do not think so.

43,667. Do you think that these people would not have been better satisfied if they had had a perfectly independent arbitrator to judge between you and them?—Possibly they would have been satisfied, but I don't know that they would. They never suggested an arbiter.

43,668. Does it not occur to yourself that that would have been better?—No, it does not. I have been able to settle with, I daresay, 400 tenants and crofters within the last seven years without the intervention of a single arbiter; and they are all pleased, all delighted.

43,669. There is great contentment then?—There is very great contentment where we have come to an agreement, and I am satisfied that there would have been very great contentment at Airor too had they accepted my terms.

43,670. But, generally speaking, don't you find that proprietors in the Highlands do fail to come to an agreement with their crofters, is not that so?—I don't know that you can lay that down as a rule; there have been exceptions, of course, but I would not say that was the rule.

43,671. There was power under the Crofters Act for the crofters and the proprietor to come to an agreement without the case being brought before the Crofters Commission at all, but in the great majority of cases they were brought before the Commission?—Well, I think the majority went before the Commission.

43,672. So that the Crofters Commission has been a great pacifier?—Well, they fixed the rents. I was thinking more of the east coast just now; but possibly the crofters who are not under the Crofters Act are better off, because they get more outlay on their buildings and holdings by the proprietor.

43,673. And with regard to the extension of hold-

Inverie, Knoydart. William Mackay.

ings and the formation of new holdings, seeing that the Commission has been such a success, don't you think that something of the same kind should be established for making small holdings available out of deer forests and large farms?—I cannot express any opinion on that.

43,674. The Crofters Commission have been very successful in their work, have they not?—No, not from my point of view.

43,675. They have brought peace and agreement between parties?—No, not in all cases.

43,676. *Mr Munro.*—Am I right in gathering from all the information you have given us to-day that Mr Bowlby really has no land which he could give to crofters for profitable cultivation?—There is the land of Inverie here on the farm of Scotas. Well, the best part of that was given to the cottars last Whitsunday. If you go along you come to Scotas itself, where there are about 12 acres of arable land cultivated by himself. This place of Sandaig to which reference has been made is also cultivated by himself, and part of Rhidarroch. Of course, he could give what he cultivates himself, but, as a matter of fact, he has not got nearly enough arable land at present for his requirements.

43,677. Could not crofters, in your opinion, be put upon the lands from which they have been previously evicted, with advantage to themselves?—That is Airor and Samadaan. I don't think they could, with advantage to themselves. As I have said, I believe if the Airor people were away from there once they would never return.

43,678. This is owing to the altered conditions of living?—Exactly; they are not satisfied with what their forefathers had 40 or 50 years ago, and quite rightly. They have got better houses and a higher standard of living, and would not now be satisfied with what their forefathers had. I don't blame them for it.

43,679. Do you think that crofters who have got moderately-sized farms, close upon £30 of rent, live a miserable existence?—Oh, no, not always. I think it was in my evidence at Glen-Urquhart that I expressed the opinion that a crofter who has got about £30 worth of land ought to live pretty fairly. He should have at least 20 acres of arable land.

43,680. So that if crofters of £30 rent could be successfully planted, you think Mr Bowlby would be quite willing that they should be?—I don't know that he would be at all; and you cannot get the land for them. It is not there.

43,681. How many acres were added to the deer forest?—About 3000.

43,682. Were any people removed from there?—None whatever.

43,683. I think you will allow that there is some reason for the people being apprehensive lest more land should be added to the deer forest, taking that fact into consideration and also the clearances made in previous years?—Well, the fact that Mr Bowlby has enclosed this, rather tends to show that he does not intend to make further additions. But I really cannot say what his intentions are regarding the future. I have never spoken to him on the subject.

43,684. You never heard Mr Bowlby himself suggest further additions?—He never said so. He told me of his addition to the forest and of his fencing it, and I concluded from the fact that he was putting an expensive fence between the forest and the sheep farms that he would not make any further addition.

43,685. About the Mallaig railway, you have made some remarks rather tending to show that you disapproved of it?—Oh, no, I do not say that. I said I was afraid there would not be much fish coming from the local lochs, but that the great bulk of what might go over the new line would come from strangers at a distance. Indeed, I may say that my firm acted in support of the Mallaig railway, to promote the scheme.

43,686. Did you ever hear of a rival railway scheme being suggested, to run along the north side of Loch Nevis and join the West Highland Railway at Banavie or Spean Bridge?—No, I never did. The only rival I ever heard of was the Kyleakin extension.

43,687. Do you think such a scheme would answer the purposes of the people better than the one on the other side of Loch Nevis?—What course do you think it would take? Inverie, Knoydart. William Mackay.

43,688. I cannot presume to say, because of the engineering difficulties to be overcome.—Then I am unable to express any opinion, because I never heard of it before. But it would be a very rough country to carry a railway across.

43,689. *Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the number of people who find employment in the deer forest, can you tell me the number of additional gamekeepers that have been engaged since the afforestment?—No, I cannot. There are nine at present, but I cannot say how many there were before.

[Adjourned.]

FIFTY-FIRST SITTING.

APPLECROSS, ROSS-SHIRE, July 6, 1894. Applecross, Ross-shire.

Present:—

James Noel Muller Forsyth, Esq. (acting as *Chairman*).
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary*.

Roderick Macbeath, Cottar, Torgarve, Applecross (40). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.) Roderick Macbeath.

43,690. *Mr Forsyth.*—Were you appointed at any public meeting to come before us as a delegate?—No; I simply volunteered to give evidence.

43,691. Have you any land at all?—No.

43,692. But you have a house?—Yes.

43,693. How do you make your living?—In the service of the proprietor; I get labour on his estate.

43,694. Do the people here find their crofts too small?—Some of them say their crofts are too small.

43,695. Do they consider that there is more land in this district out of which arable land could be got?—Yes.

43,696. Where is it?—In Torgarve and in Ceapachan, but that is in the proprietor's hands.

43,697. Is that the Home Farm you are speaking of?—It is in the proprietor's own hands, but he does not cultivate it; he has it out in pasture.

43,698. Have the crofters here much hill pasture?—They have pieces of pasture.

43,699. Could the crofters do with more hill land if they had the chance of getting it?—The crofters did not speak to me on the subject, and I don't know whether they would like to get it or not.

43,700–1. Are there many cottars about here without land?—There are two cottars besides myself in the township where I live. There are other cottars on the estate, but I don't know whether any of them want land.

43,702–3. Are they mostly labourers like yourself, or are they fishermen?—Most of them follow the fishing.

43,704. Is there any particular point that you would like to bring before us, beyond the wish for some land off the Home Farm?—I don't know anything except the lands I have referred to already; these lands were formerly in the occupation of crofters.

43,705. But you don't know that the crofters are desirous of getting that land back again?—Those that I spoke to would take the land if they could get it.

43,706. *Mr Maccallum.*—When were there crofters there?—So far as I can ascertain, the tenants were

pplecross, oss-shire.

oderick acbeath.

removed from Torgarve about 50 years ago. I cannot say how long it is since the tenants were cleared from Ceapachan, but the grandchildren of the men who had land there are of the same age as myself to-day.

43,707. Why were the people removed from Torgarve and Ceapachan?—I cannot say: I don't know why they were removed, but I understand the land was taken into the proprietor's hands at that time.

43,708. Do you know who was proprietor?—Mackenzie of Applecross was then proprietor.

43,709–10. And was the land put under sheep?—There were sheep on the estate at that time, and also cattle.

43,711. Has the land been cultivated since?—Part of it has, and another part has remained uncultivated since the tenants were removed.

43,712. Do you consider these lands well fitted for the formation of new crofts?—I think they are.

43,713. How many crofters do you think could be settled comfortably in these two places?—I cannot state the number; it would depend upon the extent of land that each crofter would want.

43,714. What size of croft would you like to get yourself?—I would like a croft that would keep three or four cows, and a few sheep.

43,715. Can you tell us anything about the deer forest, whether there is any land there that would suit?—Undoubtedly there is.

43,716–17. Whereabouts in the deer forest?—Up the Strath-Mhaol-Chaluim.

43,718. Were there crofters there before?—I cannot say; if so, it was very long ago.

43,719. Has there been any addition made to the forest recently?—I am not aware of any recent addition.

43,720. Is that the only part of the forest that you consider suitable for the formation of crofts?—Russel is another place that is suitable for crofter occupation. That is at the head of Loch-Kishorn.

43,721. Were there crofters in Rossal?—I do not remember: if there were crofters there, it must have been long ago. It was let to a tacksman in the time of the Mackenzies.

43,722. Do you know when it was put under deer?—I cannot tell the exact year.

43,723. Would that be a suitable place for fishermen's crofts?—Yes.

43,724–25. Is there good fishing in that neighbourhood?—Yes, undoubtedly; it is the best fishing loch in the north for white fish.

43,726. Is it a herring loch also?—Yes, white fish and herring.

42,727. Can you mention any other place in the deer forest that could be profitably occupied by crofters?—I cannot mention any other.

43,728–29. Do you know Borrodale?—Yes, very well.

43,730. Would that be a suitable place for a settlement?—Yes, it would. It is on the Home Farm.

43,731. Is there land there at present uncultivated which could be cultivated?—Borrodale is now in cultivation.

43,732. The whole of the land in Borrodale is under regular cultivation, is it?—Yes, it is in the landlord's own hands.

43,733. Do you know Langwell?—Yes.

43,734. Where is it?—Langwell is along with Torgarve. Langwell and Torgarve were two holdings at one time, but they are now consolidated into one farm.

43,735. Is there any arable land in Langwell left out of cultivation?—Parts of Langwell are cultivated; there is old arable land out of cultivation there.

43,736–37. And what about the grazing which was attached to Langwell before; how is it occupied?—It is under sheep and cattle, the proprietor's own stock.

43,738. Do you know Ach-a'-choirc?—Yes.

43,739. Where is it?—It is to the north-east, between Langwell and Keppach. It is on the road to Kishorn.

43,740. All these places that you mentioned could, you think, be profitably occupied by crofters?—Yes.

43,741. Is there much congestion in the district?—In my opinion there is congestion there; the people are overcrowded. Applecross Ross-shire.

43,742–43. *Mr W. J. Duncan, Solicitor, Dingwall, agent for Lord Middleton.*—Are you able to pay for the stock of a croft?—If I got the croft first, I would endeavour to stock it. Roderick Macbeath.

43,744. Do you get regular employment from Lord Middleton?—Yes, I get labour on the estate.

43,745–46. Have you ever heard of crofters on the estate who wish to give up their hill ground?—I heard that there were some on the other side of the country who did not agree with the other Commission.

43,747. Do you know whether all the farms you referred to—the lands of Borrodale and Langwell and others—were trenched and drained, and brought into a proper state of cultivation by the late Mr Mackenzie of Applecross?—Yes, I know that; and dykes were erected by him also. What he had under cultivation himself he reclaimed in the manner you describe.

DONALD BAIN, Manager at Applecross, for the Right Hon. Lord Middleton (60)—*examined.* Donald Bain.

43,748–49. *Mr Forsyth.*—Have you any general statement to make on behalf of the estate?—Yes; in the first place I should apologise for the absence of Mr Wright, Lord Middleton's factor, who would have been present to-day, but he was unable to make it fit in with his other engagements. My statement is as follows:—

Statement by DONALD BAIN, Manager at Applecross, for the Right Honourable Lord Middleton, with reference to the Estate of Applecross.

I am desired by Lord Middleton to afford the Commission every assistance in my power, in connection with the prosecution of their enquiries; and with that object, and in the unavoidable absence of Mr Wright, his lordship's factor, I beg to submit the following statement.

The estate of Applecross lies in the parish of Applecross and County of Ross and Cromarty. It forms a rocky promontory between Loch-Kishorn on the south and Loch Torridon on the north, and is mountainous and rugged in appearance. It is probably the most inaccessible estate in the county, the road by which it is approached ascending to a height of 2050 feet above the sea level, and being liable to be snow-blocked during several months of the year, when the only access is by sea. A former proprietor expended between £4000 and £5000 in 1825 and 1826 in making this road. The estate contains nearly 72,000 acres, or, deducting foreshores and tidal water, about 70,500 acres.

Roughly speaking, the land appears to be occupied as follows:—

Forest about	37,000 acres
Crofts and small holdings, about	27,500 „
Mansion house, gardens, policies, woods, Home Farm, Hartfield, and grazing in the occupation of the owner, about	6,000 „
	70,500 acres.

The crofters' rents were revised by the Crofters Commission in 1892. The fair rents fixed amount to £466, 4s. 0d., and the arrears cancelled were £1189, 19s. 3d. The fair rents are in arrear to the extent of 33 per cent.

The crofters are chiefly engaged in fishing.

The rents and areas of the lands let (including two small farms) may be thus stated:—

Township or Farm.	No. of Holdings.	Arable Land.	Old Arable.	Common Pasture.	Total Contents.	Rents.
		Ac. ro. po.	Ac. ro. po.		Ac. ro. po.	£ s. d.
Inverbain,	1	2 1 9	4 2 24	1,435	1,441 3 33	18 0 0
Ardheslaig,	10	21 2 6	3 1 8	3,158	3,182 3 14	41 18 0
Kenmore,	6	23 2 21	1 3 8	2,434	2,459 1 29	40 11 0
Arinachrinach,	7	22 – 28	...	1,559	1,592 3 20	24 18 0
Fernbeg,	6	11 2 32	...			9 12 0
Fernmore,	10	22 2 30	...	1,390	1,412 2 30	26 0 0
Cuaig,	10	31 2 35	3 1 –	2,282	2,316 3 35	34 0 0
Kalakill,	9	31 3 31	5 – 28	3,059	3,096 – 19	50 11 0
Lonbain,	11	34 3 8	...	1,164	1,198 3 8	36 6 0
Milltown,	6	17 2 39	9 – 24	595	621 3 23	32 2 0
Camusteel,	12	24 2 13	3 – –	44	71 2 13	15 10 0
Camusterrach,	6	10 2 35	3 2 12	1,153	1,167 1 7	25 8 0
Culduie,	9	20 1 26	...	688	708 1 26	26 19 0
Ardhu,	8	18 3 16	...	285	303 3 16	9 12 0
Poldon,	3	5 – –	1 – 39	169	175 – 39	6 0 0
Callagillie,	4	6 1 20	– 3 20	94	101 1 –	8 0 0
Eilean-na-ba,	1	1 1 –	...	36	37 1 –	1 10 0
Toscaig,	19	26 1 34	3 1 5	2,557	2,586 2 39	55 1 0
Uags,	4	7 – 16	...	1,402	1,409 – 16	15 0 0
Sallacher and Sand (small farm),	1	Not known	...	2,936	2,936 – –	40 0 0
Crowline Island (small farm),	1	do.	...	697	697 – –	34 0 0
Total,		340 3 39	39 1 8	27,137	27,517 1 7	550 18 0

Since the late Lord Middleton purchased the estate of Applecross no lands let to crofters have been taken from them, with the exception of some of the high ground formerly attached to the township of Toscaig. This land was resumed in 1864 at the request of fifteen out of the nineteen tenants, who expressed a strong desire to give up keeping a sheep stock. The rent of the township was at the same time reduced by £16, 4s.

Considerable sums have been expended by the present and the late Lord Middleton in making roads and tracks, building schools and cottages, improving land, and erecting fences for the protection of the crofters' arable land from sheep and deer. Almost all the crofters' lands which are liable to be injured by deer have been protected in this way.

The deer forest is in Lord Middleton's own hands. None of the game is sold, and a great portion of the venison is given in gift to the tenants.

The Home Farm is in Lord Middleton's hands, and contains about 2400 acres, of which 164 acres are arable land under cultivation, and 70 acres are old arable land now in permanent pasture.

The Farm of Hartfield was, at the beginning of the century, occupied by Captain Donald Mackenzie, a member of the family of a former laird of Applecross. It was afterwards tenanted by his daughter, and subsequently passed into the occupation of the proprietor, in whose hands it has been ever since, with the exception of the short period between 1861 and 1863, when it was tenanted by Captain Chisholm, who had been the factor of the Duke of Leeds, a former proprietor. It contains about 53 acres of arable land, and some grazing ground. The arable land is now in permanent grass, and the farm is used as an outrun for the Highland cattle and ponies in connection with the Home Farm. The higher lands now form part of the deer forest.

The small sheep farm of Aridrissach contains about 2500 acres, with between 3 and 4 acres of arable land. A former tenant, who also occupied the farm of Tornapress in Kishorn, gave up the farm in 1861 or 1862, and his stock was taken over by the proprietor by valuation. The farm was then let to an Alexander Maclennan, Mull, at a rent of £35, but this arrangement soon came to an end, and the farm has since been occupied by Lord Middleton and his father as a sheep farm, the sheep being fed for the use of his Lordship's establishments in Applecross and in England. It carries at present a stock of about 300 wedders.

The lower grounds of Russel are used for grazing Highland cattle; the high ground has formed part of the deer forest for a number of years, having been so occupied when the late Lord Middleton purchased the property.

The stock of Highland and other cattle, horses and ponies, on the farms in Lord Middleton's lands, is as follows:—

Breeding cows,	44
Young cattle, including calves,	65
Horses and ponies,	23

The farms cannot winter this stock with their own produce. A considerable quantity of hay and other feeding stuffs has to be purchased annually for this purpose.

The remainder of the estate forms the deer forest of Applecross, the purpose for which it is best suited. It is of a very rugged and mountainous character, the height of the hills ranging from Ben-Clachan on the north coast 2048 feet, to Ben-Bhan near the east boundary 2936 feet, and Meal-Gorm 2325 feet, and Scour Conobhar 1621 feet towards the south, above Aridrissach. There is no arable land in the forest. The rain fall, according to the rain-guage near the gardener's house at Applecross, was 66·44 inches in 1890; 57·46 inches in 1891; 56·63 inches in 1892; and 57·40 inches in 1893. The situation of this gauge is sheltered. On the bare hillsides and in the glens the fall must have been at least 4 inches more. During the winter the deer have to seek food and refuge from storms, to a great extent, on the farms occupied by Lord Middleton.

The estate of Applecross was purchased by the late Lord Middleton, the father of the present proprietor, in 1861; the price paid for it was £78,000. Since then the following large expenditure has been made upon the estate:—

Estate improvements and up-keep for twenty-two years from 31st October 1871,	£24,850	6	5
Farm wages and labour for do.,	8,800	0	0
Foresters' wages for do.,	7,700	0	0
Labour and payments in garden for do.,	6,600	0	0
Contribution to doctor's salary for do.,	1,760	0	0
Parish and county rates for do.,	10,388	3	4
Minister's stipend for do.,	990	0	0
	£61,088	9	9

Applecross, Ross-shire. — Donald Bain.

Brought forward,	£61,088	9	9
New cottages built, and sums expended on Toscaig road and Camus-nan-Eilean track, .	2,887	3	2
Cost of Applecross School less sum repaid by School Board, .	1,000	0	0
Cost of Arinachrinach School, less sum repaid by School Board, .	500	0	0
The accounts containing the expenditure for the ten years preceding 31st October 1871, are not at the moment available, but the expenditure is certainly estimated within the mark when put at an average of the last twenty-two years' expenditure of £61,088, 9s. 9d., or in round figures, .	27,730	0	0
	£93,255	12	11

This expenditure is exclusive of Lord Middleton's household and personal expenses in Applecross.

During the said period of twenty-two years, from 31st October 1871, the rents received from the tenants amounted to £13,200 0 0

During the previous 10 years, say . . . 6,000 0 0

£19,200 0 0

The local rates are heavy, the poor, school, and county rates paid by Lord Middleton during the last three years having been as follows:—

Year.	Poor and School Rates.	County Rates.	Total
1891	£321 0 7	£89 7 6	£410 8 1
1892	321 14 9	70 3 4	391 18 1
1893	377 11 2	79 7 5	456 18 7

In every case, where it has been possible to do so, full advantage has been taken of local labour in carrying out estate improvements and works.

The following servants and workmen are employed on the estate:—

Seven foresters and gamekeepers, in addition to gillies and watchers employed from time to time.

One farm manager, one foreman, three ploughmen, four shepherds and herds, and from five to six labourers on the farms, besides female outworkers employed in squad work.

One head gardener, one foreman gardener, and from four to five labourers in the gardens.

From twelve to eighteen labourers more or less constantly employed on general estate work.

Upwards of £1600 are annually expended on the estate in wages alone.

DOND. BAIN.

APPLECROSS,
6*th July* 1894.

43,750–51. You say in your statement that the crofters' ground is generally fenced off from the deer forest?—All that was troubled with deer.

43,752. Is that by means of high deer fences?—Mostly by means of stone fences with iron on the top, but some by means of iron fences altogether.

43,753. Sufficiently high to keep out deer?—Yes, specially for that purpose.

43,754. You mentioned the total amount of the poor rates. Can you tell us what is the rate per £1 for poor and school rates?—The school rate is 8d. per £1, and the parochial rate 3s. 3d.

43,755–56. That is the whole amount divisible between proprietor and tenant?—Yes, for the present year.

43,757. Has the poor rate been increasing of late years?—Not for the last three years.

43,758–59. Has it been going down?—Yes, a good deal.

43,760. We have noticed that the amount of arable land held by the crofters is very small; it appears to be on an average something about 2 acres each only?—Yes.

43,761. Will that be about the average size of the arable land in a croft here?—From 2 to 2½ acres, I should say.

43,762. Is that because there is not much arable land in the place?—Just so, in each township.

43,763. Is there more land among their holdings which they could take in and make arable?—Yes, in some of the townships.

43,764. Do you think they could improve their circumstances by reclaiming some of their outrun? Would it pay them to do so?—I would say so, in certain places, not upon the whole.

43,765. The outrun is mostly hard black ground, is it not?—Yes, except the low ground.

43,766. *Mr Munro.*—How long have you resided in Applecross, Mr Bain?—For 25 years.

43,767–68. Then you know the people here thoroughly, I suppose?—Thoroughly.

43,769. Do you remember a time when there were more crofters here than there are now?—No.

43,770. Not during your time?—No.

43,771. There have been no evictions during your recollection then?—No, except that a few crofters at Crowlin Islands were brought to the mainland, and their places given to one man. That is the only place I know.

43,772. From your experience, is it your opinion that the estate of Applecross is being devoted to the best use it could be put to at present?—Yes, in many matters I know that for a certainty. It brings more money to the country.

43,773. But, if it brings so much money to the country how is it that the poor rates are so excessive?—They are lower than they have been; I have seen them up to 4s. per £1.

43,774. To what do you attribute the present decrease in the rates?—I am not prepared to say. The poor rate is not so very heavy.

43,775–76. Is it owing to more labour being provided for the people, or is it that the crofters and cottars are becoming more comfortable, or what is it?—They are quite as comfortable as they have been. I can hardly give any definite answer: the rate may creep up again as they fall on the parish; there are so many dying off and not so many coming up. But, as to the real cause of the decrease in the rate, I cannot speak with any certainty.

43,777. Mr Forsyth drew your attention to the fact that the portion of arable land to pasture held by the crofters is very small?—Yes.

43,778. Two to three acres only, you said?—Yes.

43,779. Let me ask you again, is there no land in Applecross that could be given them to increase their arable area?—None, except the land that is stocked by the proprietor.

43,780. But could that land be given to them?—Not without injury to the remainder.

43,781. Supposing they got it, could they cultivate it with advantage and profit to themselves?—Very few would crop it, or provide themselves with houses, I expect.

43,782. Is there any arable land in the vicinity of existing townships?—No unoccupied land.

43,783. Did the crofters complain to you at any time of a want of arable land?—No, I never heard of such: on the contrary, we have had bother with them wanting to be put off the land. They say, we would rather have half a lot than a whole one,—those who are attending to the fishing. There are two or three vacancies at present where they have given up their land.

43,784–85. Could not the land that had been previously occupied by crofters be given back to them?—Well, I think they have all that land, as far as is known to me.

43,786. But some evictions have taken place?—Not within the last sixty years.

43,787. But before that time evictions took place?—That was the time when the Home Farm was improved;

Applecross, Ross-shire. Donald Bain.

it was during the time not of the last Mackenzie but of a former Mackenzie. It was young Thomas Mackenzie who improved the Home Farm.

43,788–89. Do the crofters here follow the fishing as well as cultivating their crofts?—They are more fishermen than crofters.

43,790. Is it your experience that they can cultivate a croft well, and also follow the fishing?—No, and it is their own experience; that is the reason why they don't want much land,—so as not to take up their time from the fishing.

43,791. Then you give it as your experience, and as a result of your communications with the crofters, that they don't want much land, that they could not do justice to more land and follow the fishing too?—No, they could not attend to both.

43,792. Take the case of the cottars, now, who have no land at all; is there no land that you could give them?—None, except off the Home Farm.

43,793–94. Do the cottars follow the fishing too?—There are some cottars who follow the fishing; but, as a rule, they are employed on the estate and on the Home Farm.

43,795. Lord Middleton gives constant work to the cottars?—Constant work, they are never a day without work.

43,796. And it is mainly upon his employment that they depend for their livelihood?—Quite so.

43,797–98. Supposing that Lord Middleton ceased to give them employment, what would happen to them?—Well, they would have to be provided with something else.

43,799. Don't you think it would be a distinct advantage for them to have a bit of land that they could fall back upon at all times for a living?—Oh, certainly, if they had not anything else to depend upon; but when they get regular employment I think they have more wages than they would make by having a bit croft.

43,800. But the regular employment may cease?—Well, it has gone on since the property was bought by the late Lord Middleton.

43,801. Are they generally successful in fishing here?—Just according to the season.

43,802. Could anything be done to improve the fishing here?—Yes.

43,803. What would you suggest?—Steam communication.

43,804. *Mr Maccallum.*—I was much struck with a statement of yours which runs counter altogether to what we hear from people elsewhere. You say that in this place you have bother with people giving up their land?—Yes.

43,805. And that you have several vacancies?—There are three at present.

43,806. Do you say that that is the general feeling of the people here,—that they have too much land?—The fishermen, they don't want very much land. The fishermen and the old widows find it too much for them to cultivate the land.

43,807. How many fishermen have come to you saying that they had too much land?—I am not sure, I think now and again,—there are two at any rate.

43,808. The reason I ask you that is, that we have never had a statement like it. Could you give us the names of these two who came saying they had too much land?—There is one John Gillies in this township, and one Widow John Macleay, and Norman Macdonald, Kenmore: they had too much land.

43,809. They had too much land, and they wished to be relieved of it?—To take the half off.

43,810. Is John Gillies a fisherman?—Yes.

43,811. Did he say that the reason he was giving up the half of the croft was that he could not follow the fishing profitably and have so much land?—Yes, that he could not attend to it properly.

43,812. And he therefore wanted to give it up?—He wanted to give it up.

43,813. Retaining the house and half the croft?—Yes.

43,814. When did this happen?—Last year.

43,815. Did you take over his land?—No, we do not want to break up the crofts; we consider them small enough.

43,816. Is he a successful fisherman?—Yes.

43,817. And his sole reason for giving up this land was that he might devote more of his time to fishing?—Yes, and that he found it difficult to cultivate the whole croft. He and his wife are alone, and he said it was too heavy to cultivate so much.

43,818. What extent of arable land has he?—It is just the run of the township here.

43,819. Two or three acres?—Yes.

43,820. And he wanted it to be reduced to a half?—Yes.

43,821. Would the other people in the township be ready to take over that land?—No, there are none of the crofters in the township that would take it. We could arrange the matter, if they would take it, without putting up another house: we don't want to put up another house.

43,822. Did you offer it to the township?—I am certain there is none of them would take it.

43,823. How can you be certain of that?—Because they are not able to cultivate these.

43,824. How do you know that they cannot cultivate them; is it not rather a strange statement to make, that they could not cultivate two acres?—Because there is only this John Gillies and the other man in the township; all the rest are women. John Gillies and the other man are fishermen, and they don't want to have too much to do with land.

43,825. That seems an altogether exceptional township, does not it?—Well, it may be.

43,826. That is not to be taken as the rule,—that the crofters consider two or three acres too much to cultivate?—Well, I have found the same in other cases. There is another township, called Toscaig, where a few years ago there was a vacancy, and we could not get any of the neighbours to take up the vacancy.

43,827. Are there many such?—Not now; I got one that came from Uags to take it.

43,828. Did you offer it to the township?—Yes, several times, and it was vacant for years before it was taken.

43,829. Are there many crofters in Toscaig?—Yes, there are nineteen of them.

43,830. An offer was made to them of a vacant croft, which they refused to take?—Yes.

43,831. How was this offer made to them?—Just that they should take it along with their own.

43,832. Did you call a meeting of the township?—No, I just spoke to them. There are what we call whole lots and half lots; I offered it to those who had half lots, to take this other half lot.

43,833. Did you offer it individually to every one of them?—Not to every one of them, but it was open to any one of them, and I offered it to a few who, I thought, might take it.

43,834. Did you offer it to those lying contiguous to the croft?—Oh, yes.

43,835. To each of those contiguous to it?—Yes.

43,836. Who are the crofters contiguous to the croft that was vacant?—I think they are William Kennedy and Roderick Macrae.

43,837. You offered it to each of these?—I offered it to William Kennedy, and I offered it to another man there also, whose name has escaped me at present,—it is a good many years since. I then gave it out in pieces for potato ground to the cottars.

43,838. Then do you distinctly give us to understand that there is on this estate a general desire to have their holdings diminished?—Not except in the case of those that I told you of.

43,839. These are exceptional cases, are not they?—It is they that spoke to me about it.

43,840. You are not prepared to say, are you, that among the fishermen here there is a desire that their crofts should be diminished?—Those that I told you.

43,841. But what of the others? Is it a statement which you make about the people in general?—Well, I don't hear them asking for more land.

Applecross, Ross-shire. Donald Bain.

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43,842. But have you any reason to think that they consider their crofts too large?—I hear a good many of them complain of it in the time of cropping.

43,843. I want to have as clear and distinct an understanding about the thing as we can possibly arrive at. Do you think now, that it is the opinion of the fishermen here that their crofts are too large?—The whole of them have not complained to me.

43,844. How many have complained to you?—I gave you the names of those who complained to me last.

43,845. And these are all?—That I remember just now.

43,846. Do you think, then, that the general opinion of the people is that it is a disadvantage to have such crofts as they have here?—Well, they say so,—that it takes up too much of their time, and keeps them back too much from the fishing.

43,847. Two acres of arable land?—Yes.

43,848. You heard the witness, Mr Macbeath, speak of Russel?—Yes.

43,849. Do you consider that a suitable place for fishermen's holdings?—Well, it was never let to crofters; it was a farm formerly, and now it is in his lordship's hands for cattle-rearing, and, of course, being between the sea and the forest, the deer come down in the winter time.

43,850. It is virtually a part of the forest, is it not?—It is not fenced off from the forest.

43,851. Do you think that that place is quite as suitable as the places occupied by the crofters at present for fishermen's lots?—Oh, yes, it would be quite suitable in that respect.

43,852. The principal farm on the estate, I think, is called Hartfield?—Yes.

43,853. Does that farm embrace the best of the land on the estate?—It, and the Home Farm: what we call Borrodale.

43,854. Do you know what stock was on Hartfield when it was in the hands of a tenant?—No, that was before my time.

43,855. You cannot tell what stock was given over, and what stock of cattle was on it?—No.

43,856. But it was a large farm, was it not?—No, it was not so very large. Captain Chisholm was the factor for the Duke of Leeds, and he got this farm. [*Mr Duncan.*—The rent was £160].

43,857. You are unable to give us any idea of the stock it carried?—No, but I might find it out. There are some on the place yet who were at the delivery, and I could find out.

43,858. But it was notoriously a very good farm?—It was a good compact farm of its size.

43,859. Is there any part of that farm now in the deer forest?—Yes, the high land of it.

43,860. Was the sheep stock of Hartfield a very superior stock?—I cannot say.

43,861. Did you never hear that it had a name?—No.

43,862. Then there are about 6000 acres, I think, in the proprietor's hands, farmed?—Yes, counting the outrun.

43,863. And that includes all the best ground on the estate?—It is not all the best; of course, part of it is the best, but it takes in part of the hill as well.

43,864. Now, what is your opinion on this matter; if crofts or small holdings were formed out of Hartfield, giving them perhaps the old grazings, would such holdings be taken up, do you think?—I never heard any desire for it, except what I have heard to-day.

43,865. There are some crofts, I suppose, better than others?—There are some townships better than others: of course, the rents vary accordingly.

43,866. You think it is rather a disadvantage for the fisherman to have a large croft?—I think so.

43,867. And that the crofts here are, on the whole, too large for fishermen?—They complain more themselves. I don't think they are too large, but they consider them too much to cultivate.

43,868. Do you find then, that those who have the large crofts are the least successful fishermen?—No, I don't think so.

43,869. You think that those who have the large crofts are quite as successful as those who have the small?—Those able-bodied men who can manage both the croft and the fishing. Applecross, Ross-shire. Donald Bain.

43,870. That is just what we have been hearing everywhere. But you think it is a decided advantage for a fisherman on the west coast generally to have a croft?—Yes.

43,871. And that he would be under a great disadvantage if he had not one?—Yes, that is quite true.

43,872. In fact, that it is almost impossible for a fisherman to do without it?—Yes.

[Adjourned.]

FIFTY-SECOND SITTING.

STORNOWAY, LEWIS, July 9, 1894.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Present:—

David Brand, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
James Noel Muller Forsyth, Esq.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

Alexander Maclennan, 18 Maravaig, Lochs (56). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.) Alexander Maclennan.

43,873. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

43,874. In what township?—No. 18 Maravaig.

43,875. Your holding, I think, was dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

43,876. And apparently you have two acres arable and five acres of outrun?—Yes.

43,877. Your former rent was £1, 16s. and your fair rent became £1, 5s.?—Yes.

43,878. And you have besides an interest in common pasture extending to 863 acres common to 22 holdings in Maravaig, and you also have the Island of Torraidh in common with the township of Calbost?—Yes.

43,879. I suppose you have no written statement?—No.

43,880. But you are ready to give us some information with regard to the purposes of this Commission. If you have any statement to make we shall be glad to hear it?—It is about the position of the township and how we are situated that I wish to explain to the Commission. There are 23 lots in the township and 40 houses, but only 8 whole lots, the remainder being cut up.

43,881. Are there some lots with two or three families on the lot?—Yes, there are two or three families on some.

43,882. Are there any with as many as four families?—No, not so many in our township.

43,883. Have you a number of cottars attached to the township?—Those who occupy the houses over and above the 23 lots are cottars, but they get a share of the crofts to till them. They get a piece for potato land.

43,884. And many of these have stock of their own?—Yes, they have, more or less.

43,885. Are the occupants of that township much in need of additional land?—Yes, they are very needful of that.

43,886. Is there land available in the vicinity?—Park is the only available land in that district.

43,887. Do you mean the Park forest?—The Park forest.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Alexander Maclennan.

43,888. What kind of land is that?—Land that was formerly inhabited by living men who were comfortably situated when they were there.

43,889. Is it land capable of cultivation?—Yes, they could till it now as formerly.

43,890. How long is it since it was occupied in the way you have mentioned?—Forty-nine or fifty years.

43,891. Do you yourself remember when any part of the land there was occupied?—I recollect seeing the men coming from there with their furniture when they were flitting.

43,892. What was the name of the place they came from?—Eishken and Orasaigh and Leumrabhagh.

43,893. Were there any other evictions except at these places?—At many other places before I was born.

43,894. Can you give me the name of any?—Little Scealadail and Big Scealadail, Airidh-Dhomhnuill-Chaim, and Stromas.

43,895. Any others?—A small township, Caolas-an-Eilein.

43,896. What is the nature of the soil in the locality where these dwellings were?—The soil generally is similar to the ground we till ourselves.

43,897. And is the ground you till for the most part moss?—Part of it is moss.

43,898. And the rest?—Thinner soil and stones.

43,899. Is it a general characteristic of the land in Park forest and the surrounding country that it is moss land?—Yes, but near the sea the soil is thinner.

43,900. But back from the sea, is it for the most part deep moss?—Yes, as you ascend from the sea-shore the moss gets deeper.

43,901. And do you know what is to be found below the moss generally?—There is a great depth of moss in some places.

43,902. Do most of the crofters in your township and the neighbouring townships live partly by fishing?—They have nothing else.

43,903. But for the fishing they could not live there?—No; and the fishing has gone back very much.

43,904. Suppose you had the chance of getting a new croft, would you like to supplement what you get from the croft by means of fishing?—The mind of my township is that if they get a piece of land and fishing along with it they could fish at the same time.

43,905. Am I right in supposing that the view you represent is a desire for additional land with aid from fishing as a means of livelihood?—Yes, they would be quite satisfied with that in my township.

43,906. Now, you said there were 40 houses among the 23 lots. Can you tell me how many houses there were ten years ago?—I would require a little time in order to be accurate.

43,907. But as near an estimate as you can give?—There have been only a few houses added within the last ten years to the township. When I was born, I remember seeing the township with only six lots.

43,908. When you were born there were only six lots?—That is so.

43,909. How long have there been 23 lots?—When the township was lotted by Mr Cameron there were 22 lots formed, in Sir James's time, and one lot has been added since.

43,910. How long was that after Sir James came into the property?—I am not very sure, but Mr Orrock knows. [*Mr Orrock, Chamberlain.*—It would be about the year 1850.]

43,911. Have you a road to your township?—No, never a foot of a road in Park.

43,912. How far are you from a road?—We are nine miles from the nearest road.

43,913. Is there a bridle path?—No, no footpath. There was a small bit formed last year for the school children.

43,914. You have no horses in Lochs?—There are only two horses in the whole parish of Park.

43,915. Is the fishing in the neighbourhood of the townships good fishing as a rule?—Ours is a good fishing township.

43,916. Can you give me an idea of the number of children in your township?—I can tell the number on the whole place, in our own township and in Calbost.

43,917. How many?—Ninety-four.

43,918. Do you pay any rates?—Yes.

43,919. What taxes are levied on you?—Poor rates and road rate. I paid 3s. 7d. of poor rates this year, and 6d. for road money.

43,920. Is 3s. 7d. what you pay in a year for the poor rate?—Yes, 1s. 7d. for County Council.

43,921. *Mr Maccallum.*—Did you go over the Park forest and number the various townships that were there?—There is an old man in the township who was born and brought up at Park, and he told me. There were 34 places where people dwelt at one time, but in some of these there was only one family.

43,922. And do you know what the whole population was?—I cannot tell. In the largest townships there were six lots, but I cannot tell the number of people who lived at Park: that is too far back for my recollection.

43,923. Do you know what was the occasion of their being removed from Park?—In order to make it waste for sheep.

43,924. When was it put under sheep?—One part was made waste for sheep long before the other part, when the Stewarts came.

43,925. Were the Stewarts the first to get land there?—Yes, the Duntulm family.

43,926. When was that?—It is so far back that I cannot remember.

43,927. What was the part that was first cleared?—Valamus, Ceann-na-Carraig, Ceannmhuir, and Ceann-chreanaidh.

43,928. Was there a house erected for the Stewarts?—They had a white house at Valamus, which was the principal house in Park at that time. Eishken or Isginn is the principal house now.

43,929. Then, after that, when was the remainder cleared?—That was when the Leumrabhagh people and the Orasaigh people, were sent away, about 50 years ago.

43,930. How long was it occupied as a sheep farm?—It was subsequently to that under sheep with Mr Sellar and Mr Scobie until it was taken by the present tenant, Mr Platt, as a deer forest.

43,931. When did Mr Platt get it?—He had Park at one time, but left it and returned after two years' absence.

43,932. When were the sheep cleared away?—He had the shooting from Mr Sellar in the first place, and when he returned he occupied it under Lady Matheson, and then the sheep were cleared away seven years, I think, afterwards.

43,933. Do you know what was the rent of it as a sheep farm?—£800 is what Mr Sellar was charged for it, I think, but I am under correction if I am wrong.

43,934. Then, do you know what Mr Platt paid for the shooting he had from Mr Sellar?—Mr Platt spoke to me once at Portree, and told me that one year that Park was waste, the year it was left with Lady Matheson, her ladyship wanted £2000 of rent.

43,935. But what did Mr Platt pay to Mr Sellar before it was cleared of sheep?—Mr Sellar had the grazing of the sheep at Park for nothing; he received as much in sporting rent as he paid for the whole place.

43,936. That means that Mr Platt was paying £800 to him for the shooting?—Yes.

43,937. Do you know what stock he had on the farm?—9000 or 10,000 when it was fully stocked.

43,938. And do you think there were 9000 or 10,000 on it when Mr Platt was paying £800 for the shooting?—I know that when Mr Sellar parted with part of it, he put 9000 or 10,000 sheep upon it, when he parted with it to Lady Matheson.

43,939. When did he put that on?—Lady Matheson was obliged to take the stock, and that number was upon it when he parted with it.

43,940. And at that time Mr Platt had the shooting, I suppose?—Yes.

43,941. Were the old townships situated along the

coast of Park?—Yes, there is only one township, Stromas, that was any distance from the sea.

43,942. Do you think that these townships that were occupied before are all suitable for re-occupation by crofters?—Yes, they would be suitable to-day, and the old men who lived in them say that they would go back.

43,943. This place was not cleared because the people were ill-off, but because it was thought to be suitable for sheep?—Not on account of the poverty of the people; they lived very well there. They were just ejected from there.

43,944. Where did the most of them go?—They were spread among the townships of the island, and a great many of them sent to Crossbost. My grandfather was the greatest part of his time in Park, and he had a good deal of stock there.

43,945. In what township did your grandfather live?—Ceann-creannag near Loch-Bhrollum.

43,946. Is that a suitable place, do you think?—Quite as well as it was, if not better, after all the length of time it was cultivated.

43,947. Where did he go after leaving that place?—He came to Maravaig.

43,948. Did he come to a vacant croft, or was he put in along with the other crofters?—He got a piece of a lot from a relative of his own.

43,949. And built a house for himself?—Yes.

43,950. You know the townships presently occupied by crofters in Lochs. Do you think these are in any way superior to the land in Park?—Not much better; there are some townships in Lochs where the arable land is better.

43,951. What township is that that you consider better?—Crossbost, where there is very good arable land, but they cannot keep stock there in comparison with the stock they had at Park.

43,952. You think the pasture in Park is superior, but there is more arable land in Crossbost?—The grazing is much better and more plentiful at Park.

43,953. Could you mention any other township that you think is better than Park?—Big Scealadail, in Park, is as good as any township in Lochs.

43,954. Then if Park were re-occupied by crofters, would they be suitably situated for fishing?—Yes, it is surrounded by fishermen's townships.

43,955. Would they be more conveniently situated than some of the present townships in Lochs?—Orasaigh and Stiomrabhagh would be better than any township in Lochs for fishing purposes.

43,956. You said that Park was the only land available?—Yes.

43,957. Is there not a large grazing farm anywhere in the parish there?—Not south of Loch-Erisort, except what Mr Roderick Martin has.

43,958. Is the land occupied by Mr Martin suitable for occupation, and would it be desirable that they should have that land?—Stiomrabhagh and Orasaigh are as good as any piece in Park.

43,959. And as good as any place occupied by crofters just now?—Fully as good; the people that were sent away from these places were very sorry to leave.

43,960. You did not refer to Crobeg and Eilean Chalum-Chille; what have you to say about these?—I would leave that with the man who has got it.

43,961. Who has got it?—Mr Roderick Martin.

43,962. Is there good land there?—Yes, good arable land.

43,963. Better than anything the crofters have got?—Yes.

43,964. Were there crofters in these places before?—Not in my day; only two in my day.

43,965. Is Eilean Chalum-Chille cultivated now?—No.

43,966. Are there indications that it was cultivated in former times?—There was a dwelling house, and a family living there.

43,967. Are there not signs of old cultivation almost all over the island?—Yes, the rigs are there, quite numerous through the island.

43,968. Did the crofters apply for Park after it was given up as a sheep farm?—There was a petition sent to Lady Matheson from our township asking her ladyship to give us Orasaigh and Stiomrabhagh. Stornoway, Lewis. — Alexander Maclennan.

43,969. From what townships did that application come?—From Calbost and Maravaig.

43,970. Did you get any reply?—I am not sure of the terms of the letter to-day, but she declined to give them. Her ladyship complained that this letter was not respectful enough. We were not aware of that; we thought it was quite respectful.

43,971. You meant to send a respectful application, I suppose, and to pay a fair rent for the land you applied for?—Yes, our petition was respectful, and we promised to pay a fair rent.

43,972. Was there any reason given for refusing the application except that its terms were not respectful enough?—Nothing else.

43,973. *The Chairman.*—There was an important report made by Mr Alexander Fraser and Mr Malcolm Macneill to Lord Lothian, as Secretary for Scotland, with regard to the cottar population of the Lews in 1888; and to these gentlemen a statement was submitted by Mr William Mackay, then Chamberlain of the Lews: and I think it is important that I should read a passage from that statement to which Mr Mackenzie our Secretary has called my attention. Mr William Mackay there says, 'I produce a history of the Peninsula of Park, as 'far as I have been able to gather it from the records of the 'estate,' and the history he refers to is the following:—

'The parish of Lochs appears to be the most recently 'inhabited parish in the Island of Lews. At the time 'of the first Earl of Seaforth, the whole of what is now 'known as Park was a deer forest, and the tenants or 'crofters of Uig used to graze their cattle in summer, 'or had their sheilings there. Where the Park deer 'raiders encamped for the night is named Airidh-Dhomh-'nuill-Chaim. It has been said that there were crofters 'here, but Donald Cam resided in Uig, and merely 'had a sheiling in Park. Early in the present century 'a company of four gentlemen from Skye took what 'was then known as the farm of Park; one of the 'company was Lachlan Mackinnon of Corry. The 'manager of the farm was a Donald Stewart from Perth-'shire, who subsequently became tenant, and after him 'his two brothers, Alexander and Archibald Stewart, 'who held the farm till 1842, when it was let to 'Walter Scott, Hawick, at a rent of £587. His lease 'terminated in 1857. Thereafter, the farm was let to 'Mitchell Scobie, when the crofters in Stiemervay, 'being in the centre of the farm, were removed to 'Liemervay, which was then part of Park Farm. Mr 'Mitchell Scobie made over his lease to Mr P. P. 'Sellar, whose occupancy terminated at Whitsunday '1883. The farm was then advertised but a tenant 'could not be got for it. It was then advertised as a deer 'forest and let as such to Mr Platt in 1886. Of the 'lands held by Mr Sellar, Seaforthhead and Shieldinish, 'an area of about 5000 acres has been let to six crofters 'at a rent of £51; and Stiemervay and Orinsay con-'taining about 3000 acres, with the Shiant Isles was let 'to Roderick Martin, tenant of Crobeg. Island Ewhart, 'in Loch Shell, was given to the crofters at Liemervay 'without any additional rent being charged.

'The whole area of the peninsula between Loch 'Erisort and Loch Seaforth is 68,000 acres, of which '42,000 acres forms the deer forest of Park, and the 'remainder is under crofters, with the exception of one 'tenant paying over £30 of rent. The farthest back 'rental of Park is that of 1828, though, no doubt, 'there were crofters along the coast in Park previous 'to that date. In 1828 there were eight crofters in 'Shieldinish, fifteen in Eishken. Orinsay was let to a 'Miss Maciver, who is supposed to have had sub-tenants. 'Liemervay and Stiemervay was let to a Roderick 'Nicolson, who was also supposed to have had sub-'tenants; and Park Farm proper was held by Alex-'ander and Archibald Stewart at a rent of £326. The 'Stewarts had this farm for many years previous to '1828. In 1831 there were seven crofters in Shield-'inish, sixteen in Eishken, seventeen in Orinsay, twenty 'in Liemervay, and eight in Stiemervay, and the Stewarts

Stornoway, Lewis. — Alexander Maclennan.

'held the farm of Park. The crofters in Eishken were 'removed in 1843, those in Orinsay and Shieldinish 'in 1838 and Liemervay in 1831,—in all sixty crofters 'that were removed: but this took place previous to 'Sir James Matheson purchasing the estate. It is thus 'impossible to give the destination of the crofters 'removed from Park, but a number of them emigrated. 'Others were sent to Crossbost, in Lochs; 27 were 'sent to Crossbost, which was previously a farm, and 'others were sent to Tong and Tolsta, in the parish of 'Stornoway' [pp. 39–40].

That seems to be a very full account of the number of removals, and of the number of crofters who lived in the townships you have mentioned in former days.

43,974. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—You are a Free Church elder?—Yes.

43,975. Do you know of the crofting townships in the congregational district of Crossbost?—Yes.

43,976. Do you know Cromore?—I know Cromore.

43,977. That is in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

43,978. Do you know how many whole lots are there?—I am not very sure.

43,979. Are most of the crofts sub-divided?—Yes, most of them are.

43,980. Are there more than two families on the most of them?—Yes, three on a great many of them.

43,981. Are there many of them that are undivided?—No, very few.

43,982. Is the number of cottars in Cromore, in your opinion, roughly speaking, as large as the number of crofters in the township?—Fully as large.

43,983. Is it your opinion that if this township and your own had the crofts undivided, and only one family on each croft, the townships could be fairly comfortable?—Yes, they would be in a good position then.

43,984. Supposing the stock of all the cottars in these townships were counted up, would it amount to about as much as the stock of the crofters themselves?—Fully, if not more.

43,985. Now, is there a desire in these townships, even amongst men who are crofters within the meaning of the Act, and who hold only bits of crofts, half crofts or third crofts, that the crofts should be made whole,—that some should go in order that the crofts should be restored to their original size?—Yes, they have that desire, and unless that is done some of them must go away.

43,986. Is it your opinion that they will all disappear unless something is done?—Yes, they are getting more like that every day and falling into poverty.

43,987. Supposing suitable and available lands were found in other parts of the parish, who would go to these lands?—I have in view three classes of men,—first, men who have whole crofts but who do not get the full benefit of their crofts, although they pay for them; next, men who are crofters but who hold only a portion of a croft; and the third class, cottars. In the first place the cottars would leave, and a few that have crofts are thinking that they would be better in Park, and they would gladly leave.

43,988. But is there a desire among those who have full crofts to go to Park?—Yes, and that applies to people who are acquainted with Park, and who are better there than they are at present.

43,989. Do the crofters consider it a hardship to have to pay the rent, however fair it may be, seeing that they do not get the full benefit of the crofts?—Yes, in consequence of the number who are upon the land along with them; but they are quite satisfied with the position in which the Crofters Commission left them.

43,990. Is the complaint, with regard to these, that men who don't pay any rent, either to the estate or to the crofters, have as large a stock as the men who pay rent?—Yes, and they have reason to complain.

43,991. Is sub-division then, in your opinion, a good thing or a bad thing?—Sub-division is not a good thing; but what could be done with poor people? They could not live. The father is obliged to keep his son along with him: 'such pity as a father hath unto his 'children dear.'

43,992. You referred to Crossbost as having the best arable land of all the crofting townships?—Yes.

43,993. Is it as congested as Cromore?—Yes, and more; they are very much crowded at Crossbost.

43,994. Is the congestion in Barnish as serious?—Barnish is in the same position, and it will soon be extinct, unless they will feel sorry for it.

43,995. Is it your opinion that there is enough land in Lochs for all the cottars who have no land at all, and for all the crofters who have only bits of crofts?—It would defy them to get sufficient land; the people who are south of Loch-Erisort would be relieved by the whole available lands in Lochs. [*The Chairman.*—I think what you mean to say is that there is not enough of suitable land for the townships requiring extension on the south side of Loch-Erisort?—It would satisfy those who are landless on the south of the Loch.]

43,996. But are there not on the north side of Loch Erisort, from Aridh-Bhruthaich to Barnish, as many people and as great a congestion as on the south side?—Yes, quite as many.

43,997. Now, do you know of lands in other parishes of the island that, in your opinion, would be suitable for those in Lochs who could not be relieved by the land in Lochs?—Is Aline attached to the parish of Lochs?

43,998. Yes, but is there land in any other parish?—According to the situation of the island, it is so densely populated that all the people of the parish who have no land would require all the available land in the parish.

43,999. Did you say, at a public meeting last Saturday week, that land was promised to you by the M.P. for the county, and that he broke his promise?—I did not say that he broke his promise; but I may say that every one is working to the best of his ability to give us land, and there is not an M.P. about, better than he is.

44,000. Did you attend a public meeting in Calbost a week last Saturday, with the Rev. Donald Maccallum, E.C. minister in the chair?—Yes.

44,001. Did you not there state, addressing the Chairman, that men were coming and promising the people land and breaking their promises, and did not the Chairman ask you to name any man who did it, and did you not name Mr Weir [*Line of examination disallowed*].

44,002. You mentioned one farm in the parish of Lochs that has not been brought under the notice of the Royal Commission. You referred to Aline, the farm or forest of Aline?—Yes.

44,003. Do you know that forest?—Yes.

44,004. From Bowglass at Mol-na-Herradh right on to Airidh-Bhruthaich?—Yes.

44,005. Is the quality of the land, in your opinion, equal to the quality of land in the crofting townships of Park?—There is not a bit in Park better than Aline.

44,006. And is it, in your opinion, suitable also in regard to the fishing industry?—It is not very convenient for fishing, except when the herring come up Loch-Seaforth.

44,007. Was there a good fishing in Loch-Seaforth three years ago?—Yes, a very good fishing.

44,008. In fact, it saved the island that season?—Yes, in a great measure.

44,009. Do you know, personally, the inland crofting township in Park deer forest called Stromas?—Yes.

44,010. What kind of crofts would you make there,—would it be fishing crofts, or crofts of a larger size?—Larger crofts. That is a good place, and I would make larger crofts there because it is not convenient to the sea.

44,011. Have you often travelled through the Park deer forest?—I did, when I had liberty, but we have not liberty now.

44,012. How does the grazing of Park deer forest compare with the grazing of the crofting townships on the south side of Loch-Erisort?—The Park grazing is better; the grazing on the south side of Loch-Erisort is eaten up.

44,013. But is the quality of the grazing in Park deer forest naturally superior to the quality of the grazing in

ornoway, wis.

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all the crofting townships on the south side of the loch?—It is naturally better.

44,014. Is the ground in Park deer forest naturally better for stock than the grazings you have?—The greater part of it is very dry. [*The Chairman.*—Do you mean too dry?—No, it is well watered.]

44,015. There are mountains in Park, and it is better drained?—Yes, there are some good places in Park.

oderick nlayson.

RODERICK FINLAYSON, Maravaig, Lochs, (67). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

44,016. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—It was.

44,017. You had 2 acres of arable land and 2 acres of outrun, with a share in 863 acres of common pasture; the old rent of £2, 1s. was reduced to £1, 6s. by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

44,018. May we take it that you agree with the statements made by MacIennan with regard to your township?—Yes.

44,019. Is there anything special of your own that you would like to tell us?—Nothing, but a little history about Park.

44,020. We have heard very fully about Park already?—That is so, but I resided in Park myself.

44,021. Whereabouts in Park did you reside?—At Bunish, Loch Sealg.

44,022. When did you live there?—I lived there for ten years; I went there as a young boy, when there were six crofters there.

44,023. What became of them?—Some went to America, and others came into the townships of the Lews.

44,024. Were they removed from Bunish?—Yes.

44,025. Who was the landlord at the time?—The Stewarts.

44,026. Do you remember how many years it is since you were removed?—I do not remember.

44,027. Your father would be alive at that time, I suppose?—He was.

44,028. Where did he go to when he left?—He came to Maravaig.

44,029. You had some arable land at Bunish, had you?—Yes, the arable land in that township was very good.

44,030. What rent did your father pay?—I don't know.

44,031. Is it the opinion of the crofters in your township that they would always require to have aid from fishing in order to live on their holdings?—Yes.

44,032. Suppose proposals were made for the removal of some of the crofters of Maravaig, could they leave without assistance?—They would be the better of assistance.

44,033. *Mr Forsyth.*—What size of croft would you require, if you got one in Park, to be self-supporting without assistance from fishing or labour?—Two or three acres.

44,034. Could you live upon that?—I cannot answer that question. I should like to get assistance from the seas.

44,035. I will put it in another way. How much stock would you need to keep in order to live without assistance from the sea or by labour?—I don't know.

44,036. Then is it a fact that a croft of that kind is not contemplated in Lewis at all, and that the people direct their minds to small crofts which are merely homes, they making their living by fishing or otherwise?—Yes, those who are fishermen are of that opinion.

44,037. Do you know of any crofts in Lewis that are large enough for the men to live on without help of any sort?—No.

44,038. Then the fishing is what you need as your assistance?—Yes.

44,039. Would not the greater part of Park forest be too far from the open sea for fishermen's holdings?—Park is surrounded by the sea, and there are anchorages opposite most of the townships.

44,040. But is there not a great deal of the forest far up the lochs, *e.g.*, up Loch Seaforth and at the head of Loch-Sealg, where new townships would be too far away from the open sea for fishing?—No, they can fish all along Loch Sealg.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Roderick Finlayson.

44,041. Supposing you had a croft at the head of Loch-Seaforth, could you ply your avocation as a fisherman?—Not at the head of Loch-Seaforth.

44,042. Supposing your croft was even further up than the shooting-lodge of Aline, could you work from there to the sea?—I am not acquainted with that side of Park.

44,043. You wish to speak only about Loch-Shell or Loch-Sealg?—Yes, and up from Valamus.

44,044. *Mr Maccallum.*—Did you try to make any calculation as to the number of townships that formerly existed in the forest?—There were about 34, more or less.

44,045. Could you yourself point out these 34 townships to the Commissioners on the ground?—Yes, so far as I can go.

44,046. But do you know of 34 yourself?—Yes, with the exception of those that are on Loch-Seaforth side, where I am not so well acquainted.

44,047. Did you make any calculation as to the population of these old townships?—I did not make that up.

44,048. Could you give any idea as to the number of families that could be accommodated in the forest of Park as fishermen's crofts?—No, I would require to go over the townships before I could do that.

44,049. Could places be found there for all the cottars in the parish of Lochs?—It would make a very good clearance of all the cottars in the parish of Lochs.

44,050. What would you do with the inland part of the forest, the hill pasture of it?—When we were there we did not get much advantage from the hill-tops, but sheep and cattle could be put there in summer.

44,051. Do you think the whole pasture in Park forest could be advantageously occupied by the crofters who would be settled along the coast?—I am not sure, but they would take possession of it as far as they got orders.

44,052. But could they advantageously occupy the whole pasture?—Yes, all around.

44,053. Their stock could be pastured on the whole of the forest, is that so?—It was occupied in that way before.

44,054. After occupation in that way do you think the sporting value of Park would be destroyed, or would there still remain a sporting value?—I think it would not injure the sport altogether; I saw it in that way formerly.

44,055. When it was occupied as a sheep farm the sport was valuable, was it not?—Yes.

44,056. And do you think it would be quite as valuable under the crofters as it was under the sheep farmer?—I don't know.

44,057. You don't know of any reason why it should not be quite as valuable?—I cannot say.

MURDO MACKENZIE, Cottar, Grabhir, Lochs (43) —*examined.*

Murdo Mackenzie.

44,058. *The Chairman.*—I understand you are a cottar?—Yes.

44,059. On whose croft do you live?—On my father's croft.

44,060. Did you build a separate house there?—Yes.

44,061. Is it on the holding or on the common?—On the holding.

44,062. When did you build it?—A few years ago; it is a shoemaker's shop that I have.

44,063. But when did you build the house you occupy?—About six years ago.

44,064. Did you get married then?—I was married before.

44,065. Where were you living before?—I was

Stornoway, Lewis. — Murdo Mackenzie.

married the second time; I was along with my good-father in No. 28 Grabhir.

44,066. And now you have a house in your father's holding, and you carry on business as a shoemaker?—Yes.

44,067. Have you a family?—Yes.

44,068. Does your father live on his croft?—Yes.

44,069. Are there any other dwelling-houses besides your father's and your own?—No.

44,070. Do you pay your father a rent?—No.

44,071. Was there not an agreement as to rent between you and him?—No.

44,072. What rent attaches to your father's holding?—He pays 25s. now.

44,073. Is that a rent that was fixed by Commissioner Hosack?—Yes.

44,074. What rent did he pay before?—I think it was 36s. or 40s.

44,075. What is your father's name?—John Mackenzie.

44,076. Have you any land?—No.

44,077. Have you none from your father?—Maybe I get a little, but I have not an inch of my own.

44,078. Are you anxious, if it could be arranged, to leave your father's holding and get a holding elsewhere?—I would be very glad.

44,079. Can you point us to a place where such a holding could be got?—I believe I would not go very far if I could get Oronsay. There are three townships, Crobeg, Oronsay, Stiomrabhagh, and the Shiant Isles, occupied by Roderick Martin.

44,080. What size of holdings would you wish to have?—About the usual going, not less.

44,081. How many acres arable?—I could not say.

44,082. But, if you went to a new holding, I suppose you would still wish to carry on your trade as shoemaker?—Yes, I would try to till the croft too.

44,083. Would you live partly by your trade and partly by your croft?—Yes.

44,084. Could you take such a holding without any assistance?—I would, I think. I know there are poor crofters, but I am as poor as any of them. I know there are some that would require assistance.

44,085. But you think you would not require assistance?—Well, I would chance it. The whole of Park, I think, is good for crofting purposes.

44,086. How many crofters are in Grabhir altogether?—I think there were about forty or forty-one, but the lots were made in 1852.

44,087. How many entire holdings are there in Grabhir at present?—I could not say as to joint-tenants, but there are 44 holdings and 33 cottars and squatters.

44,088. Forty-four people that are tilling land?—Yes, and 33 that have nothing to till.

44,089. But how many crofters' holdings are there?—holdings as originally lotted?—There were 41 originally.

44,090. Have these cottars a good deal of stock?—Not much.

44,091. Some of them have?—Some have a few.

44,092. And does that stock feed on the crofters' ground?—Yes.

44,093. Have they no ground of their own?—No.

44,094. Do these cottars, for the most part, pay a rent either to the crofters or to the estate, or do they pay no rent?—I think they don't pay any rent. [*Mr Orrock, Chamberlain of Lewis.*—Forty-one is the present number of holdings.]

44,095. These cottars, as I understand, have their houses upon the crofters' holdings?—Yes.

44,096. Then most of the holdings have two houses, I suppose?—Yes.

44,097. Have some of them got three houses?—Yes, I think some have three.

44,098. And, in most of these houses it is married people who are living with families?—Yes.

44,099. Can you give me any idea of the number of children in Grabhir, crofters' children and cottars' children altogether? [*Mr Slater.*—There is a population of 389 in the township, old and young; these are the figures for 1891.]

44,100. Is there a general desire among the cottars of Grabhir to get additional land?—I think in Stiomrabhagh and Oronsay they wish to get land; they have suffered in gaol for that end. Stornoway, Lewis. — Murdo Mackenzie.

44,101. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you ascertain what Mr Sellar got for the shootings when he had Park as a grazing farm?—No, I cannot say.

44,102. Do you know if the sporting tenant gets good grouse shooting on the moor of the crofting townships on the south side of Loch-Erisort?—It is very unlikely that he would.

44,103. Do you know whether the sporting tenant gets as good sport—that is for birds, on the common grazing of the crofters as he does on the deer forest?—I think so.

44,104. So that, in that case, supposing crofters were placed along the sea-coast of Park deer forest, the sport, so far as birds are concerned, would be improved?—Yes, undoubtedly; it would not spoil any kind of sport.

44,105. Do you believe that the rent for sport would be as good, putting it along with the fair rent paid by the people, as the rent presently obtained from the sporting tenant alone?—I think so.

KENNETH MACKAY, Cottar, Calbost, Lochs (58). Kenneth Mackay.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

44,106. *The Chairman.*—You are a cottar, I understand?—Yes.

44,107. Whose croft do you live upon?—My father's.

44,108. What is his name?—Malcolm Mackay, No. 7.

44,109. His holding has 2 acres arable, 2 acres outrun, and a share of a common pasture of 1735 acres, divided among the 14 holdings in Calbost. The Calbost crofters have also Eilean-Thorraidh along with the Maravaig people. The old rent of the holding was £2, 6s., reduced by the Crofters Commission to £1, 7s. Do you know how many crofters are in Calbost?—Fourteen.

44,110. How many cottars?—Eighteen.

44,111. Have the cottars stock as well as the crofters?—A little; they have no means of keeping more.

44,112. And they keep it on the crofters' land?—Yes, the few that we have.

44,113. Do the cottars pay any rent?—They are trying to give a little to the crofters, as they can.

44,114. Then, do you give a little to your father?—Yes, I do, as he is bedridden, and 100 years old.

44,115. How much do you give him?—Sometimes 10s., and sometimes £1, just as I can.

44,116. Are you anxious to leave your father's holding if you could get another?—I am.

44,117. Suppose you had the chance of another holding, would the holding you desire be a fisherman's holding, or a holding by which you could live?—A croft that I could fish from, as I have been acquainted with the fishing from my infancy, and I would prefer that now.

44,118. I suppose the same may be said of all the crofters round the Park Forest, that they have been fishermen from their infancy?—That is so.

44,119. Then, do you think it would be preferable that people who required and could get new holdings, should have fishermen's holdings rather than holdings far away from the sea?—In days gone by it was the fishing that kept us alive, and we would gladly take crofts near the sea at present.

44,120. All the crofters at present, I suppose, in that locality, gain part of their livelihood from fishing?—That is so.

44,121. That is the mode of livelihood to which they are accustomed?—Yes.

44,122. Do they depend for their livelihood, for the most part, more upon fishing than upon the crofts?—The fishing is more beneficial; it is the fishing that supports the cottars altogether.

44,123. Are a large number of the crofters and cottars in your district at present on the east coast?—They were all there.

44,124. Is everybody there that can go?—Yes, out of our parish.

44,125. That is the parish of Park?—Yes. [*Mr Macrae.*—The parish of Lochs is divided into three or four congregational districts, and witness probably alludes to the district of Park.]

44,126. Are a great many of the women away as gutters?—Every one that can go to the east coast.

44,127. Is that the usual course followed by the able-bodied men and women at this time of the year, to go to the east coast in a body?—That applies to both male and female.

RODERICK MACKENZIE, Cottar, Calbost, Lochs (45). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

44,128. *The Chairman.* — You are a cottar in Calbost?—Yes.

44,129. Whose croft do you live upon?—I live on No. 4 lot.

44,130. Who is the crofter there?—Norman Mackenzie, my father.

44,131. I see the acreage given in the blue-book is 1 acre, 3 roods, 8 poles arable; 2 roods, 27 poles outrun, share in the common pasture of 1735 acres, and in the island of Torraidh along with Maravaig. The old rent was £3, 11s., and the 'fair rent' is £1, 17s.?—Yes. [*Mr Macrae.*—I may perhaps mention, with a view to the proper understanding of the position of the township of Calbost, that the Crofters Commission visited a portion of the parish of Lochs in 1888, and all the sub-tenants, who lodged applications at that time, were entered as crofters, while the townships south of Erisort were visited subsequently to the case of *Beattie* v. *Livingston*, and, therefore, are not in that position. Therefore, although there are fewer crofters, the number with sub-tenants and cottars is just about the same.]

44,132. How many dwellings are on your father's holding?—Three families, besides my father's; one family and two houses attached.

44,133. How many married couples live on that holding?—Three.

44,134. Are you married?—Yes.

44,135. Then, besides your father and yourself, how many other married people are there?—My sister, who is a widow with children.

44,136. Any one else?—Another brother.

44,137. And is he married?—Yes.

44,138. Have you any children?—Yes.

44,139. Has your sister a family?—Yes.

44,140. And your brother?—Yes.

44,141. So that there are four separate fires in winter?—Yes, or rather three separate fires; my widowed sister lives along with my father.

44,142. How many are in your father's house in winter when they are all at home, including your sister?—Four.

44,143. How many in your home?—Five.

44,144. And how many in your brother's house?—Ten.

44,145. Then there are 19 people living in three dwelling-houses on 2½ acres of land; is that correct?—Yes; there were more than that, but they are gone away.

44,146. How do you all live? Is it mainly by fishing?—Yes.

44,147. And if you got a new holding would it be a fisherman's holding or a small farm you would like?—No matter to me but to get the land.

44,148. Have you in view a holding by which you would live, or a holding where you would depend on the sea mainly?—I would prefer a fisherman's croft, as I was always a fisherman.

44,149. Is your brother a fisherman?—Yes.

44,150. Is he on the east coast just now?—He is fishing in the island at present.

44,151. Is there anybody from the holding at the east coast?—No.

44,152. The rent is 37s., that is less than 2s. each overhead. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?—No. You know our position, and you heard the narrative of the other witnesses.

44,153. And that narrative very fully sets forth what you wish to say?—Yes. [*Mr Slater.*—I may say that the population of the township in 1891 was 197.]

KENNETH MACKENZIE, Habost—*examined.*

44,154. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

44,155. Is your father, Murdo Mackenzie?—Yes.

44,156. He is a crofter with 2 acres arable, and 8 acres outrun, and a share of 1933 acres common to 13 holdings, of which the Commission dealt with 12. His former rent was £3, 17s. and his present rent is £2, 5s. Are you a cottar?—No, I live with my father.

44,157. In the same home with him?—Yes.

44,158. Do you carry on any business of your own?—Yes, I am a merchant.

44,159. You have a shop or store?—Yes.

44,160. Is it a sort of grocery store?—Yes.

44,161. How many dwelling-houses are on your father's holding altogether?—Two.

44,162. Your father occupies one, and who occupies the other?—A widowed sister with five children. There are twelve on the holding altogether.

44,163. What is the main source of livelihood for the holding? How does your father live and your sister?—I support myself; my father is getting very old, and I and a brother of mine and a sister support him.

44,164. But, I suppose, the shop is the mainstay of the holding?—Yes.

44,165. How many holdings are there in Habost?—Thirteen.

44,166. And how many cottars are there?—There are 21 families altogether.

44,167. Do the eight cottars live upon the crofters' holdings?—Yes.

44,168. And have they stock of their own?—They have, more or less.

44,169. Their stock lives upon the crofters' common?—Yes.

44,170. And do they pay any rent?—Very little, if any at all.

44,171. The township of Habost is what is called a congested township, I suppose?—Yes.

44,172. And it would be an advantage if holdings elsewhere could be obtained for all these cottars?—Yes, very much.

44,173. But I suppose it is the case that even if the cottars were removed, the crofters would still have to rely upon the sea to some extent for their livelihood?—Some depend on the land and the stock.

44,174. Which of them do so?—There are some of them who do not go to sea at all.

44,175. Give me the name of a crofter in Habost who does not go to sea?—John Macdonald, Habost, but he is a tradesman.

44,176. Does he live in No. 4, Habost?—Yes.

44,177. What kind of trade does he carry on?—He is a weaver.

44,178. He makes tweeds, does he?—Yes.

44,179. Is there anyone else who lives on his holding?—John Macleod, another weaver.

44,180. Is he in No. 11?—Yes.

44,181. John and Murdo Macleod are weavers?—Yes.

44,182. Are there any other weavers in Habost?—My father is a weaver.

44,183. But, excepting those who have trades of their own, shops or weaving, do the crofters depend upon fishing for their livelihood?—Most of them.

44,184. Is there any other trade carried on except the weaving, and your shop, and the fishing?—Some of them make Harris tweed to support them.

44,185. Do you mean weaving?—No, spinning, that is women's work; that is the only other occupation I can mention.

44,186. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do they keep many boats at Habost?—Very few.

44,187. It is perhaps rather far from the mouth of the loch for fishing?—Yes.

44,188. Then, the kind of fishing that is done is

Stornoway, Lewis. Kenneth Mackenzie.

mostly lobster-fishing, is it, or do they go out to sea much?—They do not follow the lobster-fishing, they cannot get lobsters.

44,189. Then is it mostly going to the east coast as hired hands?—Those that are able to go.

44,190. But they have one or two boats there, have they?—There is not one there just now.

44,191. Then you cannot call it a fishing village except in this way, that the men go out to the east coast as hired hands?—Yes.

44,192. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Do you remember Habost having at one time a fleet of fishing boats?—Yes, I do.

44,193. How many boats were there within your recollection?—Four large boats.

44,194. Are there other townships on Loch-Erisort that were once prosecuting the fishing in that way, but do not prosecute the fishing now?—Yes, a good many.

44,195. Name them?—Balallan, Lacsay, Keose, Seilebost, Cearshader and Gearraidh-a'-Bhaird.

44,196. These six townships prosecuted the fishing in your recollection, but had to give it up?—Yes.

44,197. Each of the townships had a fleet of large boats for the herring-fishing?—Yes, I remember them.

44,198. And there is no boat from these townships now?—None going to sea.

44,199. What is that owing to?—The fishing is such a failure.

44,200. And this year it has been a total failure, I suppose?—A total failure.

44,201. *The Chairman.*—How many years is it since there was a good fishing for these townships?—A good many years ago.

44,202. When was the last good herring fishing?—Two years ago there was good fishing in Stornoway here, but the boats were nearly done about that time.

44,203. They were no use?—No use.

44,204. Is it owing to the continued failure of the fishing that the boats have got into disrepair?—Yes, that is so.

44,205. I mean, of course, in those townships that you have specified?—Yes.

44,206. But, prior to the failure of the fishing, were they in the habit of going to the herring fishing from these townships in large boats?—Yes.

44,207. What keel do you mean by a large boat,—40 feet?—Yes, 40 to 50 feet keel.

44,208. They went away for days at a time?—Yes.

44,209. Or even for weeks?—Yes.

44,210. *Mr Forsyth.*—Is it not the case that there is a great difference now in the prices given by the curers for herring from the prices given in old times? They do not give so much per cran as they used to?—Not at all.

44,211. Has not that a good deal to do with the stoppage of the fishing from these boats, that they cannot make it pay?—I do not think so.

44,212. Is it then chiefly because the herring is not here?—That is my opinion.

44,213. And, if the herring were here, you think that people would keep boats though the prices were low?—I am certain they would.

44,214. *Mr Maccallum.*—In order to the successful prosecution of the fishing, do you think it is desirable that the fishermen should have crofts?—By all means, I think they should have crofts.

44,215. Do you think the working of the croft would seriously interfere with the prosecution of the fishing?—Not at all; those that are going to fish would go, and those who got the land would work the land.

44,216. *Mr Munro.*—Can a crofter who pursues the fishing do justice to both it and his croft?—Not in the case of a large croft, I think.

44,217. Who looks after the crofts when the men go to the east coast to fish?—There is always some one at home, women or girls, and boys, to look after the croft when the man is away.

44,218. In your opinion, then, a crofter cannot cultivate his croft as it ought to be done, and follow the fishing at the same time?—A reasonably-sized croft he could manage, but not a large croft.

Stornoway, Lewis. Kenneth Mackenzie.

44,219. And do you think that any of the crofts in your district are too large for a fisherman?—Not too large; they are all too small.

44,220. *The Chairman.*—Suppose a man lives partly by a holding and partly by the sea, is it your view that the holding should be of a size that would enable him to give almost his whole time to the sea, or would you have him divide his time, half for the holding and half for the fishing?—Well, if there were plenty of land to be got, I would prefer a pretty large croft, so that the man could work all the year round on his croft.

44,221. And not depend on the fishing?—And not depend on the fishing.

44,222. But suppose, on the other hand, that there is not land, or that the man preers fishing to crofting, would he, in your view, be better with a small holding sufficient for potatoes and so forth, and be in a position to devote all his time to the sea?—If he prefers to follow the sea I would think that a small or ordinary holding would suit him better.

44,223. Such a holding, for instance, as we have in these cases, 2 or 3 acres arable?—Yes, or a little larger to give them any support.

44,224. *Mr P. P. Slater, Solicitor, Edinburgh, on behalf of Lady Matheson.*—You mean that a fisherman should have a croft of not less than three acres?—Yes, three acres are too little, in my opinion.

44,225. What size of a croft would you give to every fisherman,—how many arable acres do you think a fisherman should have?—I cannot answer that question: I am not a land surveyor.

44,226. You think three acres too small?—In my opinion, it is.

44,227. *The Chairman.*—Suppose the case of a man who wished to live mainly by the sea, but was to have a croft besides, what size of a croft would you give him?—Two or three acres of a croft, and pasture along with it.

44,228. What stock do you think a fisherman should keep?—As much as he could.

44,229. If he has a croft of three acres, he will keep as much stock as he can winter on three acres?—Yes.

44,230. *Mr Slater.*—Are there no boats fishing from Loch-Erisort at all,—none from Lacsay, for instance?—None.

44,231. Were there none last year?—Two last year.

44,232. They gave it up this year?—There are none at all this year.

Murdo Macleod.

MURDO MACLEOD, Crofter, Habost (43).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

44,233. *The Chairman.*—Is your holding No. 11 Habost?—Yes.

44,234. The tenancy is a joint one, John and Murdo Macleod?—Yes.

44,235. You seem to have 2 acres, 2 roods arable, 16 acres outrun, and a share in 1933 acres common to 13 holdings: the rent was £3, 5s., and is now £2, 4s.?—Yes.

44,236. Are you and your brother weavers?—Yes.

44,237. Is it mainly by weaving that you earn your livelihood?—No.

44,238. How then?—By fishing as well.

44,239. Do you depend mainly upon fishing?—Yes. We put our hand to the three occupations, weaving, fishing, and crofting.

44,240. Having these three strings to your bow, are you able to carry on your undertaking to a profit?—We face the trade that pays us best.

44,241. Is the fishing the best of the three?—Yes, up till now.

44,242. But it is a failure at present?—Yes. I was for 14 years at Peterhead.

44,243. Suppose you had a new holding, a better one than you have, would you like one with which fishing was to be combined, or a holding where you

would have to live entirely by the land?—Land that would keep me all the year round.

44,244. Could you point us to any tract of land that would be suitable for that purpose?—The land that my forefathers had in Park: they did very well with their stock there.

44,245. Whereabouts is that?—At Scealadail: I can show you my forefathers' dwellings there.

44,246. What loch is Scealadail on?—On Loch-Seaforth. My great grandfather was removed from there, and my grandfather also was there.

44,247. *Mr Munro.*—Among your other occupations you say you are a weaver?—Yes, I weave in winter when the weather is bad.

44,248. Where do you get the wool you weave?—From several places: I buy it occasionally.

44,249. If you got land, would you be enabled to raise the wool you require for weaving?—Yes.

44,250. And in that way you could prosecute the weaving to greater advantage?—With double profit.

DONALD MACKAY, Cearshader, Lochs (50) —*examined.*

44,251. *The Chairman.*—Whose croft do you live upon?—My stepmother's, No. 11.

44,252. That is Widow Isabella Mackay?—Yes.

44,253. Her holding is 2 acres arable, and 11 acres outrun, with a share of 1959 acres, common to 13 holdings: her old rent of £2 was reduced to £1, 8s.?—Yes.

44,254. Do you live in a separate dwelling from your mother?—Yes.

44,255. And, I suppose, you are a married man?—Married the second time.

44,256. What family have you altogether?—Three alive.

44,257. And how many persons live in your stepmother's house?—My married brother also lives there.

44,258. What family has he?—One child.

44,259. Are there eight persons then on the croft altogether?—Ten; there is another sister.

44,260. And how many dwelling-houses are on the holding?—Two.

44,261. How is the holding mainly sustained,—by fishing, or crofting, or by trade?—My brother lives mostly by fishing, but I gave up the fishing.

44,262. How do you live now?—I am the post-runner from Laxay to our own township, and I get a little for that.

44,263. How much do you get for that?—Three shillings a week, and so I gave up the fishing.

44,264. How many cottars are in Cearshader?—There were 12 lots in 1852 at the allotment time, and there was one added since. There are 20 dwelling-houses altogether.

44,265. There are 12 or 13 holdings, and 7 or 8 separate houses?—Yes. [*Mr Slater.*—There are 22 separate families, and 103 people altogether in the township.]

44,266. Are there 22 separate dwelling-houses in Cearshader, crofters and cottars?—Not to-day.

44,267. Tell us how many there are as nearly as you can?—Twenty.

44,268. Does any one else live on the holdings, except crofters and cottars?—Only one pauper.

44,269. The cottars have stock of their own, I suppose?—They have a little.

44,270. Their stock graze upon the crofters' land?—Yes.

44,271. Is there a desire in your township of Cearshader to get new holdings?—Yes, with some.

44,272. But is it a general desire, or is it confined to a few?—All the cottars want it, and are very needful of it.

44,273. Does your township subsist mainly by fishing?—No, we are so far inland.

44,274. Then, how is it that you mainly subsist?—There are some who make cloth to sell it, and the little produce that comes out of the croft.

44,275. In how many houses is cloth made?—Six or seven. Stornoway, Lewis.

44,276. Is the wool mainly got from your own sheep, or is it purchased?—They buy the most of it; they have no grazings for their sheep. Donald Mackay.

44,277. Where is the most usual market for the cloth that is made? Is it in the locality, or do you send it further away?—They sell it in Stornoway mostly, to one Donald Maciver, a merchant there.

44,278. Are these sales for cash or for supplies?—More for supplies than for money: sometimes they do not get more than what pays the weaver for it.

44,279. Would it not be better to sell for money and buy your own provisions?—Yes, if we could get that, and if it would pay those that bought the cloth from us.

44,280. Do you ever know how you stand with your sales to the purchaser?—We are always in debt to the merchants.

44,281. And is that a common system in the Lews, that those who make cloth or stuff for sale in Stornoway only dispose of it for supplies and not for cash?—I cannot be sure.

44,282. *Mr Forsyth.*—Do you say that it is too far from the open sea at Cearshader to keep boats?—There were four boats at one time, but since the failure of the fishing they were obliged to give them up. It is not easy to fish from there in winter, as it is so far inland. It is convenient at other times if we had boats to prosecute the fishing.

44,283. As far as I can make out it is four miles from the sea; I have been there, and I have found it pretty clean and clear. Is there any difficulty in getting a boat in or out?—It would be difficult with high winds ahead; but if we had boats to go, we could go.

44,284. Then, if the fishing became more profitable in future years, you might take to it again, perhaps?—It would be easier for us if we got property to enable us to prosecute the fishing, as the property that we had ran out.

44,285. *Mr Munro.*—Is the tweed-making a growing industry in the island?—No.

44,286. What is that owing to?—The want of sheep, and at times it is not easy for us to buy wool.

44,287. I suppose you first of all get in debt to the merchant when you obtain the wool from him, is that so?—Yes. This Maciver that I referred to supplies us at times with wool in the first place.

44,288. Then, if you got sufficient land to enable you to keep sheep, would you be independent of the merchant for your wool supplies?—Yes, we might be.

44,289. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Have you any idea what stock Mr Sellar kept on Park when he had it as a grazing?—Over 8000.

44,290. Was that the number of head of sheep of all kinds?—I am not sure of the exact figure, but it was beyond that.

44,291. And did he keep a stock of Highland cattle besides?—Yes, he kept a few Highland cattle as well.

44,292. Do you know what rent he was paying for the grazing?—I am not sure, but I heard his manager say one day that he was getting more for the shooting than he was paying for the grazing.

44,293. All that land which once carried 10,000 sheep and Highland cattle is now devoted exclusively to deer?—It is.

44,294. And there is no stock now?—Very little to-day.

44,295. *Mr P. P. Slater, Solicitor, Edinburgh, on behalf of Lady Matheson.*—You say that land is now all under deer?—Yes.

44,296. Were not Oronsay, Stiomrabhagh, Shiants, and Seaforth-head all part of Park?—Yes.

44,297. Do you know the extent of Seaforth-head?—No, I do not know the acreage.

44,298. Is it not over 4000 acres?—I cannot say.

44,299. Do you know that there are six crofters on it?—Yes, I know that well.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Donald Mackay.

44,300. They have the whole of Seaforth-head?—Yes, but it is only a small bit.

44,301. You spoke of all that Mr Sellar had as Park Farm, where he kept 10,000 sheep?—Yes.

44,302. But you know that that included Oronsay and Stiomrabhagh and Seaforth-head?—Yes.

44,303. And you know that that is not under deer now?—No, unless they come there without liberty.

44,304. Do you know what stock of sheep Mr Sellar could winter on Seaforth-head?—Not without a little time.

44,305. Do you know that he kept between 300 and 400 head to winter there, and 700 in summer?—Yes, he could winter 300 or 400 there.

44,306. Well, if the six crofters who are there kept the same stock as he had, would they not have plenty of wool for their weaving?—Yes.

44,307. But they are not able to keep that stock at present?—Some of them are able to keep their own share.

44,308. Can you tell us what stock the crofters have on Seaforth-head?—I cannot.

John Maclennan.

JOHN MACLENNAN, Cottar, Balallan, Lochs (37) —*examined.*

44,309. *The Chairman.*—I understand you are a cottar, residing at No. 5 Balallan?—Yes.

44,310. Who is the crofter on that holding?—Widow Isabella Mackay.

44,311. And are you her son-in-law?—Yes.

44,312. The area of her croft seems to be 2 acres, 8 poles arable, 6 acres, 1 rood, 12 poles outrun, and a share in a common of 9903 acres, divided between Balallan and Airidh-Bhruthaich in 83 full shares. The old rent of £3 was reduced to £1, 13s. Have you a separate house from your mother-in-law?—Yes.

44,313. How many houses are on the holding?—Two.

44,314. And how many persons?—I have five of a family, and there are four in the other house.

44,315. Do you carry on any trade?—Yes, I am a weaver.

44,316. How many crofters are in Balallan altogether?—About 64.

44,317. And how many cottars?—I think 28 or 30.

44,318. I suppose most of these have stock?—Yes.

44,319. And they all live on the crofters' holdings?—Yes.

44,320. Paying no rent?—Some of them pay rent.

44,321. Have most of the holdings in Balallan more than one dwelling-house?—Yes.

44,322. And some as many as three or four, perhaps?—Some have three, but I don't know any with four.

44,323. What is the population of Balallan? [*Mr Slater.*—The population is 521.]

44,324. Is there a desire among the crofters and cottars of Balallan to get new holdings?—Yes.

44,325. In your opinion, is there available land near?—Yes.

44,326. In the forest?—Yes.

44,327. Is it moss land, or what kind of land?—Both moss land and good arable land near the shore.

44,328. Is most of the good ground near the shore?—Yes; all along the shore it is good arable ground.

44,329. As you go further into the forest, you get into moss?—It is good grazing ground.

44,330. Yes, but is it capable of growing crops?—Not far into the forest, but along the shore it is.

44,331. Would the persons there be able to remove without assistance?—Yes, a good many.

44,332. Would you yourself?—Yes, I would.

44,333. How do the crofters and cottars of Balallan mostly earn a livelihood?—In different ways.

44,334. In how many houses is weaving carried out?—In five.

44,335. And is spinning carried on in some?—Yes, in some, the women spin the wool before it comes to the weaver.

44,336. Are there a good many who spin in Balallan?—Oh, yes. Stornoway, Lewis.

44,337. What other trades besides spinning and weaving are carried on?—There are tradesmen,—one baker and one blacksmith. John Maclennan.

44,338. Is there a shoemaker?—No.

44,339. Where do they go for their shoes?—To the shops.

44,340. Is there any boat-building?—There are two boat-builders.

44,341. Any other trade?—None that I remember.

44,342. Do they live mainly by fishing, or by their holdings?—Mostly by the holdings.

44,343. How many fishermen are in Balallan?—A few young men go to the east coast as hired men.

44,344. A number are away at the east coast just now?—Yes.

44,345. Are most of the able-bodied men at the east coast at present?—Yes, a good many, but I have seen twice as many, ten years ago.

44,346. Now, does the township depend to a material degree upon fishing, or does it depend mainly upon the stock?—They depend more upon the stock, most of them. Loch Seaforth is very near, and gives great help.

44,347. What help does it give them?—Winter herring.

44,348. It may be depended upon for winter herring?—Yes, but in some years the herrings do not come.

44,349. But they trust a good deal to winter herring fishing in the loch?—Yes.

44,350. If they got new holdings, would it be fishermen's holdings they would like, or small farms?—They would all depend upon the holdings, except when the winter herring come to Loch Seaforth.

44,351. *Mr Munro.*—Did you hear the evidence which some of the other witnesses gave regarding the weaving and spinning industry of the island?—Yes.

44,352. Is that industry on the increase or the decrease in Balallan?—On the decrease.

44,353. What is the cause of its going back?—They are getting more numerous now, and the merchants who bought the stuff are getting over supplied. They cannot continue after their own wool is done, as they cannot afford to buy other wool.

44,354. I understood you to say that the trade is on the decrease, and yet you say that the spinners are becoming more numerous. How is that?—Because there is more industry, and they will all require to be working at it although it is going back.

44,355. And, I suppose, they make more than they can sell in the market?—Yes, and the manufacturers are selling a good deal of it themselves.

44,356. If the people got more land to enable them to keep sheep, would that help them to increase the trade in tweed?—Yes, undoubtedly they would manufacture their own wool at anyrate.

44,357. And in that way would the tweed industry be a valuable supplementary industry to the crofters of the island?—Yes, much more profitable if they had the wool themselves.

44,358. At present, I suppose, you, like others, have to buy your wool?—That is so.

44,359. *Mr Maccallum.*—I think you said there were 64 crofters in Balallan?—Yes, about that number.

44,360. How many of them have got whole crofts? Or do you know how many crofters there were originally,—I suppose there has been some sub-division?—As I understand, there would be about 64 whole crofts.

44,361. Then, has there been any sub-division in the township?—There are some of them sub-divided which have two on each lot. It is not easy for me to tell the number of whole lots; I would require a little time to count them up.

44,362. The number of original lots before they were divided?—They have been sub-dividing them ever since I remember, and it has continued downwards until this day.

44,363. Has there been any recent sub-division of crofts?—I am not aware of any during the last few years.

44,364. Do you know whether any were settled there by the estate after the original lotting of the township?—I cannot say.

44,365. Has there been any land taken from the township and added to any other township?—I have heard that the march was altered between Balallan and Aline; I heard that said, and that a piece was thus taken from Balallan.

44,366. Do you know when that was?—I cannot tell, but I know the piece that was taken.

44,367. How is that piece now occupied?—There is nothing upon it now but moor fowl.

44,368. Would it be suitable as an addition to the grazings of Balallan?—It would: it is just at the march.

44,369. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Would you name the places in Park deer forest, on Loch-Seaforth, where people lived at one time, beginning at the head of the loch and going out?—The first place is Ceannamhuir (Big and Little), then Scealadail (Big and Little), and Keose, Stromas, Brunigil, Ceann-na-Carraig.

44,370. Stromas is inland, I think?—It is not adjacent to the shore, but it is the prettiest township in the whole place.

44,371. Can it be seen from the sea?—No, it cannot be seen until it is reached.

44,372. Is the whole of that coast known to you personally?—Yes, every spot of it.

44,373. And do you know the land to the watershed, to the top of the hills in the centre of Park?—Yes, on both sides.

44,374. Do you know any land occupied by crofters to-day in the parish of Lochs better suited for crofter holdings?—No, for two special reasons.

44,375. Please state the two special reasons?—The hill is more suitable for stock than any place that I know occupied by crofters in the parish of Lochs. Then again Loch-Seaforth is a better loch for winter fishing than any loch in the Lews; and that fishing can be prosecuted there without doing any harm to the working of the croft.

44,376. And it can be prosecuted when the weather outside is pretty bad?—Yes, they shoot their nets there in the evening, and leave them there till next morning.

44,377. Then direct your attention to the land on the Aline side. Is that land suitable?—It is; it is similar to the other both in regard to the grazing and also in regard to the hill grazing. The hill grazing is quite as good, and the arable land there is better than the land in Park.

44,378. Do you know Airidh-Bhruthaich?—Yes, I was born and brought up there.

44,379. Are you aware that Airidh-Bhruthaich is a recent crofting township, built on the pasture of Balallan?—That is so.

44,380. Was that place naturally as suitable for crofters' holdings as Aline or Park?—The people that came there first said that it was a most unlikely place to be tilled,—much more so than any place on either side of Loch Seaforth.

44,381. What was the excuse for putting a crofting township on the common pasture of Balallan?—I heard my father and my grandfather, who were the first to go there, say that they were put there as a crew to ferry people across, there being no road at that time. [*The Chairman.*—It was done, I think, by Mr John Scobie as factor for Sir James Matheson.]

44,382. And they multiplied there?—There were others planted there afterwards.

44,383. And how many holdings are there now?—Sixteen.

44,384. How many families?—Twenty-eight. [*Mr Slater.*—The population of Airidh-Bhruthaich is 1387.]

44,385. *Mr P. P. Slater, Solicitor, Edinburgh, on behalf of Lady Matheson.*—You personally have no knowledge of when Airidh-Bhruthaich was formed?—No.

44,386. You talked of a piece of land being taken from Balallan and given to Aline. Do you know that there was a piece of land got for Balallan from the farm of Valtos?—Yes, but they paid the rent when they got it.

Stornoway, Lewis.

John Maclennan.

44,387. You have talked of weaving. When you were answering the questions about weaving, you did not mean that you only weaved your own wool? I suppose you are a general weaver, and take in the spun wool from others and weave it?—Yes, I take in the thread that is made outside.

44,388. And what you mean by saying the weaving is going down, is that it has become less profitable because there are so many now engaged in it?—Yes. It is quite as profitable to the weavers but not to the spinners.

44,389. It is quite as good for you, but worse for the people who produce it?—Yes.

44,390. Then, if there were more weaving going on, it would be still less profitable, would it not?—If they were too numerous it would not be so profitable; but although there were a few more, it would not affect the present weaving.

44,391. But if weaving were more general it would not be so profitable?—No.

44,392. Is it a fact that at present they would be unable to dispose of what they produce if it were not for Mrs Platt buying a great quantity of it?—For the last two years Mrs Platt has not bought much, but previously she bought large quantities.

44,393. When did you go to this croft, No. 3?—Nine years ago.

44,394. And when did you build this separate house?—It was built before I went there, but I enlarged it.

44,395. When did you enlarge it?—About that time, or very soon after.

44,396. You lived with your mother-in-law for a long time, did you not?—No, I went out and in to this house that is alongside.

MALCOLM SMITH, Cottar, Balallan (42)—*examined.*

Malcolm Smith.

44,397. *The Chairman.*—Do you live on No. 42 Balallan?—Yes.

44,398. Is that your father's croft, or whose?—My brother's.

44,399. I see it has 2 acres, 2 roods, 7 poles arable, 3 acres, 31 poles outrun, and a share in a common of 9903 acres. The old rent was £3, 6s., and the present rent is £1, 16s. How many houses are on the lot?—Three.

44,400. Your father-in-law, yourself, and your brother?—No; my mother, my brother, and I.

44,401. How many individuals, men, women, and children, are on the holding?—About 13.

44,402. Do you live mainly by the fishing?—No, not to-day, but by labour.

44,403. Do you get labouring work down there?—Sometimes.

44,404. Where do you get it?—Working at houses and other new things that may turn up.

44,405. Do you mean doing work for crofters?—Yes.

44,406. How does your brother make a living?—Just as I do.

44,407. Do you wish to get a new holding?—Yes.

44,408. Could you take a holding without getting assistance?—I would try as far as I could.

44,409. Do the crofters of Balallan depend upon the fishing for a livelihood or upon their stock?—On their stock: there is very little coming from the fishing to-day.

44,410. Then, supposing they had an extension of grazings, could they easily put an additional stock on these grazings?—Some of them could.

44,411. Could you yourself?—Yes, a few.

44,412. What stock have you yourself just now?—I have one cow and 15 or 16 sheep.

44,413. Have you any stirks or heifers?—No.

44,414. Does that stock feed upon the crofters' land?—Yes.

44,415. And you pay no rent?—Yes, I pay the fourth share of my father's rent.

44,416. What part of the croft have you?—I have the fourth part.

44,417. What stock has your father got?—My father is dead.

44,418. Is your mother living?—Yes, she has one cow, but my mother takes nothing to do with the croft; my brother and I work the croft for her.

44,419. What stock has your brother got?—One cow, one three-year old, and two one-year olds.

44,420. And how many sheep?—Eight or nine.

44,421. Is he a cottar also?—No; he is the crofter.

44,422. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—What does Balallan need most,—is it an extension of grazing or the removal of some of the people out of the place?—Some of them to leave for another place.

44,423. Do you believe that if there were only one family for each croft the people would be able to live fairly comfortably?—In some crofts where there is only one family they could live pretty well. [*The Chairman.*—Would you say that of the minority of the crofts or the majority?—Most of them.]

44,424. Supposing such a number of the people were removed as would leave a full croft for each family that remained, would that make the township fairly comfortable?—Yes.

44,425. What lands do those in Balallan and in Airidh-Bhruthaich look to for relief from the congestion?—Park and Aline: these are the nearest lands to us.

44,426. Are these the lands that every township in the parish looks to for relief?—I think so, including Oronsay and Stiomrabhagh.

REV. DONALD MACCALLUM, Minister of the Parish of Lochs (44)—*examined.*

44,427. *The Chairman.*—How long have you been in the parish of Lochs?—For five years.

44,428. Have you a written statement to submit?—Yes.

44,429. We shall be obliged by your reading it.

Statement on lordism and waste lands submitted to the Royal Commission by Donald Maccallum, Minister of Lochs, Lewis.

Before bringing before you the evidence most directly relevant to your inquiry, I wish, with your permission, to make a general statement as to the causes that operated in bringing about the present grievous condition of the great mass of the people in relation to their occupancy of the land. The gist of the evidence I submit to you is that there is a great amount of land waste in this parish, and at the same time that the various townships are greatly congested — that the remedy to which the people look is permission for the cottars to reoccupy every inch of the land in the forests and large farms on equitable terms.

Great evils have necessarily resulted from the fact that land, lake, river, and estuary are appropriated to the sole use, and regulated by the will of a few irresponsible individuals styled by themselves and others as lords.

The right of the people, freely and equitably to use the land and the water, was wholly ignored by the legislature till the Crofters Act recognised it so far as present crofts are concerned. And the principal evils under which the people suffer are directly traceable to the system of absolute lordism that previously prevailed.

Since I became a preacher of the truth, I have endeavoured to find out how my countrymen were situated, what are their rights, in how far have they been deprived of them, the best means of preserving them the rights still left them, and of restoring them those they have lost. In disseminating the truths I have learned regarding the usurpation of the people's rights by the lords, and the people's miserable condition, I have laboured to the utmost capacity of my time, strength, and substance. For some of my words and deeds, at the hands of the powers that be I have suffered much—persecution and imprisonment. I am often denied the common civilities of civilised society. In offering my hand to a brother clergyman I am often repulsed with the taunt 'I shake hands with gentlemen only.' Often by an old acquaintance I have been regarded as thin invisible air.

In regard to the temporal right of the people and the evils of lordism the learned are profoundly ignorant and the unlettered are deeply apathetic. The most exasperating nonsense is often spoken and written on these subjects. The fashion is to glorify lordism as a divinely appointed system of which it would be sacrilege but to speak or write but in praise, lordism being considered beyond criticism. On the question of the people's rights the fashion is to pour forth the most scathing contumely and sarcasm ingenuity can invent, as an ugly monster brought forth by the addled brain of the demagogue.

Every man has a right, natural, and God-given, to the earth and its fulness—its fulness of light, air, and water, of vegetation and fruit, of beast, birds, and fishes, of metals and minerals. A nation, which by its laws and armed forces, deprives its people of their right to a share of the earth and its fulness is using its acumen and its power to hasten its own utter extinction. Certainly there should be land laws, not laws such as ours, whose chief end is to deprive the nation of its land with all its benefits, and to assist those to whom it is given to retain absolute and undisturbed possession of it, but laws such as reason teaches and the word of God approves, whose chief end would be to give every man his own share of the earth and its benefits, and to compel each to make a proper use of his share.

I believe the lords of the Highlands think that I condemn none but the rulers of the land for the grabbing of the land and its benefits by them, and for reducing the people to the condition of a conquered nation. The fact is I consider the people who allowed the land to be grabbed by so-called lords even more guilty than those who grabbed it. The answer which Naboth gave to Ahab when he asked him to give him his vineyard for its value in money, or for a better vineyard, should have been given by our fore-fathers to each lordling who coveted and would take their lands, not for payment nor for better lands, but as their spoil as the conquerors of the people.—'God forbid that we should 'give you the inheritance of our fathers.' There will be no prosperity till the people get the use of the land and water.

The lords who first sold the land had no right to do so, and therefore the lords who bought the land are not the owners thereof. That which a man has no right to sell cannot become the property of the man who buys it. Not only have the lords, who at present possess the land, no right to compensation for restoring the use of it to the people, but the people are entitled to payment from the lords for having so long held possession of their rights—not that the wholesale destruction of life and property, effected by the lords' grabbing and holding the land and its benefits, can ever be compensated.

The people of this nation regard with superstitious awe the possessors of its soil—the lords. They would like liberty to use the land, but they will not take upon themselves to ask but for very little bits — small holdings. They will not be so bold as to ask these but for a very small section—labourers. To show their humility they will promise to pay three times their value for these little bits. That they may not detract from the beauty of the scenery around the castles of their idols, they will only take these little bits in, out of the very corners. In short, they will only ask for little bits of comparatively worthless land, for a few people, if it will be the will and pleasure of the lords of the soil to grant them, on most exorbitant terms. They would like sometimes to reclaim pieces of land from the sea, but they will not take upon themselves to do so without the consent of the lord of the land, who will only grant leave on their binding themselves, and those who will be allowed to inhabit the land after them, to pay to him an enormous yearly tax. The reverence of the people of this nation towards the possessors of the

noway, is.

Donald callum.

soil, in my estimation, borders on superstition. The people of this nation would like to have leave to climb its mountains, but they fear the lords too much to ask leave to do so but for a few of their number—painters, invalids, and geologists. Of course they will only ask leave for these to climb but at certain stated times of the year, and only a few of the mountains will be scheduled as available for the purpose.

The Highlanders call the land they love—"Tir nan gleann, 's nam beann, 's nan gaisgeach." It is now more properly described as—"Tir na cain, a' mhail, 's nan Sas'-nach." It is not enough for the Highlanders to be the slaves of the lords at home—in the land which was once their fathers'. When their idols continue maltreating them till they must run away with their lives, in the land of their pilgrimage you will find them hiring town-halls where they may glorify their lords without fear, being far from their jurisdiction. On the cards, calling the expatriated Gaels to their yearly chief festival, will be printed this magnificent misnomer—'Tir nan gleann, 'nam beann, 's nan gaisgeach.'

Lordism impoverishes the land. The wealth that is earned on sea and land, instead of being used in rearing the families of those who earn it, is spent in providing luxuries for idle lords. The destitution and the plague which follow in the wake of this usurper lift up their voices against it and condemn it. Lordism devastates the land. The people, weakened and impoverished by landlord exactions are unable to do full justice to the land or the fishing. Owing to the enormous amount of rack rent and violent profits claimed and exacted by the lords for allowing their fellow-men to cultivate the land, through time, the cultivators must starve or give up the struggle. On the face of the deserted villages, once the happy homes of the free and the brave, now lying in silent desolation, we read:—The scourge of lordism has passed over us. I never heard of any creature having a swallowing capacity equal to that of lordism. The cattle and the ears of corn which Pharaoh saw in his dream come nearest to it.

Parliament thinks it has done great things for the Highlands in the new laws it has enacted within recent years. It has not done so much as it thinks. It is better to revoke one bad law than to enact many good ones. The old laws are the old rotten clothes, and the new laws are little pieces of good cloth sewn on the old clothes which make the rent worse. Owing to this being overlooked by Parliament, we have to bear the burdens of two kinds of government—Aristocratic and Democratic, without getting the benefit of either.

Lordism is a curse to the lords themselves. If the lords think it is not as their best friend I would ask the lands devastated by them and held in their possession, to be given to be cultivated and inhabited by the people they are very much mistaken. This is what the prophet declares—'Woe unto them that join house to 'house, and add field to field, till there be no room left, 'that they may live alone in the midst of the earth.' In the deer forests and waste lands held by the lords are there not fields added to fields? To make warm the great hearth of the shooting lodge were there not many made cold? The lords have no reason to thank the ministers, who, in order to enjoy their support and friendship, will not declare the truth in all its fulness.

Lordism only wants time and opportunity to appropriate every right and privilege capable of appropriation possessed by the people. It is not more reasonable and just that all fish found in lake, river, and estuary should be the property of the lords, than that all fish found in loch, sound, and ocean, should be their property. It is not more just and reasonable that men should be imprisoned for catching a salmon than that they should be imprisoned for catching a herring. Let lordism go on unchecked on its conquering career, and this is a sample of what will happen. All the fishing banks in the ocean will be appropriated by it. War vessels will be equipped and appointed to guard them from human poachers. Sea constables, fiscals, and sheriffs, will be appointed and paid enormous salaries—to be provided by the people—to arrest, prosecute, and punish any one who will dare to put a net or hook in loch, sound, or ocean, without the consent of the sea-lords, who will let the fishing-banks to sea-bank farmers for rack rents and violent profits. Just as you will now find landlords calling themselves by the names of parishes, districts, counties, nations, you will find the sea-lords calling themselves by the names of lochs, sounds, bays, seas, oceans. Just as now there are landlords who sign their names—Lochiel, Sutherland, Argyle, Wales, there will be sea-lords who will sign their names—Little Minch, Lochourn, Great Minch, Atlantic Ocean. Both sets of assumed names are equally reasonable or unreasonable. Or, rather, they are equally vain-glorious and audacious. The reason why the lochs, sounds and oceans are not already appropriated by sea-lords and guarded by sea-officials, appointed and paid by the people from inroads by themselves, is that lordism has not yet had time and favourable conditions to flourish and ripen to the full extent of its magnitude and fruitfulness.

Stornoway. Lewis. Rev. Donald Maccallum.

If, in the course of time, lordism will be able to grab them and to hold them in their possession, the light of the sun will be sold for so much per ray, the water for so much per drop, and the air for so much per breath. If these blessings are free it is in spite of lordism. It is quite as just and reasonable that the lords should own the light, the air and the water, as that they should own the soil of this globe. The fact is, the lords have already, to a very great extent, appropriated them. The sun that shines on the faces of the Highland mountains, the breezes that blow around them, the lakes that glitter in their bosoms, the streams that trickle down their rugged sides, the lords own. Just try to partake of yon light, and air, and water, and you will find for your foolhardiness in the prison cell, the faintest light, the poorest water, and the rankest air, measured out to you in very small quantities. We asked leave of the proprietrix of this island to enjoy the sunlight in a walk through the waste lands of Aline, and her factor wrote us to say that her ladyship declined to grant us leave to do so. I have seen the road from crofter townships to the harbour cut across with a trench. I have seen landing-places to their shores blocked with stones.

We do not expect to see lordism abolished, but we hope to see it greatly modified and weakened. I wish to point out to you some of the things we hope to see accomplished even under the kings, commonly called lords. We hope to see the lands laid waste by lord-usurpation and greed, inhabited and cultivated by the sons of those who were cleared off them, and are now confined on the barren rocks of the sea-shore. It is a most disgraceful state of matters that while, in this parish, there are good lands lying uncultivated, there are many landless cottars able and willing to work them for the support of their families. There will be no disputes between the townships of this parish as to who should get possession of the different lands we will point out to you as suitable for cultivation. We have made arrangements by which each township shall apply only for the lands allotted to them by common consent. Generally speaking, each township will apply for the lands from which their fathers were evicted.

If we must always see the rent spent unprofitably on luxurious idleness, we hope to see Government more keenly guarding its exaction. "Fair rent" may be an improvement on "rack rent," but the term "fair rent" is an absurdity, unworthy of the intelligence of this nation. If it means anything definite it is this:—something that will keep the lords in style and luxury becoming their exalted station, and that will make it worth their while paying a factor and his underlings to hold a rent collection twice a year. "Fair rent," means nothing more definite than this—something like the thing. Rent is the amount of money realised on a croft, after deducting the value of the seed sown, of the manure used, of the labour expended on the croft, of the food given to cattle other than what the croft produced, and of the interest of the money invested. Even as things are, a lord who would take the profit of crofts, when there would be a profit, should make up to the crofters the deficiency when their working would entail a loss. In other

Stornoway, Lewis.

Rev. Donald Maccallum.

words, the profit of good years should go to make up the deficiency of bad ones. The profit of the years of plenty should be used in feeding the people during years of famine. I do not know of a more humiliating spectacle than to see a lord, after pocketing and spending the profit of an estate for years, asking the people of the nation to provide his tenants with food when the strict exacting of his rent causes them to be starving. There is a certain lord whom the Highlanders glorify as the most generous of the race, because some old men tell that, in the remote ages of antiquity, an ancestor of his in a year of famine, instead of exacting the rent, gave to his tenants a little meal for making roads around his castle.

It may be that the lands we will show you are not so good as the lands of the mainland; yet they are better than the lands at present cultivated by the crofters. It is because that is so that the lords coveted them and cleared them of human beings to make room for their sheep and deer. Though it is quite true that it is not by the produce of the crofts alone the men of Lewis are reared, yet, with the help it gives them, on these crofts are reared men and women, who, in perfection of physical and mental qualities, are not inferior to any at home or abroad. 'Feuch an laodh's na feuch a 'chuid.' Giving the lands we will show you to the Lewismen to be cultivated will be adding considerably to the strength and goodliness of the nation, as well as to the wealth derived from the produce of sea and land.

It will be said that the high rent, which the proprietrix of this island gets for the deer forest, is better for the parish of Lochs than that the people should have the lands of the deer forest for their own use, seeing she gives so much per pound sterling to feed and clothe the hungry and starving. The fact is this—the thing that, in this case, helps to sustain the poor is the very thing that causes their poverty. That is, the laying waste of fertile fields and fruitful valleys in order to get exorbitant rents for them. The lords, in clearing the people off the best lands to convert them into slaughter fields for the art and practice of artistic killing of beast and birds, pauperises the people. When the poor law compels the lords to contribute so much for the support of the poor, they will say to the world—'See and bear 'witness for us. If we cannot get high rents for our 'deer forests we cannot support the poor. Let the nation 'support them or let them starve. The addled-brained 'agitators who hold that deer forests should be abolished 'must admit that they wish the people to starve.' In this lordism is a great house-breaker and cattle-lifter who, after taking away everything the people possessed, comes back with a few bolls of meal, a few shirts and blankets, and calls all men to witness that it is the greatest benefactor of the race—that, without its assistance, the people would starve with cold and hunger—that it is the duty of all men to support and strengthen lordism.

(Signed) DONALD MACCALLUM.

44,430. That is the written statement which I have prepared for the Commission, embodying, as I take it, more or less, the aspirations of the people. It may be strong language that I use; it is not stronger than I feel. I thank the Commission for listening to my paper, and I hope that they will see it embodied in the report which they will present.

44,431. *Mr Forsyth.*—I see that your opinion, so far as I can gather from your statement, is that, to begin with, at least, it would be desirable to give the crofters the whole land on the island which is not occupied by them at present; is that so?—No, I would not take the Home Farm, for instance; I would leave to the proprietor or proprietrix of the island what would be a reasonable amount of land for a home farm; and small farms I would not at all think of breaking up.

44,432. There are not many small farms?—Not many.

44,433. Speaking generally, you have to deal with a very large number of crofters, and with several large farms, and two or three deer forests,—is that, roughly speaking, the state of matters in the island?—Yes. The deer forests are those of Aline and Park, and the small forest of Arnish.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Rev. Donald Maccallum.

44,434. Then, do you think that, assuming that were done, it would relieve the congestion of the Lews?—Oh no, but it would go a good way.

44,435. The evidence we have got from the various delegates to-day rather points to crofts handy to harbours for fishing, as their idea of what is most suitable for them. Is that not the case?—Yes, that is the case.

44,436. They do not seem, so far, to have a great idea of what we have heard so much of in the mainland,—the small farm or large self-sustaining croft?—I believe that the limited amount of land available in the Lews explains why they don't look so much to large farms; the land is so very limited, compared with the number of people, that they intuitively see that it would be absurd that they should ask for a large piece for each.

44,437. Simply because they are not to be had?—They are not to be had.

44,438. And the amount of arable land, I think I am correct in saying, is very small compared to the rough black hill grazing?—Very small.

44,439. And also that it is broken stony land, which almost requires to be cultivated in lazy-beds, even where it is not deep peat moss?—That is so.

44,440. Then, naturally, the people turn to fishermen's holdings?—Yes.

44,441. Assuming that to be the case, have you any remedy to suggest for this great population, seeing that the land would not carry them all?—What I would suggest would be to use the land not at present cultivated, by giving it to cottars so far as it would go; and what would become of the rest would be a subsequent question. I believe that, in a number of years hence, the young men will leave the island of their own accord. Education now is very much more advanced than it was a few years ago, and I find that lads, up to twenty years of age, leave more readily than men above that age. I quite believe that continuing to give them good education would of itself work out the problem. They will not take kindly to emigration so long as they see lands here to which they look.

44,442. You think, then, that the time may come when there will be a turning-point in the increase of population?—Yes, I am very strongly of that opinion.

44,443. But you think that would not happen until the whole lands available in the island were occupied?—Well, I believe that education would open up a way for them, but they would not so readily take it so long as they see the land unoccupied; that would be an obstacle in the way. But I quite believe that, even although the land was not all given, they would in process of time go away.

44,444. And do you think the interval of time from now onward, until the people learnt that the surplus population must move, could be tided over without disaster?—I think so, by giving them the lands now. That is my opinion.

44,445. Would not one or two more seasons of bad herring fishing and low prices be a very serious tax on their resources?—Yes, certainly.

44,446. I presume you do not consider that their condition is at present very satisfactory?—It is far from being satisfactory.

44,447. They have great difficulty in making ends meet, owing to the partial failure of the herring fishing and the low prices for stock?—Yes.

44,448. But, with reference to the evil (if it be an evil, and I think we must agree that it is) of a large population and small means, you have no anticipation that that would increase so much as to become unbearable during the next few years?—No, if Government were to take steps to give them this land, it would make them more willing to do the best they could themselves.

44,449. A great part of this land is far away from sea and harbour,—you will know that, of course, from your knowledge of the country?—Yes.

44,450. And, assuming that fishermen's holdings convenient to a harbour for the open sea were provided, it would supply a very large number, would it?—No, it would not supply a great number.

44,451. Then you are looking rather to the moral effect which would be produced, when all has been done which could reasonably be done?—Exactly; I put very great stress on that.

44,452. And the people having seen that, would they begin to turn their eyes to other sources of livelihood outside the island?—That is my strong belief.

44,453. *Mr Munro.*—How long have you lived in the island?—Five years.

44,454. And, during that time, I take it that you have become thoroughly familiar with the wants and wishes of the people?—As thoroughly as I could; I have always tried to find out their desires.

44,455. So far as your experience goes, is there really what is called a 'land-hunger' in the islands?—Not to the extent of desiring to own the crofts and live by them, but to the extent of wishing a holding that would help them in the fishing. They wish to have enough land to keep them going during the time when they are not fishing, and to provide their families with milk and other necessaries for the bringing up of their children.

44,456. Do I understand you to mean that they would elect to follow the fishing as a staple industry, and have a lot of land merely to supplement their income from the fishing?—That is so.

44,457. The population of Lewis is close upon 30,000, is it not?—I believe so.

44,458. Now, supposing that the whole island of Lewis were divided according to your ideas of division, would there be sufficient to sustain that population on the island?—Oh, no, not at all; but it would assist a great many in the way of giving them little crofts to help them as fishermen. It would go a long way, but not all the way.

44,459. Then, is it your view, with all your kindly feelings towards the crofters, that their only remedy, to a certain extent, lies in the direction of emigration?—Voluntary emigration. The remedy is, in my opinion, to equip them with education and prosperity, so far as they can be made prosperous.

44,460. Either emigration or migration?—I do not think migration is practicable.

44,461. But you are perfectly clear that the island could not maintain the present population comfortably?—Not comfortably.

44,462. In your paper I observed that you made some reference to what is called a 'fair rent'?—Yes.

44,463. And I understood you rather to deprecate what is called 'fair rent,' according to the modern definition of that term; am I right in that?—It is a tautological term; 'rent' alone is the word. What is not a *fair* rent is an immoral exaction,—an impossibility, in fact, for any man to exact in name of law.

44,464. On what principle then would you arrange that rents should be exacted from crofters?—By the sworn evidence of the crofters as to the amount of seed used, and the value of the seed sown, and the amount of labour expended, and as to the profit realised. Deducting the cost from the profit, I would call the difference *rent*.

44,465. Does that mean the establishment of another kind of Law Court?—Oh, no. I would instruct —that is to say supposing I had authority to do so,—I would instruct the Crofters Commission to ask the people what they spent in providing seed and manure, and how much they should be paid in daily wages for working the croft; and then I would ask them what was the profit of the croft; and I would deduct what they spent from what they realised.

44,466. Does that involve any change in the existing machinery for fixing rent?—No. But I would not at all like it to be thought that I find fault with the rent laid on the crofters; I wish to guard against that being thought. Although, theoretically, I hold rent to be what I have defined, I do not say so to find fault with the amount of rent laid on crofters; but I say that this is the proper way of finding it out.

44,467. But I suppose you come here to-day to say that there is plenty land in the island that would go to a large extent to modify the existing conditions of the crofters?—Oh, yes, that is so.

44,468. You could give no rough idea of the extent of it?—No.

44,469. *The Chairman.*—I gather from the views you have expressed, that if holdings were formed in the Lews which might be called self-sustaining holdings, these would not be readily taken up by Lewis crofters?—No, they would block the way: there is not sufficient room for that class of holding.

44,470. And probably you are also of opinion that the Lewsman is not a man who would readily take to such a holding?—That is my opinion.

44,471. Are you of opinion that considerable tracts of the land in the Lews are not capable of cultivation to profit by anybody?—Yes, I have no doubt of it.

44,472. Large tracts of moss land?—Deep moss.

44,473. Deep moss, and peat hags, and stoney lands that are utterly incapable of cultivation to profit?—Yes, that is so.

44,474. Or even being used for grazing purposes?—I do not think there is much of it but what could be realised for grazing purposes.

44,475. But there is some of it of very little value even for that?—Yes.

44,476. You spoke of migration. Suppose the Lewisman came to be satisfied that everything had been done that could be done within the limits of the island, would he not be disposed, if facilities were afforded, to migrate to any other land?—It was not from the Lewsman's point of view that I answered the question in the way I did, but rather from the mainlander's point of view, for I think that if the people on the mainland were dispersed over the land, there would be little enough for themselves.

44,477. And do you think the mainlander would be disposed to object to the settling of the Lewsman near him?—I don't know if he would object, but I think he would require all the land for himself.

44,478. Any available land there, could be occupied by himself?—I believe so.

44,479. Then, in the case of the Lewsmen being satisfied that everything had been done that could be done within the limits of the island, would they be disposed to emigrate if facilities were afforded?—I think the emigration would go on itself, perhaps imperceptibly: it would not be a conscious action on the part of the people, but it would work that way.

44,480. With the aid of education and the expansion of their ideas?—Yes.

44,481. But, I suppose, if Lewsmen were willing now, and you had the necessary authority and resources, you would propose emigration to them now?—Oh, no, I would not.

44,482. You would rather wait till they see what can be done for the island?—Yes, most decidedly.

44,483. At the same time, I take it that you look to emigration as one of the ultimate means by which relief could be afforded to the island?—Oh, yes.

44,484. Mr Forsyth asked you an important question in relation to the interval that would elapse between the present time, and such period as we are now pointing at. Are you quite clear that no serious disaster would ensue to the island during that interval?—I believe no serious disaster would result.

44,485. Because we have had a good deal of evidence both before this Commission and before the Crofters Commission, as to the congested state of a great number of townships in the island?—Yes, and so far as I could understand, you heard it at its worst. I don't think you need take it to be worse.

44,486. But what we have heard is, I think you will agree, pretty bad?—Yes.

44,487. I suppose we may take it that but for the money which is spent among Reserve men in Lews from year to year, their condition would be even much worse than it is?—That may be so: but I don't think the Reserve works in the end to their good at all.

44,488. I am not suggesting any opinion about that;

Stornoway, Lewis.

Rev. Donald Maccallum.

but I mean that the immediate income of money to the men is useful to them?—Oh, yes.

44,489. It provides them with cash so far as it goes?—Yes, but it keeps them waiting on it for the year with little else to do. They look to that to keep them, and my opinion is that it is not a good thing for the Lews on the whole.

44,490. You do not think it is a beneficial mode of assistance?—No.

44,491. *Mr P. P. Slater, Solicitor, Edinburgh, on behalf of Lady Matheson.*—Your statement was one of a very general character, I think, and did not deal particularly with the island of Lewis?—No, it did not refer more particularly to Lewis than to the mainland.

44,492. It did not seem to refer particularly to the Lews at all?—No; not more particularly than to the mainland.

44,493. At any rate I hope you have suffered no persecution in the island here?—No, I did not mean that.

44,494. I may take it that it is quite clear that since you came to this island you have been at perfect liberty to act as you chose?—Yes.

44,495. What struck me in regard to your statement was that when we did come, after the written statement, to particulars, they were in reality of a very general kind. You have not, I think, a very clear idea of Lochs,—I take it you speak more particularly for Lochs?—I represent the parish of Lochs here.

44,496. Do you have any idea of the acreage of Lochs?—No.

44,497. Do you have any idea of the proportion of that acreage that is under crofts, and the proportion under deer forest and farms?—No.

44,498. Then, does it not appear to you that it is putting it rather strong to say there is plenty of good land for a large increase of crofts?—Well, I would not emphasize the 'large,' considering the number of landless people in Lochs.

44,499. I can give you the particulars of the acreage and the rental, and perhaps it may tend to modify your opinions somewhat. I don't know whether you are aware of the rental at the present moment?—No.

44,500. Well, there is a total population in Lochs of 4700 souls, according to the last census. There is a total rental of £3622, so that at the present moment, supposing the crofters had the whole land at the present rental, it would mean paying 15s. per head in Lochs?—Yes.

44,501. Do you think that at 15s. per head of population the land in Lochs could possibly sustain the inhabitants?—But there is also the shooting. People do not live by what they pay but by what they earn.

44,502. That is inclusive of the shooting rental. I include not only the rent of Lady Matheson but the rent of other properties in Lochs. The details are:—

Crofting rents,	£931
Farm rent,	140
Sporting rent,	2,288
	£3359
and other proprietors of whom you form one in virtue of your glebe,	263
	£3622

—No, I am not a proprietor. I object to be called a proprietor on account of my glebe, for I have not the privileges of a proprietor.

44,503. Take it any way you like. Do you think that if the whole of that rental, including your common, were all thrown in and given to the crofters, 15s. per head of population could possibly support any increase of crofts? Do you think it is a possibility for life to be sustained with advantage either to the parties living there or to the community at large, the nation?—But do you take into account the fishing at all?

44,504. I am taking the land rental as one thing to fix the idea how many people can live in a certain locality?—That is not the way to look at it. Tell me what they earn.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Rev. Donald Maccallum.

44,505. Well, we shall not argue that point, but I will take you over some other ground. If you go into this question of increasing crofts, have you any idea how many new townships you would form?—About 30, I daresay.

44,506. Do you know how many new schools that would imply? Would it be a matter of from 10 to 20 schools?—Oh, no, not at all; very few. The new townships could be near each other in many cases. In many cases the existing schools would be available.

44,507. There are 12 schools in Lochs already?—Yes.

44,508. And if you are to set up 30 new townships in this very large district, would not that imply at least half a dozen new schools?—I think not: I should say three would do, but that is a mere guess.

44,509. Well, if you had only three schools, I am afraid some of the children would be unable to travel the necessary distance. But would not that be a cost that could not well be borne by the present rental?—It would be no cost at all to educate and rear the children for it would be adding to the strength of the parish.

44,510. Do you know what it costs at present to educate the children of Lochs?—If you go on that ground, you could argue that Balallan should not exist at all because it has to keep a school.

44,511. I am not making any arguments at all, you mistake me: I merely state facts, and ask your opinion about them?—My opinion is that it would be a very proper thing to have a school for them, and the more schools the better.

44,512. Have you any idea what it costs at present to educate the children of Lochs?—No.

44,513. Would you be surprised to learn that there will be a deficit of about £1300 to get from Government this year?—I daresay that may be so.

44,514. And would you be surprised to learn that the whole of the rates received by the School Board from the parish of Lochs amount to only £75?—But there are questions within questions. One of the reasons why the rates are so high and the Government grant low is owing to the epidemics that are constantly raging in these townships, whereby the attendance is very much reduced.

44,515. The attendance is just a little over 70 per cent.?—That is very low; much lower than it should be.

44,516. Perhaps it is; but considering that the Government (rightly, as I believe) expends on the poor districts a matter of some £1500 or £1800 a year on education in Lochs, could you ever face the possibility of the parish being able to do that itself?—Oh, yes.

44,517. Out of a rental of £3600?—The rates would not be so high.

44,518. But they could not be lower than they are at present,—6d. per £?—Eliminate the epidemics.

44,519. At present the rates are only 6d. per £?—Yes, I know.

44,520. Could you have them lower in Lochs? Have they not been up as far as 4s. 6d.?—But Government pays the rest, you know.

44,521. It is all very well to look to Government, but it must be kept in view that an increase of the crofting area would result in an increase in the cost of schools?—Assuredly.

44,522. And Government alone has to look to that?—Well, no, the children grow up to make the nation.

44,523. Undoubtedly, but they do not grow less, they always grow more. [*The Chairman*].—Is what you look to then a perpetual Government grant?—Not at all. I quite believe that after the sun of prosperity shall have begun to shine upon the island the people will be able to pay the rates themselves.

44,524. My question did not refer to the matter of perpetual grants, but to the interval between the present state of matters, and the attainment of a good situation in Lochs. What period do you look forward to as likely to elapse between now and that future

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time? Have you formed any idea in your own mind? —No, I have not.

44,525. Would it take a generation, do you think? —Perhaps it might: I don't think it would take more.

44,526. And, in the meantime, you think there is room in Lochs for the population to go on increasing during the next generation?—No, I don't; I explained my views on that point already. I believe that there would be a regular flow of people out of the island, educated people who could make their way in the world; and giving them the land would, I think, open up the way for the people to leave the island of their own accord.

44,527. You think that, in the interval, people would gradually dropping off?—I am certain of it. [*The Chairman.*—Are they dropping off just now?—Yes, the *Chairman* lads are.]

44,528. The population, as a matter of fact, is increasing, and is more since the census of 1891, I think?—Yes.

44,529. Well, even assuming that they were not so, and that the population would be stationary during that interval of a generation, do you think that if they got the forests of Park, Aline, and Arnish, and the small farm of Stiomrabhagh, they would be able to pay the same rent as at present?—That would depend upon the produce, according to my definition of rent.

44,530. But accepting your definition of rent, do you think the land, if given to crofters, would return anything like the present rental of Lochs?—No, but the shooting rental would go along with it.

44,531. But it is all put in here in the rental I have quoted. Do you look forward to the prospect of increasing your rates, parochial and otherwise, if you decrease your rental?—No.

44,532. The rates are at present, as you know, very high: I think you will bear me out in saying that the rates, taking them all over in Lochs, are 8s. 4d. per £; falling between landlord and tenant. Do you not think that is already an excessive rate?—It is.

44,533. And that, if there is any decrease in the rental, the rate per £ must go up?—But pauperism would decrease.

44,534. You think pauperism would decrease with the increase of population?—No, but with the giving of the land.

44,535. You think so?—I am certain of it.

44,536. And are you still of opinion, after these explanations about actual figures, that it would be a judicious thing to give more land to the people at the rate of 15s. per head of population?—But you see I do not admit that that is the proper rate, as it has not been placed before me, nor that that is a proper way of considering the question.

44,537. I think you may accept it from me that that is the proper amount?—Well, I daresay it is not very far wrong; but I cannot say.

44,538. Do you think it would be judicious to increase the population at that rent?—This would not be increasing the population at all: it would decrease the population. They increase in their present circumstances much more than they would then. They are too poor at present to go away.

44,539. That just brings me to the point I was coming to. You spoke of emigration, but you are not, I think, very clear as to the point when emigration would take place in a voluntary way. You put it that they would first have to be equipped with education and prosperity?—Yes.

44,540. I understand your equipping them with education, but I confess I am a little at sea as to the meaning of equipping them with prosperity?—I mean that they would prosper when they would have the land.

44,541. Do you mean that at present the people are too poor to emigrate?—Well, yes.

44,542. And you think that, with education, they would be able to make a little more money?—Yes.

44,543. Your statement was, as I have said, of a very general nature, but you talked of 'fertile fields and fruitful valleys.' Has that any reference to the Lews? —I do not exclude the Lews.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Rev. Donald Maccallum.

44,544. Well, could you give us an instance in Lochs where we could find 'fertile fields and fruitful valleys' on which to place more crofters?—Yes, I can.

44,545. I shall be glad to hear it.—There is Ceannamhuir and several other townships mentioned by crofter witnesses. I don't see why the time of the Commission should be taken up by my mentioning them.

44,546. My reason for that question is that I believe that Park was, to a large extent, a forest from time immemorial, until it became a sheep farm. Is not that the case,—that Park has been a forest or a sheep farm from time immemorial?—Not at all; it was under crofters.

44,547. Is it not the case that a great many of these places which are called townships were merely shepherds' houses, used for looking after the sheep, and that these shepherds would often increase in the same way as crofters?—I deny that these townships were shepherds' houses. I deny that they were keepers' houses.

44,548. Well, we will leave that matter alone. Can you give us any estimate of the number of families you would place in Park?—I think I have answered that question already.

44,549. No, you have not; excuse me. When a man talks in the way you have done about placing crofters on the land, I should like to have his idea, if he has an idea in his own mind, how many acres there are?—I could not say how many. But as to your question whether I speak of the Lews when I say 'fertile fields' and fruitful valleys,' I say I do include the Lews, and I mention Ceannamhuir, Brunigil, Scealadail, Stromas, Valamus, Oronsay, Stiomrabhagh, and many others which I could name.

44,550. Well, I leave it to be judged by the Commission whether these are suitable places. But taking it in the rough, and summing up your evidence, may I take it that you have formed no idea as to the statistics of this question at all?—Not particularly.

44,551. But generally?—I did generally.

44,552. Well, generally, give us your idea. [*The Chairman.*—I think the witness has given as much evidence on that point as he is able to give.]

44,553. But the summing up of his evidence is that he has no statistics to go upon? [*The Chairman.*—That is your comment on his evidence.]

44,554. But I ask him if he knows how many acres there are available? *Witness.*—No, I do not, but I say that there are fertile fields and fertile valleys capable of sustaining many crofters.

44,555. That is a matter of opinion; but you do not know how many arable acres there ever have been in Park Forest?—No.

44,556. And you do not know how many arable acres the crofters possess?—No. But that information is contained in the books you have before you. If I had known you wanted that information from me I would have made an effort to find it out.

44,557. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Reference has been made to the question of education. Is it a matter, within your knowledge, that the prevalence of epidemics has seriously reduced the grant-earning capacity of the schools of Lochs?—Yes, that is so.

44,558. Is there any one school in particular which has been seriously and periodically afflicted with epidemics?—Yes, the school at Barnish.

44,559. Who is the teacher there?—Mr Wood.

44,560. Has he been in Lochs for a number of years? —Yes.

44,561. And what has he to say with regard to the prevalence of epidemic?—He says that, unless the township is better looked after, it will soon be extinct.

44,562. Have you heard him discussing the matter, and mentioning the fact that, every year since he has come, the school has had to be closed for a considerable period because of a prevailing epidemic?—Yes and I believe there is an epidemic there at the present time. [*The Chairman.*—A fever epidemic?—Yes, scarlet

Stornoway, Lewis.

Rev. Donald Maccallum.

fever]. [*Mr Slater.*—Is that in the spring time or all through the year?—All through the year.]

44,563. What, in your opinion, is that perennial epidemic caused by?—By overcrowding, and the houses not being in a sanitary condition.

44,564. And the removal of a number of families to the lands you referred to would so far relieve the congestion and remove the cause of the epidemic?—It would go a long way towards that.

44,565. Then a good deal has been said about emigration. But is it your opinion that even although the Government came and offered liberal assistance to emigrants, the people of Lewis would not take to that for the reason that they could not believe that it was meant for their good, seeing that lands at home which they considered suitable were refused?—I would not say they would assert that the Government consciously did that.

44,566. They don't blame the Government?—No.

44,567. But is this, in your opinion, the reason why the emigration scheme was not accepted?—Yes: they see the land at home.

44,568. You believe that the first thing to be done is to give all the land in the island to the people?—Decidedly.

44,569. And you think that, if that is done, a considerable number of them will accept assisted emigration?—Yes, I quite believe it.

44,570. But not till then?—No, not till then.

44,571. *The Chairman.*—In fact, your policy would be one which, in your judgment, would have the effect of gradually reducing the population of the Lews by the very extension of townships?—Exactly. That is my policy.

44,572. Relieving the congested holdings, affording accommodation for a certain number of new holdings, and when the people saw there were no more new holdings to be got, thereby inducing them the more willingly to leave the island?—That is decidedly my opinion.

44,573. And in your view such a policy, if carried out, would, before many years had run, greatly reduce the population of the island?—Yes.

44,574. I ought perhaps to call your attention to a letter which the Secretary has put into my hands dated 'Crossbost, Lochs, 28th May 1894. Sir,—The 'cottars of the township of Crossbost earnestly desire 'to bring before the notice of the Commission that 'they wish to be removed to Oronsay in Park, Lewis, 'where our fathers were cruelly treated before and sent 'off. We, the undernamed, have also suffered for the 'above noted place. We hope it is now in the hands 'of a law that will give us it. We recommend Rev. D. 'Maccallum, E.C. Minister, Keose, Lochs, Stornoway, 'N.B., to stand on our behalf before the Royal Com-'mission.' Do you wish to add anything in reference to this letter?—No, except that I hope to see the prayer of it granted. And also that, as I have said in the written statement, there would be no disputes in the parish as to who should occupy the lands: arrangements have been made in each township which would avoid any dispute, and the crofters of each township would apply for a particular piece of land. Oronsay is the township which we arranged should be given to the cottars of Crossbost.

John Graham.

JOHN GRAHAM, Five-Penny, Borve (56).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

44,575. *The Chairman.*—What is the number of your lot in Borve?—No. 12.

44,576. Are you in Fivepenny Borve?—Yes.

44,577. The area of the holding is 4 acres, 1 rood, and 24 poles arable; 1 rood and 22 poles outrun, and one seventy-fifth share of a common extending to 4786 acres; also share in Galson Moor, extending to 6936 acres common to 485 crofters; the former rent was £2, 3s., and the present rent is £1, 5s. How many crofters are in Borve?—There are 49 who have a number.

44,578. And how many have no number?—Seventeen. Stornoway, Lewis.

44,579. Do you know Mid-Borve?—Yes.

44,580. How many are there with a number?—Eight or nine. John Graham.

44,581. And how many cottars?—Seven, or so.

44,582. How many dwelling-houses are on the holding you occupy?—One only; it is little enough for myself.

44,583. Is it a common thing to have more than one dwelling-house on a croft in the township of Fivepenny Borve?—It is.

44,584. Are there sometimes as many as three dwelling-houses on the one holding?—No, not three, but two are common.

44,585. Is there a desire in your township for additional land?—Yes.

44,586. Can you say where such land might be obtainable?—Yes, that I can.

44,587. Where?—Out on Galson South Farm, where my forefathers were reared.

44,588. Was the land that is now in Galson formerly in townships?—Yes, from time immemorial.

44,589. What are the names of the townships once on what is called Galson Farm?—Balmeanach, Melbost, and another small township that was placed above the square,—they called it Balure or Newton. There were eight houses there originally.

44,590. Any others?—North Galson; that is all that I know of.

44,591. Was a part of what used to be Galson Farm added to the crofters some years ago?—Balmeanach was given to the Ballard crofters. [*Mr Slater.*—To Mid-Borve.]

44,592. Any other portion?—No.

44,593. Is the grazing land of Galson suitable for occupation by crofters?—It is suitable enough.

44,594. Would a great number of the Borve crofters be ready to take holdings there without assistance?—Yes.

44,595. Were you appointed as a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

44,596. And you represent the views of the township of Fivepenny Borve?—Yes.

44,597. Has the obtaining of additional land been a frequent subject of discussion among yourselves?—Yes, indeed.

44,598. For a number of years?—Yes.

44,599. And does great anxiety prevail in your township on that question?—Yes. There is suitable enough land there for them: it was taken from them against their wills.

44,600. Do you know another farm to the north of Galson,—the farm of Dell?—Yes, it is a small farm.

44,601. Who holds Dell?—One Murdo Macfarquhar.

44,602. Do you know what rent he pays?—No, I do not know.

44,603. Has the attention of the crofters of Borve not been directed to it at all?—No, they have plenty beside themselves if they could get it.

44,604. At Galson?—Yes.

44,605. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—How far does the farm of Galson extend along the road to Ness?—Four miles.

44,606. And is the whole of that extent suitable land for new holdings on both sides of the road?—Not the whole length; but there are over two miles suitable enough.

44,607. Is there a sufficient population of cottars in your parish to take up all the available land there?—Yes, and more.

44,608. *Mr P. P. Slater, Solicitor, Edinburgh, on behalf of Lady Matheson.*—Were you an applicant for an enlargement of holding in Galson?—Yes, I was one of them.

44,609. And was the enlargement refused by the Crofters Commission?—It was; but it was quite likely that we were to get it until the Commissioners went into dinner with Mr Helm. I accompanied them through the land, and their talk conveyed to me that we were going to get it as an addition to our crofts.

44,610. It was not contiguous to the holdings?—Perhaps not. I am not done yet.

44,611. *The Chairman.*—What else would you like to say?—I was born and brought up in North Galson, and we were sent away against our will, every one of us.

44,612. Who sent you away?—Thomas Macdonald was the ground officer, and the late Mr Donald Munro was the factor.

ROBERT SAUNDERS, 30 Fivepenny Borve (67). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

44,613. *The Chairman.*—Your holding appears to have 6 acres, 38 poles arable, 3 roods outrun, and a share in a common of 4786 acres. The old rent was £4, 14s. 9d., and the present rent is £3, 2s. How many dwelling-houses are on your holding?—Only one.

44,614. Are you anxious to get additional land from Galson Farm?—Yes. I have two sons, and one of them has a bothy outside the dyke, but I gave him a share of my croft. He is on the common.

44,615. The rent of Galson Farm is £165, 13s., and the rent of Delve is £68. Do you agree with the evidence you heard from Graham?—Yes. [*Mr Slater.*—The population of Fivepenny Borve is 357.] We are waiting for this extra land. There is a large number of poor people in the township, many of whom have no meal from the croft to-day, not a pound.

44,616. They buy all their meal?—Yes: I buy sometimes 18 bolls in the year.

44,617. How many are in your household?—I have only six to-day, but I had nine or ten when I was buying that quantity.

ANGUS MORRISON, Five-Penny, Borve (60). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

44,618. *The Chairman.*—What is the number of your holding?—No. 41.

44,619. It seems to have 6 acres, 33 poles arable, 1 rood, 35 poles outrun, and a share in a common of 4786 acres. The old rent was £6, 5s., and the new rent is £3, 10s. How many houses are on your croft?—One just now.

44,620. Do you agree with the evidence that has been given with regard to Galson Farm?—We want Melbost Borve, a place beyond Ballard. That is the township that the meeting claimed.

44,621. That is now a part of Galson Farm but was formerly a township?—Yes.

44,622. And what those you now represent are most anxious about, if it can be obtained, is to get the land of Melbost?—Yes, we are very anxious to get it. There was £100 taken off the tacksman and put on to the crofters between my place and the Butt of Lewis; and there was added to my rent 11s. or 12s. as my share. It is useless to me; I can take no bread out of it unless I get the other piece. These were swamps and soft places that were cut off.

44,623. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you want this land as an extension of your present holdings, or for new holdings?—For the whole township. There are such a number of people on the common who are taking up a right to their crofts.

44,624. What has become of those who have no land at all?—We are willing to take them in along with us, because they are at present at the back of the dyke, and thus cause injury to our stock.

44,625. But would you take them into this place, Melbost, and give them a croft or a piece there?—If we get Melbost and the old marches we will take them in along with us. At present there are in some houses three families around the one fire.

JOHN SMITH, Fivepenny Borve (60)—*examined.*

44,626. *The Chairman.*—Have you a croft?—I have the third of croft No. 43.

44,627. Whose name is it entered in?—My brother has two shares: Malcolm Smith is his name. Stornoway, Lewis. John Smith.

44,628. The area of the croft seems to be 2 acres, 14 poles arable, 24 poles outrun, and $\frac{1}{15}$ share in the common. The old rent of £1, 18s. was reduced to £1, 2s. You are here doubtless to give us the same sort of evidence that has been given already about Galson?—Yes, the same, being very needful of it for a long time.

44,629. We quite understand the particulars from the other evidence that was given, and we intend to go and see the ground.

44,630. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Are you speaking for crofters or for cottars?—For myself in the first place, and if we get the land, we will take in the other people as well.

44,631. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

44,632. By the crofters?—Yes.

44,633. Did the cottars appoint you?—They did.

PETER PETERSON SLATER, Solicitor, Edinburgh (38)—*examined.* Peter Peterson Slater.

44,634. *The Chairman.*—You are here as representing the agents for Lady Matheson of the Lews?—Yes, and with the wish to give every possible assistance to the Commission, and lay before them all facts that may be desired. First, in regard to North Galson, I may just say that in 1863 the crofters there found that they could not support themselves on the land, and they petitioned to be sent to America. Some of them did go,—24 out of 43, and the remaining 19 were provided with holdings elsewhere. The state of matters is referred to in Mr Mackay's evidence before the Napier Commission in 1883, Appendix 162. Then, with your liberty, I would wish to make a statement as to the whole island.

The island of Lewis contains, roughly speaking, 404,000 acres of land, excluding water and foreshores. It has 3076 crofters, and, I believe, about 900 or 1000 squatters, although we have not actual statistics of these later than 1885. These squatters are not, of course, on her ladyship's rental. The acreage occupied by the crofters, and, of course, by the squatters as well, is 258,958 acres, consisting of arable land, outrun, and grazing rights; farmers in Lewis hold 65,969 acres, sportsmen hold 74,925 acres, and the remainder 4148 acres is occupied by glebes, schools, town lands, and the Flannen and Rona Islands, and a number of other parts occupied by outsiders. The rental of the island payable by crofters at the present moment is £5917, 10s. 5d.; the farm rental is £2279, making a total land rental of £8196, 10s. 5d.; the sporting rental is £6135, but over and above that there is the rent of the castle grounds, &c., £700, so that Lady Matheson's rental comes to £15,731, 10s. 5d. All other landward rental held by other proprietors is covered by the sum of £1346, 9s. 7d., so that the total landward rental of Lewis is £17,078. I leave out the town of Stornoway, both as regards population and rental, and the above figures thus give an average rental of the landward population of the Lews of 14s. per head.

The average rent of the crofter population, taking it at 24,000 (I believe it is above that now) is less than 5s. per head. The number of land holdings of all descriptions in Lewis is 3105, and the average rent per holding is about £2, 13s. 4d. The crofters' holdings, however, embrace 3076 of these, and the rental being £5917, gives a very much smaller proportion per holding,—under £1, 12s.

I may say that we have a very great number of small holdings in the island. Of holdings rented at £1 and under there are 483, 232 of which are in Stornoway parish, 126 in Barvas, 66 in Uig, and 59 in Lochs. I would compare that with the state of matters when Sir James Matheson bought the island in 1844. There are now 995 more holdings, taking all the farms and the crofter holdings together, than there were in 1844, when the holdings numbered 2110, with a land rental of £9437, 19s. 2d., or over £1200 above the present rental. But the division of the crofts then

Stornoway, Lewis.

Peter Peterson Slater.

was peculiar. In Stornoway parish there were then only 98 crofts under £1 of rent, as will be seen from the following table :—

	Stornoway.	Lochs.	Uig.	Barvas	Total.
At and under 10s.,	23	15	7	...	45
,, ,, 20s.,	75	...	...	3	78
From 10s. to 30s.,	43	23	7	27	100
Under 50s.,	100	148	37	130	415
,, £5,	279	350	290	380	1299
,, £6,	21	33	36	...	90
,, £10,	4	...	...	35	39
,, £20,	6	...	...	...	6
,, £30,	...	5	3	4	12
Other holdings under					
,, ,, £50,	...	...	...	1	1
,, ,, £100,	7	5	8	...	20
,, ,, £130,	2	...	...	...	2
,, ,, £250,	...	...	2	...	2
,, ,, £600,	...	1	...	...	1
	560	580	390	580	2110

The only holding under £600 is the farm of Park, let as a sheep farm at £587. The average rent per holding in 1844 was £4, 10s., while it is now down to £2, 13s. 4d.

44,635. Is that the average fair rent ?—No, the whole land rental, giving an average for each holding.

44,636. Does it include the large sheep farms ?—Yes, it includes the whole of the land rental ; only the shooting rent is excluded from the average. The smaller average of £2, 13s. 4d. is accounted for by the increased number of holdings and the decreased land rental.

The details of Lady Matheson's present rental are as follows :—

Parish.	No. of Crofters.	Crofters' Rental.	Farmers, Castle Grounds, &c.	Sportsmen and Fishings, &c.	Other Proprietors.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Stornoway,	982	1723 14 6	1707 0 0	749 0 0	618 5 6
Barvas,	962	1775 7 0	352 0 0	491 0 0	285 13 0
Uig,	614	1487 5 5	780 0 0	3307 0 0	179 14 7
Lochs,	518	931 3 6	140 0 0	2288 0 0	262 16 6
	3076	5917 10 5	2979 0 0	6835 0 0	1346 9 7

I may say, in passing, that the comparison in the case of Lochs and Barvas is not quite accurate, inasmuch as there have been certain changes of boundaries made by the Boundaries Commission. The land rental has fallen since 1844 by £1241, but, of that, £963 is accounted for by changing farm land into forest land, leaving a difference of £278. But the reductions of rent given by the Crofters Commission are over £2000 (the exact figure is £2195, 14s. 7d.), so that land outside that, occupied by crofters, has increased in value to the extent of the difference,—about £1970. That is to say, had there been no reduction in the crofting rents by the Crofters Commission, our rental, instead of showing a decrease, would have shown an increase of £2200. As it is, it shows a decrease of only £278 : therefore, the real difference is made up by increased farm rents, and interest on improvements, of course, and other matters.

I do not propose to detain you with any words as to Sir James Matheson's prior management of the estate, or of the state of matters during the years of destitution caused by the potato failure. His efforts from 1844 to 1850 are matters of history, and were strongly in the direction of alleviating the distress by giving employment to every one in Lewis that would and could work. In 1850 the population had risen from 17,000 to 19,000, and at one period of that year there were no fewer than 12,829 individuals getting relief from the Highland Destitution Committee,—2269 men, 2560 women, and 8000 children. That was, of course, the largest number that ever received relief at one time, and then only for a month or two ; however, the average number receiving relief throughout the year was about 5000. At that time there were about 2261 crofters and 773 cottars. I need not refer to the amount distributed by the Destitution Committee, but I should like to state a few facts concerning crofters' rents and arrears.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Peter Peterson Slater.

In 1882 there was paid by the crofters in the Island of Lewis £6787, 15s. 10d., and their arrears stood at £6741, 14s. 2d. At that time there was the expectation of the Royal Commission, which was appointed, and which came next year to inquire into the state of the crofters, and the arrears of rent went up by £1700 to £8476, 19s. 5d. In 1884, after the visit of Lord Napier's Commission, the arrears rose to £11,789, 16s. 6d. ; in 1885 they rose to £14,886, 5s. 3d. ; and in 1886, when the Crofters Act came into operation, to £19,423, 4s. 3d. They went steadily up thereafter, and in the case of the crofters dealt with by the Crofters Commission, 2572 in number, between 1888 and 1892, the arrears amounted to £40,981, 18s. 1d. Of these arrears the Crofters Commission cancelled £30,092, 7s. 4d., or about 75 per cent., while during the years 1890 to 1892 Lady Matheson herself cancelled £3156, 12s. 11d. of arrears. The total arrears wiped out between the Commission and Lady Matheson thus amounted to £33,249, 0s. 3d., which, taking the fair rents fixed by the Commission as the annual rental, has given the crofters the benefit of five years' non-payment of rent.

At the present moment, leaving out the year 1894, which it is quite fair to do (the usual date for payment of the year's rent due at Whitsunday being September in each year), the arrears amount to £12,168, 8s. 4d., or more than two years' fair rents. It is right to point out that, as Mr Orrock has carefully noted, this excludes £198, 8s. of instalment arrears, of which the period for payment has not arrived,—I believe it takes place in September. That, however, is a mere bagatelle compared with the total arrears.

Next, I should like to give a few details to what the estate has done to increase the crofting area in the island. There were, of course, many demands made for increase of crofter lands which could not be met. Wherever they could they had been met during the past 23 years. The bulk of the cases have occurred during the last 16 or 17 years. In 1878, the township of Kirkibost in Uig, which consisted of 1400 acres (476 arable and 924 pasture), was given to a certain number of crofters and squatters from Bosta and elsewhere in Bernera, who settled in 26 holdings. The land was taken from the farm of Linshader, and the rental fixed on the crofters was £120. I may say, in passing, that there was an offer of £150 for the place as a sheep farm, which was not accepted, because the land was taken with the view of giving it to the crofters. In 1888, however, the estate reconsidered the matter, and readjusted the rent as from 1878, the date of entry, at £100 only, arrears of £180 on the £120 rent being at the same time written off. Of the 26 crofters thus settled in Kirkibost, 22 applied to the Crofters Commission and had their rents reduced from £91, 3s. 4d. to £67, 3s., and their arrears reduced from £400, 13s. 8d. to £180, 10s. Their arrears now amount to £200, 11s. 10d., not including the rent due at Whitsunday 1894. Then, again, when the other parts of Linshader Farm were broken up in 1892, though they were in arrears of rent, Mr Orrock, no doubt with judicious management, gave them, for wintering, the island of Chearstaidh with about 200 acres of good pasture.

Again, in 1880, the crofters of Croir, eight in number, together with some squatters,—20 in all, took Hacklete at £85, 8s. Whenever a large acreage is offered, it invariably happens that the crofters cannot take it all, and they have to take in squatters. The acreage given at Hacklete is 977 acres. The whole of these settlers applied to the Crofters Commission, who reduced the rent to £55, 9s., and cancelled £474, 4s. 6d. of arrears amounting to £645, 14s. 6d. The arrears now amount to £197, 3s. 8d. Hacklete and Breaclete, another township in Bernera, has got the island of Little Bernera with 276 acres for wintering. Tobson, another township in Bernera, has got Bosta (from

ornoway, wis. ter Peter- n Slater.

which the crofters were removed) with 425 acres, for wintering. Six crofters from Tobson have got an acreage of 1200 acres in Lundail to form new crofts upon. Valtos has got the island of Pabbay, with 270 acres for wintering. All these places, with the exception of Hacklete and Kirkibost, formed parts of the grazings of Linshader till May 1893.

In regard to other increases of pasture,—in 1887, 60 acres of grazing was given from Dalbeg Farm to Carloway township, and 140 acres of moor grazing on the same farm was given to South Shawbost township. The reduction of rent given to the farmer was £12, and the land formed good pasture, but there was no additional rent charged against the crofters. Under an enlargement application, Mid Borve got from Galson Farm an addition of 61 acres of pasture at a rent of £14, 17s. In 1891, the arrears of rent were only £20, 6s.; they now amount on the increased holdings to £67, 13s. 6d.

In Stornoway parish, the crofters of Tong and Aird of Tong in 1891 got 2468 acres of moor off the farm of Coll. In the same year, the crofters of Back and Tolsta got 4701 acres of moorland from the farm of Gress. In 1887 Melbost Links (192 acres) were given to the Melbost and Steinish crofters, and in 1890 Eilean-nan-Uan (5½ acres) was given to the crofters of Holm. Coming now to Lochs parish; in 1883 Eilean Ewart, containing 200 acres rented at £12 and till then attached to the farm of Park, was given to the crofters of Leumravay without additional rent. In 1885 the island of Torraidh, rented at £6, 6s. as part of the farm of Valtos, was given to the crofters of Calbost and Maravaig without additional rent. I may say that in the case of moor pastures there was no additional rent charged to the crofters. In 1886 the island of Rosaidh, rented at £8 and till then attached to Crobeg Farm, was given to the crofters of Grimshader, but was stocked, I believe, by the Cromore crofters. No additional rent was charged.

44,637. What was the extent of that?—Eilean Rosaidh will be about 40 or 50 acres, but we have not measured it. It was entirely for wintering. Then there is another experiment which is one of the most recent. In 1886, when Park Farm lease ran out, part of it forming the ewe hirsel and consisting of 4486 acres at Seaforthhead, which used to summer about 700 ewes and winter 300 or 400, was given to six crofters at a rent of £51. From £65 to £70 was offered for the place for a farm at the time. One of these has since had to give it up, and his arrears of £24 are still outstanding. Two years after it was given to the six crofters: they were £80, 5s. in arrear, and they applied to the Crofters Commission. I should say that they were allowed to apply to the Commission, for if the estate had taken advantage of the terms imposed by the Act, their applications could have been successfully opposed, as also in numerous other cases.

44,637A. I deem it well to notice that I do not think there was any endeavour on the part of the estate here either to keep crofters outwith the operation of the Act, who might have been excluded, or to take any undue advantage of purely technical objections to applications made?—I understand there was no such objection taken before I had to do with the estate, and there certainly have been no frivolous objections since.

44,637B. Very few objections of any kind have been taken?—The estate has endeavoured to carry out the spirit of the Act. In the case of the Seaforth-head crofters, of whom I was speaking, their applications were disposed of in 1892, when their arrears amounted to £143. The Crofters Commission left the rent of £51, unchanged, but cancelled £50, 15s. of the arrears,—practically a year's rent, to give them a start, I presume. Their arrears now are £70, of which £20, 5s. is not payable till September.

The only other matter to which I would direct your attention is the very serious question of rating. Of course, the very heavy rates falling on the Lews are borne by Lady Matheson, in common with all the tenants; but she, as proprietrix, has suffered to an extent beyond all tenants, because she used to pay the rates for all tenants under £4. The rates in 1888 and in 1893 falling on landlord and tenant were as follows:— Stornoway, Lewis. Peter Peter on Slater.

Parish.	1888.	1893.
Stornoway, . .	5s. 8d. per £	5s. 0¼d. per £
Barvas, . . .	11s. 6d. ,,	9s. 8¼d. ,,
Uig, ...	6s. 6d. ,,	5s. 6¼d. ,,
Lochs, . . .	11s. 8d. ,,	8s. 4¼d. ,,

The school rate in 1893 was 6d. per £, except in Uig, where it was 9d. In 1887 and 1888 Lady Matheson paid, in poor and school rates, £4156 (including crofters' rates under £4 of rental), and in road assessments £657; in all £4813. That is paid out of a rental of under £8000. During the years from 1879 to 1888 Lady Matheson paid in local rates *on rents not received*, a total of £4581, 13s., also during the same period on rents under £4, £1893, 10s. 2d., and of the latter sum there is still unpaid £1228, 7s. 6d.

Dealing now with the question of education, we find that the children of school age in the island of Lewis number 5517, and their education during the year to Whitsunday 1893 cost £7164. The amount of that raised by the rates is in Barvas parish £60, in Stornoway £450, in Uig £150, and in Lochs £78. Education in Lochs parish costs £1436, and the total rate of the parish was £78. I may say that Stornoway town pays its own way in the matter of education rates, and the school grants are very well earned. The ordinary school grants earned were,—in Barvas £802, in Stornoway £1182, in Uig £765, and in Lochs £637. Then there are grants in relief of fees,—Barvas £414, Stornoway £726, Uig £393, Lochs £346. These are all ordinary grants which any school is entitled to earn; but the Lewis schools also get the Lochiel grants, which are confined to certain districts in the Highlands, — 13 School Boards I think. The sums obtained for Lochiel grants are, Barvas £284, Stornoway £300, Uig £172, and Lochs £204. They also get a special probate grant, as it is called, as follows:—Barvas £140, Uig £400, and Lochs £517. These are the figures for last year, but the deficiency this year, I am informed, will amount to a matter of £1200 or £1300. There has been great strides in the matter of education, undoubtedly, and 70 per cent. of the children now attend school, on an average. These grants that I have detailed show that a large sum of money is earned by the children, so that, were the attendance to be larger than 70 per cent., the schools might be practically self-supporting. I do not think I need trouble you with more figures, except to mention the amount of debt on each School Board, towards which, no doubt, the Government will ultimately have to give some relief. In Lochs the outstanding school debt is £5678.

44,638. What does the debt consist of?—Building debt.

44,638A. Is not that being paid off by instalments?—Yes, but the instalments have stopped: they should be paid out of the rates.

44,639. Are they not being paid somehow?—I am afraid they came to a stop some years ago. I am told that they retain the Lochiel grant for that purpose. There is a total building debt outstanding in the island of £15,321 on the building of 36 schools.

44,640. Which is going off by instalments?—Yes, from the special Lochiel Grant. The debt of the Stornoway Board is £4209, on Barvas £2277, on Uig £3157, and on Lochs £5678. The parish of Lochs, where the crofters' rental is only £931, or very much lower than the others, the number of schools is twelve, or three more than in any of the other parishes, even the large parish of Stornoway. That is why, when Rev. Mr Maccallum was in the witness-box, I asked him specially about this question of schools for Lochs; I may be wrong, but I have an impression that if the townships suggested by Mr Maccallum were to be formed in Lochs, the parish

Stornoway, Lewis.

Peter Peterson Slater.

would require other six to ten schools, for many of the new townships would be out of the three-mile boundary.

If there is any further information or explanations that Mr Orrock or I can afford to the Commission, we shall be very happy to do so; and the estate books will be made patent to any one of you.

44,641. I understood you to say that of the total area of the island, 404,000 acres, about 259,000 acres or much more than the half is under crofters?—Yes, and there is certainly more than nine-tenths of the arable ground in Lewis already under crofters.

44,642. What is the extent of the forests,—Park forest, Aline forest, Arnish forest, and Scaliscro?—There are only two parishes in the island on which we have preserved ground, Lochs and Uig. In Lochs the forest of Park occupies 41,913 acres; the forest of Aline occupies 8774 acres; and the little home forest of Arnish 2776 acres; total 53,293 acres. In Uig parish, Morsgail forest occupies 13,311 acres; Scaliscro forest occupies 3143 acres; Grimista forest occupies 5178 acres. Grimista, however, is more of a fishing than a shooting. The total forest acreage is thus about 75,000 acres.

44,642A. Can you tell me what farm land has been turned into forest land since Sir James Matheson acquired the property?—Yes, I think I can. First of all there is Park. When the lease of Park Farm ran out with Mr Sellar, the whole of the sheep stock had to be taken over by the proprietor at a very serious loss. The farm was advertised repeatedly to let as a sheep farm.

44,643. That was in 1883?—That was in 1883. It was advertised extensively, but nobody would take it as a sheep farm. It was then decided to make a forest of it.

44,644. Can you give us the area of land then afforested?—Not without some calculation: but, speaking very roughly, I might say perhaps about 40,000 acres.

44,645. Now, has there been any other land besides that turned into forest?—Aline was rented as a farm at £90; Scaliscro at £100; Morsgail at £150; and Arnish at £30: all these were farms turned into forest, and adding £587 as the rental of Park Farm we get a total farm rental of £963 for land, which under forest yields over £3000.

44,646. Is that including the fishing rental?—No.

44,647. All that afforestment has taken place since Sir James acquired the island?—No, not exactly: the farm of Park has from time immemorial been a sheep farm with deer on it.

44,648. It was the old Seaforth Farm?—It was known from time immemorial as The Park or Deer Forest of the Lews, and there are still to be seen the remains of an old dyke to keep the deer in.

44,649. I wanted to ask you one or two questions about Sir James Matheson's reclamations?—These, I may say, I have not taken up, as the matter was gone into so exhaustively before previous Commissions that I have not thought it necessary to refer to it here.

44,650. You dealt fully with the matter of the cancellations of arrears by the Crofters Commission, and, I think, you said that the total arrears cancelled, whether by the Commission or by Lady Matheson herself, between 1888 and 1892, came to £33,249?—Yes.

44,651. Is it not the fact that, in previous years, it sometimes happened that large cancellations had to be made?—Not to the same extent, or anything approaching it. I could give you the arrears in the years of destitution.

44,652. If you please?—I cannot give you them off-hand, but I think I have already given a note of them to the Crofters Commission.

44,653. No previous cancellation has been at all comparable to this?—Nothing approaching it. If you wish it, we can submit a note of all the cancellations for the last twenty years.

44,654. If you please, we should like to have such a note, say for the period from 1868 to 1888.* You mentioned in detail the matter of rates?—I did so, because, I think, they had a strong bearing on the question.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Peter Peterson Slater.

44,655. Is it the fact that Lady Matheson has had to pay rates on unpaid rents?—Very extensively; on several thousands of pounds.

44,656. And she raised the question, I think, in the Supreme Courts, whether she was liable to pay such, and it was held by a majority of three to one, the dissenting judge being the late Lord Lee, that she was not entitled to relief or rebate of rates paid on unpaid rents?—Quite so, and she had to suffer; but since then the Boards have taken up what I may call the moral standpoint of assessing tenants direct. It was such a well-known state of matters that it was felt it would be immoral to assess her any longer.

44,657. *Mr Forsyth.*—Is it the practice of the Parochial Boards now to charge tenants under £4 direct?—Yes, throughout Lewis that has been the practice now for some years.

44,658. Has that been since the passing of the Local Government (Scotland) Act?—No, since 1889, I think.

44,659. *The Chairman.*—Lady Matheson has endeavoured always to keep on as friendly relations as possible with her tenants?—That was always her wish and intention. I may say that there has been a disposition on the part of certain of the crofters to take up a position as if Lady Matheson were their natural enemy,—I do not think this arises out of any personal illwill at all, but simply because she happens to be proprietrix of the island.

44,660. A state of tension has grown up in the relations between them?—But on her part there has been no feeling whatever.

44,661. *Mr Maccallum.*—You gave 75,000 acres as the area devoted exclusively to sport?—Yes.

44,662. And the sporting rental is £6835?—Yes.

44,663. Now, the sporting rental is not derived wholly from the 75,000 acres?—Oh, no.

44,664. Can you tell me how much of it is derived from land held by crofters?—It is a little difficult to give that off-hand, and I would not like to commit myself on the point at present.

44,665. Well, taking it in round numbers, is not more than the half of this sporting rental derived from farms and crofts?—No, I think not. I can give you the figure in Lochs.

44,666. Can you give me exactly the deer forest rents?—Yes. In Lochs the rents are £2020, and in Uig £3662. But that includes the fishing rent, and it would be a little difficult to discriminate off hand. You cannot distinguish the fishing rent from the shooting rent, because they go together.

44,667. But reading your paper one would readily conclude that you derive the rental of £6135 from the 75,000 acres; that was the gist of your statement, although you afterwards explained that it was different. Your original statement, however, would lead me to suppose that you derived the £6835 from the 75,000 acres: there was nothing to show that that is not so?—I beg your pardon; I think there was. I told you that in Stornoway and Barvas we had no preserved land, and I gave you the shooting rental there.

44,668. Well, I took the figures as you gave them, putting figures opposite acreages; *e.g.*, you give so many acres under crofters, so much rent; so many acres under farms, so much rent; so many acres for sporting, so much sporting rental; which would lead a person to suppose that the sporting rental was derived from the 75,000 acres in the same way as the other rentals were derived in the manner mentioned.—Yes, but I specially mentioned the sporting rent received in the two parishes in which there was no preserved land.

44,669. Then, with regard to Park, considering the large number of crofters there and the great congestion, how is it that more of it was not given to the crofters?—There were petitions for parts of Park, but there was one offer which the estate considered at the time would take the heart of the forest out of it, and for this a rent of some £40 was offered. But it was considered quite unsuitable, and that was the primary reason for refusing the petition.

* For the statement of arrears abated by the proprietor during the period stated, see page 1085.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Peter Peterson Sluter.

44,670. Is that the answer that was sent?—Certainly; I am not here for a moment to say that the matter of rent would not be a consideration, but I may tell you that after a very careful examination of Park, and from information as to old arable land by old plans, &c., we came to the conclusion that it was not at all suited for crofters.

44,671. Was not there a reply sent to the effect that they had not sent a sufficiently respectful petition?—I need not go back on that ancient history.

44,672. It is not at all ancient history; it is as recent as the afforestment?—But I do not care about raking up these old matters. If I did, I would have to state the terms of some of the applications and the threatening letters received, and these are things which I would prefer should remain buried in the past. I scarcely think it would be prudent or judicious now to come forward and tell you about those letters which Lady Matheson received.

44,673. Do you say that the reason of the refusal was that the ground was not suitable for crofter occupation?—Yes.

44,674. But was not the reply that was sent to the applicants to the effect that the application was not respectful?—If you produce the reply I will tell you whether it is correct.

44,675. I cannot produce the reply.—Well, I am not here to say whether every rumour or matter of hearsay knowledge is true or not.

44,676. It is on the report of the Napier Commission.—I will leave it on the report of the Napier Commission: I am quite content to do so.

44,677. Now, you say that the reason why Park was not let as a sheep farm was that nobody would take it?—There was no offer for it.

44,678. But the crofters wanted to take parts of it?—Certainly.

44,679. Did they ask for Stiomrabhagh?—They asked for a good many individual parts of Park, to give which it was thought would not be judicious for crofters, and would certainly be entirely destructive of the place as a deer forest.

44,680. Why would not Stiomrabhagh be suitable for crofters?—It was considered unsuitable by the estate authorities, and, I think, they had better and more complete information before them than we have before us now.

44,681. But you are speaking just now for the estate?—Certainly I am.

44,682. Well, I ask how it was that the estate management did not consider that place suitable for crofting?—I am giving you the result at which they arrived.

44,683. It is not the result I am asking, but the reasons which influenced them in coming to that result?—But you see I am not here to give you all the private reasons of the estate management during past years. I am willing to give you every result they arrived at, but I certainly would not produce private letters and private correspondence, even for the information of the Royal Commission. I don't think I am called upon to do so.

44,684. You are called upon to give us any information which would throw light upon our inquiry.—Yes, and I will submit to the ruling of the Chairman on the point whether that covers the information you seek.

44,685. The Chairman has not ruled that I have asked anything which is not quite pertinent and allowable?—I hope he will have no occasion to make any such ruling.

44,686. Well, can you tell us why the estate management thought Stiomrabhagh unsuitable?—I have already answered that the decision was reached after mature deliberation and consideration.

44,687. That is not an answer.—That is an answer to the question.

44,688. Is that an answer why the ground was considered unsuitable?—I will leave the Commission to judge whether it is not a sufficient answer. [*The Chairman.*—I think you should either give the reason, or say that you do not wish to give it?—I do not wish to give any reason further than that it was considered unsuitable.]

44,689. But what was the reason why it was so considered? You are not giving an answer to the question, but simply stating that it was refused, and I ask on what grounds it was refused?—I say the estate considered the ground unsuitable for crofters. You ask why the estate considered it unsuitable; but that is not a proper question to ask. [*The Chairman.*—We must be the judges of what is a proper or competent question. Mr Maccallum asks on what ground the estate considered the place unsuitable for crofters?—On the ground that they would not be successful as crofters there, either for the benefit of themselves or of the forest. I may add that in the case of Stiomrabhagh and Leumrabhagh it was thought better that the farm as a sheep farm should be compact. I could not go back and give you all the various reasons which influenced the estate management.]

44,690. Is it not well situated for fishing crofts?—I have not seen the ground, but my understanding is that it is not; and it was not a successful fishing township before.

44,691. It is situated on the coast of Loch-Shell, is it not?—I believe so.

44,692. Well, I may say that we have had a very successful fishing experience ourselves in our yacht, 'The Marmion,' just opposite that place.—I am glad to hear that.

44,693. Part of the farm was let, you say. Seaforth-head was let to crofters?—Yes, to six crofters.

44,694. Now, is Seaforthhead a suitable place for fishermen's crofts?—No, I don't think so; the object of giving it to the crofters was to try crofting pure and simple.

44,695. Self-sustaining holdings?—Yes. The extent of the place, 4486 acres, puts the question of fishermen's lots quite out of the question.

44,696. But you know that the desire generally in this island is for fishing crofts?—No, I am not sure that that is so. I have met here with numerous replies as to why the fishing has not been successfully prosecuted, and it has been stated that three or four acres of arable land is requisite for a fishing crofter. Before the Crofters Commission I have had similar evidence. I have had the reply that a crofter could not go to the fishing because he had not a horse, which meant that he could not go to the fishing and have his croft too. My experience on the whole is that they want land, and that the fishing is a subsidiary affair.

44,697. The evidence we have had here to-day was certainly to the effect that they desired, above all things, to have crofts situated conveniently for the fishing?—That is so to-day.

44,698. And these Seaforth-head crofters are not such?—No, and I would deprecate the idea that the estate ever meant them to be such.

44,699. And you did not try to form fishermen's crofts on land better situated for fishing?—I have given you the whole of the changes made by the estate management.

44,700. The rent that was put upon them was something like £50?—£51.

44,701. Which, I suppose, did not give them the sporting privilege of the place?—No.

44,702. What do you think would be the sporting rent of Seaforth-head?—I am not competent to decide on that point. But I may tell you that the land was given to the crofters at a rent of £51, and the Crofters Commission decided that that was a fair rent.

44,703. But there is over and above that a certain sporting value on the place?—There will be some, more or less.

44,704. It would not let as a large farm, the remainder of it?—Not at the time of the lease running out.

44,705. But would it not let well enough for crofters holdings,—just as well for instance as Seaforth-head?—Oh dear, no. Seaforth-head was the ewe hirsel of Park; it could summer 700 ewes and winter over 300,

Stornoway, Lewis.
Peter Peterson Slater.

and I don't think you will find any other place in Park capable of doing that.

44,706. But every other part of Park is better suited for the great industry of the people,—fishing?—That may be so, but so far as lots go I think Seaforthhead was the prime part of the farm.

44,707. Did they not show as great a willingness to get other parts of Park as well as Seaforthhead?—I really cannot follow you there, further than saying that I have given you all the estate changes of the kind. I have not the slighest doubt that you are correct in stating that there are numerous people who would have taken lots.

44,708. Then, even when the Park forest was held as a farm, it had a great sporting value?—It had undoubtedly. I cannot condescend on the exact amount, but, I believe, it was something like £1100 while the rental of the place was only £800 or £900.

44,709. And what is the total value of it now?—£2000.

44,710. Do you get £2000 for Park Forest?—It is entered in the Valuation Roll at £1760, but that is after deducting the tenant's share of taxes. It is really a matter of about £2000.

44,711. And while it was under sheep the sporting was worth £1100?—Yes.

44,712. And the farmer paid £800?—I am not perfectly certain; Mr Orrock tells me £850 was the pastoral rent.

44,713. Then these two rents added together come to more than the amount now yielded by it as a deer forest?—It is a little higher now than the two together; but the rent that Mr Platt paid as sub-tenant of the shootings I have merely on hearsay.

44,714. *Mr Munro.*—Do I gather from all you have stated here to-day that there is really no additional land in the Lews available for crofter cultivation?—I would not say that there is no land that could be cultivated by crofters, but I hold that the condition of matters is that there is no available land in the proper sense of the word.

44,715. Is there land which could be given to them, and which they could cultivate with profit to themselves and pay you a fair rent?—In my opinion there is not. I speak with conviction upon that point,—an opinion which I have formed after hearing possibly 1600 or 1700 of them in their fair rent applications.

44,716. No one is better aware than you are that there is a great amount of discontent in the island. Now, have you any remedy to suggest for that discontent, seeing you have no additional land?—I am afraid I cannot suggest a remedy: I would leave that for the recommendation of the Royal Commission, though it is perhaps outside of their object of finding available land. I should think that, in the case of children of school age, who number between 5000 and 6000, if the boys, instead of leaving school at 13 or 14, and doing nothing till they are about 18, which is practically the case in the Lews, could be employed immediately after leaving school, they would not be so apt to take on the habits of the population around them; that would be the first step towards the remedy. This, however, is a private opinion of my own, which I do not submit as coming from the estate at all. If the boys went to the navy at the age of 14 or 15 it would be a good thing for them, but you will not get many of them to go when they are lads of 18 or 19 years of age. They do not employ themselves actively, it seems to me, until they are about 18 years old.

44,717. Do you consider the present population of the island more than it can properly sustain?—I state, with perfect frankness, that, I think, there should not be more than a third of the present population,—not even comfortably,—but to live with fair elbow room.

44,718. Looking at that state of matters, would you suggest emigration as one remedy?—I would rather leave these suggestions for yourself: it is really a very hard question to put. The estate has certainly tried to help emigration: Sir James Matheson spent £11,000 or so on voluntary emigration. No doubt numbers of these people were in arrear of rent; they had either to emigrate or leave, but their way was all paid for them. I understand the Government has attempted a scheme of emigration and has failed; what the causes of the failure are I cannot say, and I would not feel inclined to press my views upon the Commission even if I could.

Stornoway, Lewis.
Peter Peterson Slater.

44,718A. I think you are answering in a manner that is perfectly straightforward and frank in this matter.—That is my intention, at all events.

44,719. You have furnished us with a list of arrears of rent in the island, both of fair rents and otherwise,—a list which, I think, is perfectly appalling. Do you think the failure to pay these arrears is owing to want of will or to want of ability?—That is a matter I would not like to express any opinion upon. The arrears are there; I have stated their existence as a fact that faces us, but I would not like to judge one individual crofter in the island as to the cause of the arrears.

44,720. Take the forest of Park; supposing you advertise it to-morrow in one or more sheep farms, could it be let without a considerable loss to the proprietor?—Certainly not. If I am able to form any opinion whatever, it is let now at its best value.

44,721. *The Chairman.*—Am I right in saying that, in the cases heard by the Appeal Court of the Crofters Commission, which I think you attended throughout, the complaint of the appellants was mainly with regard to arrears?—That is so; mainly with regard to arrears.

44,722. And in a good many cases it was exclusively with regard to arrears?—Exclusively from the island of Bernera.

It is right that I should clear up the matter of this correspondence between certain crofters and Lady Matheson, which has been referred to more than once to-day. Lady Matheson received a letter from the villages of Gravir, Calbost, and Crobeg, in the parish of Lochs, dated 22nd November 1881. She then received another letter, apparently dated 23rd December 1882, that is fully a year afterwards, and in a letter of 5th December 1882 the following words occur:—'We have patiently waited for the last twelve 'months for your reply, having called for the same at 'your office repeatedly to no purpose. We most 'respectfully request a reply in writing, so that we may 'consider what steps should be taken so as to secure 'our object. We expect that the prayer of said petition has been favourably received by Lady Matheson 'and all concerned, and that our very distressing condition, which is becoming more and more serious, may 'induce you to give us an opportunity of earning an 'honest livelihood in our native island, specially when 'such a suitable opening occurs.' [That refers to Mr Sellar giving up his farm.] 'Waiting your reply, in 'name and on behalf of said petitioners, we respectfully 'remain your obedient servants, Kenneth Nicolson, 'Kenneth Macleod,' and many others. [*Minutes of Evidence*, vol. ii., p. 1144.]

Now, following upon that, was a letter dated 23rd December 1882, which, however, is only printed in the Appendix to Lord Napier's Report (vol. v., p. 152), which says:—'Honoured Lady, on behalf of a number 'of fishermen residing at Calbost, Maravich, and Gravir, 'in the parish of Lochs, I beg leave most respectfully 'to send you herewith copy of a petition, addressed by 'us to your ladyship, through Mr M'Kay, Chamberlain 'of Lewis, last January, and *to which we had no* 'reply.

'Trusting we may not be led to *resort* reluctantly 'to *such steps* as many of our unfortunate countrymen 'are *forced* to adopt.

'May I take the liberty of asking that you be so good 'as let the petitioners know your own views regarding 'the matters contained in the petition.—I have the 'honour to be your ladyship's obedient servant, 'Kenneth Nicolson.'

And then came Lady Matheson's reply, which is dated from Cleveland Row, London, 3rd January 1883:—

'Lady Matheson regrets that the above-named 'respectable class of Lewsmen should have been led to 'address her on a subject of such importance as that 'contained in their petition, by adding to it a letter

'which causes her to set aside their request, as Lady 'Matheson is too devoted to her Queen and the laws of 'which Her Gracious Majesty is the representative, to 'listen for one moment to a petition accompanied by a 'threat from them to infringe the laws by which all 'are governed, and by the support of which, as indi-'viduals, the well-being of the land and its communities 'at large can alone be promoted.' That seems to be the correspondence referred to?—Well, I leave the matter on that footing. I have not a word to say about it.

Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.—There is a small township in the neighbourhood of Stornoway here which appointed two delegates to appear before the Commission, but by a slight mishap their names have not been brought forward.

The Chairman.—A mishap of your own, do you mean?

Mr Macrae.—Well, on both sides,—on their part and on mine; and if your lordship would allow these delegates to appear and answer questions I will not ask any questions of Mr Slater. They are cottars in the immediate neighbourhood.

Mr Slater.—There is no wish on my part for such consideration.

DONALD MACLEOD, Laxdale (36)—*examined.*

44,723. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No, a squatter.

44,724. Where do you live?—At Laxdale.

44,725. Do you live on some one's holding there?—No.

44,726. Whose land are you upon?—I live in a small bothy outside the township.

44,727. Are you on the common?—On the roadside, between the fence and the road.

44,728. What evidence do you wish to give us to-day?—We are wanting some assistance like what the rest get.

44,729. What kind of assistance; do you want to get a holding?—Yes.

44,730. Could you pay the rent of a holding?—Yes.

44,731. How do you live at present; do you carry on any occupation?—Labouring.

44,732. In Stornoway?—Yes.

44,733. Have you employment at present?—No, I work about the quay.

44,734. You are anxious to get a holding near Stornoway?—Yes.

44,735. Was your father a crofter?—Yes.

44,736. Is he alive?—No.

44,737. Where was his holding?—In Gearshader.

44,738. Are you a married man?—Yes.

44,739. Have you a family?—Yes, two.

44,740. Where is it you desire to obtain a holding?—In Gearshader.

44,741. Could you set up a holding there without assistance?—Not very well.

DUNCAN MACDONALD, Cottar, Newmarket, near Stornoway,—*examined.*

44,742. *The Chairman.*—Are you a cottar?—Yes.

44,743. Where do you live?—I live at Newmarket, at the head of Loch Beneside?—I have a house on my father-in-law's croft.

44,744. When did you build that house?—About seven years ago.

44,745. What is his name?—John Macleod.

44,746. Do you pay him a rent?—I just pay him whenever he is in any need: I give him help, but not in the shape of rent.

44,747. Do you want to get another holding?—Yes, if I could possibly get it.

44,748. In that neighbourhood?—Yes.

44,749. Do you carry on labouring work?—My chief occupation is chimney-sweeping in Stornoway; I am well known here.

THE LEWS ESTATE.

ARREARS OF CROFTERS' RENTS ABATED BY PROPRIETOR FROM 1868 TO 1887 (see questions 44650–4, page 1082).

Parish.	1868.	1869.	1870.	1871.	1872.	1873.	1874.	1875.	1876.	1877.	1878.	1879.	1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	1886.	1887.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Stornoway,	...	...	377 17 1	...	1 4 10	...	0 5 0	...	38 2 11	35 2 4	13 1 8	137 6 3	45 4 8	18 6 8	10 1 3	...	11 13 3	15 18 8	7 8 7	20 17 2	732 10 4
Barvas,	...	...	551 8 9	...	...	...	...	0 19 6	204 9 2	7 8 5	...	28 6 3	78 16 2	66 15 9	...	33 1 2	19 0 3	10 4 0	21 5 7	40 0 3	1061 10 3
Uig,	...	...	73 12 7	...	...	...	...	14 6 4	117 7 9	3 6 3	...	1 19 3	...	15 13 6	...	14 14 7	13 19 3	5 2 0	8 8 4	40 18 1	309 7 11
Lochs,	...	...	66 5 7	...	...	...	4 10 0	...	51 19 8	0 5 6	...	55 8 3	39 6 11	44 6 2	20 8 4	37 0 5	...	34 10 3	3 7 2	39 4 9	396 13 0
Total,	..	...	1068 19 0	...	1 4 10	...	4 15 0	15 5 10	411 19 6	46 2 6	13 1 8	223 0 0	163 7 9	145 2 1	30 9 7	84 16 2	44 12 9	65 14 11	40 9 3	141 0 3	2500 1 5

(Signed) CHARLES ORROCK,
Chamberlain of the Lews.

Stornoway, Lewis.
Duncan Macdonald.

Stornoway, Lewis.

Duncan Macdonald.

44,750. You have regular employment?—Not regular, except during two months in the spring.

44,751. But you would like to get a holding?—Yes, I think I could make a decent living if I got a holding.

44,752. You are a married man, I suppose?—Yes.

44,753. With a family?—With a small family, and perhaps helping others as well as myself occasionally.

44,754. What family have you?—I have none of my own, but there are some women on the place nearly invalid, who cannot support themselves and they cannot work. Of course, I don't want to be an encumbrance: there is a young man who came from Glasgow last year who is the heir to the croft, and I see plainly that I cannot be long there.

44,755. You apprehend danger, and would like to get a holding somewhere else?—Yes.

44,755A. Supposing you got a holding, could you put up the necessary buildings without assistance?—I could, but that is not the case with many others whom I represent.

44,756. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you apply to the estate for a holding?—Yes, we did.

44,757. A number of the cottars applied?—Yes, and we sent letters also to Mr Weir, M.P., and even as far as the Secretary for Scotland.

44,758. Have you got copies of the letters that you sent to the estate?—I have none here, but, I suppose, Mr Orrock there could produce his own answers to Mr Weir.

44,759. But you wrote to the estate asking for holdings?—Yes.

44,760. What land did you apply for?—We applied to break up the farms. The tenant was leaving the small farm of Tong, and when we came to know that, we applied to the estate through Mr Orrock, but got a blunt refusal, only expressing regret that there was no land to be given. But we heard that that farm was given to another tenant.

44,761. Was there a number of cottars applying along with you at that time?—Yes, 31 cottars in the district that I am in.

44,762. Within a mile or two miles of Stornoway?—Two miles.

44,763. Do you know farms there that would be suitable for small holdings, for allotments?—Plenty places.

44,764. Give me the names of places that would be suitable?—Manor Farm.

44,765. Who has the Manor Farm to-day?—Mr Dugald Maclean.

44,766. Are there lands there suitable and available?—Yes, there are lands there suitable and as good as any in the whole island of Lewis.

44,767. Is there any other suitable farm in your neighbourhood?—There is a place called Marybank, and another piece at Gearraidh-Scoir, and between that and the black river, but I cannot say in whose occupation it is. There are lots of pieces that would do.

44,768. You invite the attention of the Royal Commission to these places as suitable for allotments for the cottars in the neighbourhood of Stornoway?—Yes.

44,769. How many cottars are there, do you say?—There are 31 cottars in our branch.

44,770-71. How many crofters are in that district?—There are three times as many crofters.

[Adjourned.]

FIFTY-THIRD SITTING.

Whalsey, Shetland.

WHALSEY, SHETLAND, July 17, 1894.

Present:—

David Brand, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
Michael Hugh Shaw Stewart, Esq., M.P.
George Gordon, Esq.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

James Rendall, Crofter, Clett, Whalsey (39)—*examined.*

James Rendall.

44,772. *The Chairman.*—You are a crofter in Clett?—Yes.

44,773. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

44,774. I see from the Report that your croft contains 5 acres, 1 rood, 37 poles arable, and 7 acres, 1 rood, 14 poles outrun. The old rent was £4, 10s. and the new rent is £2, 10s. You are one of several applicants who got an enlargement of holdings from the farm of Symbister. There were 13 applicants to whom 302 acres were assigned in equal shares at a rent of 15s. per share, thus raising your rent to £3, 5s.?—Yes.

44,775. Was that additional land grazing land, or was it partly arable and partly grazing?—It was all grazing.

44,776. Now, what is it that you desire to say to us? Have you a written statement?—No, I have just newly come ashore from the fishing, and had just time to get here, so I am rather hurried. We got a small bit of pasture when the Crofters Commission was here, but I am sorry to say that it can do us very little good; it is only a scrap along the shore, and there is no shelter in it. The sheep cannot live on it in winter.

44,777. What stock have you got?—Sixteen sheep go to a croft, but I have only part of a croft.

44,778. How many sheep belong to the holding?—Sixteen, as near as I can tell.

44,779. Are these of all sorts?—No, there are lambs as well, perhaps five lambs.

44,780. What cattle stock belongs to the holding?—Three cows, a quey, and a calf.

44,781. Is that the whole stock?—Yes.

44,782. You say you have a part of a croft only?—Yes.

44,783. What part have you?—Two-thirds.

44,784. Who has the other third?—My brother.

44,785. What is his name?—Hector Rendall.

44,786. Are there two separate dwelling-houses?—Yes.

44,787. And you tell us now that the enlargement you got is insufficient,—you desire more land still?—Yes, if we could get it, we would be glad of it.

44,788. You do not, I suppose, wish to leave your holding; it is an extension of grazings that you want?—Just extension of grazings for a few sheep.

44,789. Are you speaking just now as a delegate?—Yes, I am for the three townships of Clett, Sandwick, and Huxter.

44,790. You were appointed at a meeting to represent them?—Yes.

44,791. And do these three townships combine in asking us, through you, to consider whether you can get an extension of grazings on this island?—Yes.

44,792. I suppose such an extension would naturally come from the farm of Symbister?—Yes.

44,793. How is the rest of the island outside the limits of the farm occupied? Is it crofting land?—Patches of crofting land all along the sea-shore, except the middle of the island which is held in for a sheep farm.

Whalsey, Shetland. — James Rendall.

44,794. There is just one farm, I think, on the island?—Yes, one farm.

44,795. And that farm consists partly of land on the island of Whalsey, and partly of some outside islands?—Yes; there are some big islands.

44,796. Are these the islands of East and West Linga?—Yes, and the neighbouring islets.

44,797. Are there other small islets attached to that farm?—Yes, the Wether Holm, Bruse Holm, and Little Linga, on the west side; and on the east side of Whalsey is Great Skerry, and Nista, and Mooa, and Isbister Holm.

44,798. So that there are islands attached to the farm, or held along with the farm on both sides of Whalsey?—Yes.

44,799. And the principal of these is the island of West Linga?—Yes, that is the largest.

44,800. Are you able to indicate to us what part of the farm you have in view?—Yes, we would like just a little extension of what we got.

44,801. An extension of the existing enlargement?—Yes, it is named the Hoga Clett, the ancient scattald.

44,802. You refer particularly to the bit called the Hoga Clett: is that at the south end of the island?—Yes.

44,803. Can you tell us the extent of it?—No, I cannot.

44,804. How far is it from Symbister House?—Part of it is only half a mile or less distant.

44,805. Is any of it arable land now?—No.

44,806. And do you say that that land formerly formed part of your grazings?—Yes.

44,807. The grazings of the townships you represent?—Yes.

44,808. Can you tell us when it was lost?—It was lost about the year 1864, if I remember aright. We had been entirely without scattald for about 24 or 25 years at the time when the Crofters Commission came here.

44,809. Had you no scattald up to the date of the visit of the Commission?—No, we had none.

44,810. But you had had a scattald in former times?—Yes, Hoga Clett was the scattald.

44,811. Now, can you tell me how many crofters are in your township?—Five in Clett.

44,812. How many in Sandwick?—Five in Sandwick.

44,813. And in Huxter, how many?—Three.

44,814. Are there any cottars in these townships?—Yes, there are two in Sandwick.

44,815. And any in Huxter?—No, I think not in Huxter.

44,816. Are there any in Clett?—No.

44,817. Then there are just two cottars altogether as far as you know?—That is as far as I know. There are crofts on which two farmers live, but, I think, only two cottars, properly speaking.

44,818. Do you and your neighbours in these townships live mainly by your crofts, or mainly by fishing?—We would live very poorly by our crofts.

44,819. You are all fishermen, I suppose, those who are able to go to sea?—Yes, all fishermen.

44,820. And you have all boats or shares of boats?—Yes, most of us.

44,821. You depend mainly on the sea for your livelihood?—We depend partly on the fishing, but it is sometimes very poor. The fishing is a poor outlook, but the crofts cannot keep us half a year.

44,822. When you speak of fishing, you mean herring fishing and white fishing?—Yes.

44,823. And lobster fishing?—No.

44,824. Only herring and white fish?—Yes, and in some cases nothing but herring fishing.

44,825. Do you know who is tenant of the farm of Symbister at present?—Mr Adie of Voe. [*Mr Bain.*—Mr Thomas Adie].

44,826. *Mr Alexander Bain, Solicitor, Lerwick, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—Is the croft held by you and your brother?—The croft was taken in my father's name.

44,827. Then, is it now in your brother's name and your own jointly?—No, his part is in his own name, and my two-thirds in my name.

Whalsey, Shetland. — James Rendall.

44,828. And what is his rent?—His rent is one-third of £3, 5s.

44,829. And £3, 5s. was fixed by the Crofters Commission as the rent of the whole?—Yes, the rent of the whole.

44,830. Have any of the two cottars a share in the scattald?—No.

44,831. I see that in the findings of the Crofters Commission, when you got the extension, there was a provision for payment to the farm tenant of the value of certain fences, the value being set forth in the final order. Did the thirteen crofters pay that value?—Yes, we paid £47 for the fencing of the small patch that we got.

44,832. Has it been paid?—Yes, it has been paid.

44,833. What was your share of the herring fishing last year, which was a bad year?—I think my share came to £23 gross; but we were pretty successful; you need not measure everybody by that.

44,834. You have been pretty successful?—Yes. I must say we have, when there was any fishing; but nobody has been successful this while past.

44,835. When the scattald was taken away from you, in 1864 or whenever it was,—1865 I believe is the correct date,—was any reduction of rent given to you?—Yes.

44,836. How much?—25 per cent. I think; but that was about 30 per cent. above the fair rent still.

44,837. And you afterwards got back 300 acres of that scattald?—Yes, but a good many acres of it are simply stones along the sea-shore.

44,838. That was got back by agreement between you and the landlord?—No, it was done at the time we got it from the Crofters Commission,—we understood at the time that it was from the Commission, but we came to find afterwards that it was from Mr Hamilton.

44,839. There was a joint minute signed by your agent and the proprietor's agent by which the extension was given, but the place being let on lease it was contended that the extension was granted *ex gratia* by the landlord.

James Arthur.

James Arthur, Crofter, Nisthouse, Whalsey (61)—*examined.*

44,840. *The Chairman.*—You are a crofter at Nisthouse?—Yes.

44,841. Your holding seems to have 5 acres, 3 roods, 10 poles arable, 6 acres, 2 roods, 29 poles outrun, and a share in a common or scattald of 2458 acres, divided into 73 shares, of which 62 were dealt with by the Crofters Commission. The old rent was £6, 10s. and the fair rent £3, 5s.; the arrears were £5, 5s. 1d. and these were cancelled. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

44,842. Was that at the same meeting which appointed Rendall, or at another meeting?—I have been present at the whole of them. I was here when Mr Lyell was holding a meeting in Whalsey.

44,843. But was there a meeting recently to appoint delegates to appear before this Commission?—Yes.

44,844. And were you appointed?—I could not say.

44,845. Are you here to represent your own views?—Yes.

44,846. Or the views of the township to which you belong?—Yes, more especially.

44,847. How many crofters are in Nisthouse?—Six.

44,848. And how many cottars?—Three.

44,849. Do you represent any other township besides Nisthouse?—No.

44,850. What are the townships that share in the scattald of 2458 acres?—A number of tenants.

44,851. There seem to be 73 shares, but what are the names of the townships?—Toft, Sanswell, and Nisthouse.

44,852. Then, what is it you wish to represent to us?—I could not well say what all hands might be reflecting on.

Whalsey, Shetland. — James Arthur.

44,853. But perhaps you can say what is in your mind?—Yes.

44,854. Well, what is that?—There are various 'scruplings' about the scattald.

44,855. You want more scattald,—is that the point?—Well, I should not say it was not; I think it is true.

44,856. What is your own personal view of the matter?—The scattald we have is of no account.

44,857. What is wrong with it?—It cannot feed the animals at all; they put too many on it.

44,858. But would it be very good if they put a proper number on it?—Yes, it would.

44,859. It would be greatly improved if the cattle and sheep were in proportion to the grazing?—Yes, it would.

44,860. What stock have you yourself?—I think I have about a score of head to my family.

44,861. Twenty head of sheep?—Yes.

44,862. And how many lambs?—About an equal number.

44,863. What cattle have you?—Four cows and a calf.

44,864. Anything else?—No.

44,865. Are there any horses on the island among the crofters?—Yes, a few.

44,866. Have you a horse?—I have a share,—the tenth share of five horses.

44,867. Then, you have the horses among you to work the land?—They just go on the scattald like the sheep.

44,868. They are ponies, I suppose?—Yes.

44,869. How do you till the land in spring,—is it by means of the ponies?—No, we slave our poor bodies over it, and we have very little for it when all is done, if it comes a bad season. So it all depends on the sea, and if the sea fails us, where are we? The prices for the fish are very low.

44,870. Does each crofter in Whalsey look after his own sheep, or are they herded by a common herd?—They are supposed each to look after his own.

44,871. And every one keeps as many as he likes?—Yes.

44,872. Then, perhaps you have as much grazing as you are able to look after already?—Perhaps, but it is very little, for the whole of the sheep from the one end to the other, from Symbister to the Skaw, are all put together to go heads over heels, and they eat the place up.

44,873. Then, do you, or do you not wish more land?—My reflection for the whole is that the best of the island is taken up by the farm of Symbister, and the rest is of no account to feed the animals upon.

44,874. Is there more than one house on your croft?—Only one.

44,875. Are any of the crofts in Toft or Nisthouse divided?—Yes.

44,876. How many are divided?—Two in Nisthouse are divided, but none in Toft.

44,877. Any in Sanswell?—No.

44,878. I suppose you all depend on the sea a good deal for your livelihood?—Yes.

44,879. More than on the crofts?—Yes.

44,880. Your crofts are handy for the sea-shore?—Yes.

44,881. And for fishing?—Yes.

44,882. *Mr Munro.*—Did I understand you to say that you wished part of the farm of Symbister divided among the crofters of the island?—They were not free of asking it, but it was not granted.

44,883. What part did they point at, any particular part of the farm?—It was two islands on the east of Whalsey that they wanted.

44,884. *Mr Gordon.*—Did you say that the sheep from Symbister went down to Scarpa Point?—Yes, they go from the one end of the island to the other, outside of fences.

44,885. They mix with your sheep?—Yes, outside the fences.

44,886. Is there not a fence between the crofter land and the farm?—Yes.

44,887. And does that fence not keep the sheep in on each side?—Yes, but it is of very little account; outside the fence is of no account.

Whalsey, Shetland. — James Arthur.

44,888. As a matter of fact then, do the sheep from the farm stray over the crofters' grazings?—No.

44,889. What is it then?—The crofters' animals go into the park.

44,890. Do the farm sheep come down to Scarpa point?—No, the crofters' sheep that are outside of the fence go all to the sea, and everywhere they can go. There is many a place they cannot winter, and they go down to the ebb to feed.

44,891. Then the farm sheep do not get on to the crofters' scattald?—No, no.

44,892. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Supposing the scattald were extended, how could you be sure that the crofters would not put too much stock on it still, just as they do on their present pasture?—I doubt they might.

44,893. *The Chairman.*—Have you heard of the Crofters Grazings Act for regulating common grazings, under which the crofters form a committee among themselves to regulate the grazings?—Yes, just lately.

44,894. But you have not done anything to adopt it?—No; but we hear that a committee has been appointed in this island to adopt it and carry it out.

44,895. I think you and your friends should consider that Act. Now, you spoke just now about the sheep getting down to the ebb to feed. What do you mean by that?—That is the best feeding they get.

44,896. They feed upon the sea-weed?—Yes.

44,897. At ebb-tide?—Yes.

44,898. Is that their main feeding during winter?—It is.

44,899. How many months of the year do they go to the ebb?—The whole of the winter, from the end of harvest till the month of May, and all summer as well as all winter.

44,900. They take it in summer as well as winter?—Yes, most of them.

44,901. For how many months of the year would you say the grass grazing is good?—From May till November, and past that; I might say almost on to Christmas.

44,902. The crops this year are very good, are not they?—Well, we are not considering that yet; they are somewhat poor at present, but we are hoping for good weather to bring them forward.

44,903. I understand regulations have been issued applicable to some parts of this island if not to your township; but you have not got them?—No; but we hear they are to be enforced after the crops are off the ground next autumn.

44,904. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—Was there any scattald taken from you?—No, except what the outsets have done, but outside the park itself at Middle Whalsey is free to everybody.

44,905. Now, you tell us that the quality of the stock that the crofters have is exceedingly poor?—Very poor, that is the worst.

44,906. And the quality of the scattald in Mr Adie's farm is better?—It is kept better, so it must be better.

44,907. Is that because there is less stock on the land?—Yes, the stock is very small for the extent of the pasture.

44,908. The scattald is of the same quality itself, only it is kept better?—Yes.

44,909. Do I understand you to say that the crofters' sheep graze on Mr Adie's farm,—get through the fence and graze on Mr Adie's scattald?—From inside the fence?

44,910. Yes?—Oh, the sheep are well kept; he has a man for the purpose.

44,911. But do the crofters' sheep go on to Mr Adie's farm?—Yes, they creep in about it and annoy him, that is, a few of them.

44,912. Do I understand you to say that the crofters that you represent would be perfectly satisfied, or, at all events, much better pleased if every man had his own share in the scattald,—is that what you want to say?—Well, I could not say,—I never reflected upon that, because I see no scattald to get a share of.

44,913. Would it not suit you if every man were

allowed to carry a certain stock and no more?—May be it might not be what I or others would desire, but it would be a just thing.

44,914. And the scattald would be very much improved, would it not? It would be better as the years go on?—Oh, yes, of course, with less stock.

44,915. What number of ponies did you say you have?—I have a tenth share of five.

44,916. Are these five grazing on the common scattald?—Just so.

44,917. Have any of your family any ponies?—No.

44,918. That is all that belongs to the house?—Yes.

PETER GILBERTSON, Brough, Whalsey (31)—*examined.*

44,919. *The Chairman.*—Were you appointed a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

44,920. Are you the son of James Gilbertson?—Yes.

44,921. His croft extends to 4 acres, 31 poles arable, 1 acre, 18 poles outrun, and a share in the common of 2458 acres; old rent £5, 10s. and fair rent £2, 12s.?—Yes.

44,922. What is it you wish to say to us?—That we are in need of more scattald. I represent all the rest of the island.

44,923. Just mention the townships, please.—Brough, Hamister, Marrister, Creedyknowe, Burns, Challister, and Skaw.

44,924. You represent the whole of these seven townships?—Yes.

44,925. And were these crofters from all these places at the meeting which appointed you?—Yes.

44,926. In what respect do you find the scattald you have already insufficient?—It is bad in quality; there is no grass on it.

44,927. Is that the fault of the quality of the land, or for its being over-grazed?—The quality of the grazing.

44,928. Is it or is it not over-grazed?—It is not overgrazed.

44,929. Does each crofter put any number of sheep he chooses upon the scattald?—Yes.

44,930. And cattle also?—Yes.

44,931. And ponies?—The cattle are generally inside of the dyke, unless sometimes through the day for a while, if it is a fine summer's day they may be out.

44,932. Can you give us any idea of the number of ponies there are in the townships you represent?—No, I cannot say.

44,933. Has your father a pony or a share of one?—No.

44,934. In what direction do you suggest that the scattald might be usefully extended,—I suppose it could only be extended into the farm lands of Symbister?—That is all.

44,935. What part of the farm have you in view? Do you mean a part of the farm in the island itself, or on those outlying islets, or has that matter been considered by you and your friends?—The islands or the home scattald would do.

44,936. That is to say, part of the scattald which is at present attached to the farm of Symbister?—Yes.

44,937. Can you give us any idea of the extent of scattald belonging to the farm at present?—No.

44,938. Can you tell us what extent of additional land these townships desire?—No. All the best of our scattald is taken away for cottars, all along the seashore.

44,939. How many cottars are in Brough?—There are over a dozen in the townships I have mentioned.

44,940. Has each of these cottars got stock?—Yes.

44,941. Both cattle and sheep?—Yes.

44,942. And do these cattle and sheep feed upon the crofters' scattald?—Yes.

44,943. They have no other feeding?—No.

44,944. Do the cottars pay any rent?—Yes, a little.

44,945. To whom do they pay rent?—To Mr Bruce, the proprietor, I suppose.

44,946. What is the average cottar's rent, do you think?—£1, or 30s., or thereabouts. [*Mr Bruce.*—From £1 to 12s. is the average]. Those that pay 12s. have no land, but only peats. Whalsey, Shetland.

44,947. Do the cottars pay for peats?—Yes, the house site and the right to cut peats, that is 12s. Peter Gilbertson.

44,948. And those who have land pay from 20s. to 30s.?—Yes, 20s. to 25s. and 30s.

44,949. Have these cottars both arable land and grazing?—Yes. Some of them have far more than the crofters have; some of them have three times as much.

44,950. Are the cottars scattered over these townships, or are they chiefly in one particular township?—Scattered over the whole.

44,951. Are the houses in these townships divided?—Some of them are divided.

44,952. Many of them?—No, not many.

44,953. Are there any divided houses in your township of Brough?—Just one, I think.

44,954. Your own croft is not divided?—No.

44,955. And there is only one divided house in your township?—Yes.

44,956. Do you live with your father?—Yes.

44,957. Are you a married man?—Yes; I am his only son.

44,958. And you live in family with your father?—Yes.

44,959. Do these townships depend mainly on the fishing?—Yes, principally.

44,960. Herring fishing and white fishing?—Yes.

44,961. Would the crofters you represent be prepared to pay such an additional rent as might be laid upon land assigned, in addition to the scattald you already have?—Oh, I think so.

44,962–63. They are able to pay?—Oh, yes.

44,964. What was your share of the herring fishing last year?—Between £12 and £20 gross.

44,965. And this year it will be more perhaps?—Yes.

44,966. This is a better year for fishing?—Yes.

44,967. *Mr Munro.*—To put the crofters in a fairly comfortable position, would they require really the whole of the island?—Yes, the whole of the island, and that even would not put them in a comfortable position. There are about 900 inhabitants on this small island.

44,968. What would put them in a comfortable position,—nothing in the island I suppose?—No, nothing in the island.

44,969. They would require always to supplement their living by fishing, I suppose?—Yes.

44,970. Now, could they pay a fair rent for the whole island supposing they got it?—Oh, yes.

44,971. It would go a long way to satisfy their demands and needs at present if they got that?—Oh, yes.

44,972. *Mr Gordon.*—What is the difference between a crofter and a cottar if the cottar has land?—Well, I don't know I am sure.

44,973. Why do you call the one a cottar?—It is people that went outside our dykes and fenced in ground there.

44,974. A cottar is a man set down on the common pasture?—Yes, who went in on our pasture and fenced in a bit of ground and built a house on it.

44,975. Does he fence his crops, or how are they protected?—He fences them.

44,976. The only distinction between a cottar and a crofter is whether he is within the township dykes?—Yes.

44,977. If he is, and holds land, he is a crofter, and if he is outside and holds land he is a cottar?—Yes, we call them cottars.

44,978. How many of these are there in the townships?—I know there are more than a dozen.

44,979. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You say that the crofts which the crofters have at present are too small?—Yes, I say so.

44,980. Would some of the crofters be willing to leave the present townships and take new holdings that might be formed on Symbister farm?—I think so; I have no doubt about it.

Whalsey, Shetland.

Peter Gilbertson.

44,981. Have they been considering that, and do they look to that as the solution of the question here?—They have considered that, I think.

44,982. When was this farm of Symbister formed?—I could not say,—it was before I was born. [*Mr Bain.*—It is over a hundred years old.]

44,983. The scattald was taken from the crofters, I think, in 1865?—Yes, I think so: I heard so.

44,984. Do you know whether there were ever crofters on the low ground of Symbister?—Yes, there were some crofters there: there are two crofts in Sodom and two in Whitefield.

44,985. And you think it would be an advantage to the islanders to have the whole farm of Symbister divided amongst them?—Yes, I think it would be a great advantage.

44,986. That would mean, of course, the formation of new crofts there?—Yes.

44,987. The peats are cut, I suppose, on the scattald?—Yes.

44,988. And do you say that the cottars pay to the landlord for the peats which they use?—Yes, the peats are cut out of our scattald and paid to the landlord.

44,989. These cottars have enclosed, you say, some land which they cultivate?—Yes.

44,990. And they pay for that land to the landlord also?—Yes.

44,991. When was the last cottar settled on the scattald?—The last one that I remember was about 20 years ago.

44,992. Was he placed there by the landlord, do you think?—I think he just went of his own free will.

44,993. But he paid rent to the landlord for the land which he took?—Yes, but how much or how little I don't know. He was put out of the croft he was in, and he went outside the dykes and fenced in a piece.

44,994. Do you know the total number of crofters in the island?—No, I cannot say.

44,995. Do you know the population?—The population is surely pretty near 900, or between 900 and 1000. [*Mr Bain.*—In 1886 it was 942.]

44,996. A great proportion of this island and all the neighbouring small islands are included in the one farm of Symbister?—Yes.

44,997. And the best of the land, I suppose, is included in that farm?—Yes, by far the best; what is outside of that farm is of no use at all; there is not a worse place in Shetland nor yet in Scotland.

44,998. *The Chairman.*—The population is stated to have been 942 in 1886. Can you tell us what it was at the last census, 1891?—No, I cannot tell, but there were over 1000 in Whalsey and Skerries together.

44,999. Do you know what the population was at the previous census of 1881?—No.

45,000. Can you tell us generally whether the population has been increasing?—Yes, it is always increasing; it has increased a good deal since the herring fishing commenced.

45,001. When did it commence?—They commenced with big boats in 1879, I think.

45,002. And that led to an increase of the population?—Yes.

45,003. You say there are about a dozen cottars, and we have it that you have 2458 acres of scattald, and the cottars live on the scattald. Is the land which the cottars occupy and have fenced in included in the 2458 acres, or excluded?—I don't know: it is likely to be excluded, I think. [*Mr Bain.*—I understand it is excluded. That area is probably the extent of the scattald when the Crofters Commission was here.]

45,004. Do the crofters pay anything for peats?—No.

45,005. It is all in the rent?—All in the rent.

45,006. Can you tell me how many large boats are in the island altogether?—There are about twenty, I think.

45,007. Boats that can go to sea for a fortnight at a time?—Well, yes, but they never go for more than a week. I believe the population of Whalsey and the Skerries at last census (1891) was 1094.

45,007A. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—In 1865, the grazing was taken from the crofters: can you tell me how the Symbister sheep grazed before that time?—They just went at large over the whole island.

45,008. Before 1865, the Symbister sheep and the crofters' sheep all grazed promiscuously?—Yes.

45,009. And in 1865, a portion was fenced in for the farm?—Yes.

45,010. Now, can you tell me how you come to say that the grazing is not overstocked just now? When did you count the stock on the grazing?—It has never been counted: some have a few and others none at all.

45,011. You cannot tell me what stock is on it just now?—No, I could not.

45,012. Not even approximately?—No.

45,013. Then, you cannot say, as a matter of fact, whether the grazing is overstocked or not?—To all appearance it is not overstocked, going through it and seeing what sheep are on it. But it is overstocked, keeping in mind the quality of the ground, which is bad.

45,014. Can you imagine that twenty years ago the grazing outside Symbister farm was as good as the grazing inside the farm is now?—No, it was not.

45,015. You think the best part was taken in for the Symbister farm?—Yes, it has always been that, because there is never anything on it except a few sheep sometimes.

45,016. Did the Crofters Commission give the cottars any right in the scattald?—I don't know, I am sure.

45,017. As a matter of fact, have the cottars that you talked to the Court about any right to graze sheep or cattle on the same scattald that you graze them on?—Whether they have right or not they graze on the scattald the same as we do.

45,018. Are there more than 73 houses having grazing rights on the 2458 acres of scattald?—There are surely that; I don't know the number.

45,019. When you say that there are people grazing on the farm other than the crofters, do I understand you to mean people paying 12s. or 10s. of rent?—Yes.

45,020. And they are grazing on it?—Yes.

45,021. But if they had no right to graze on it, and their stock was taken off, that would improve it very considerably, would not it?—Not much.

45,022. Have they not much stock?—Some of them have more stock than the crofters.

45,023. Then, if their stock were taken off, would not that improve the grazing very much?—Not much, I think.

45,024. You think it would not improve, in fact?—No, I don't think it ever will improve.

45,025. Nothing will improve it?—No, nothing will improve it, because it is useless.

45,026. You say you would take the whole farm of Symbister. Do you know what the rent of Symbister is?—The rent of Symbister in 1889, when the Crofters Commission was here, was, I think, £85, besides the islands.

45,027. But I understand you would take both the islands and the farm?—Yes.

45,028. You would not leave out the islands?—No, we would have the islands too.

45,029. Can you tell me what the rent of the whole would be?—No.

45,030. If it was £117, 10s., would you be prepared to take over that?—Yes.

45,031. And to take over the present stock at valuation?—Well, I don't know about that.

45,032. You don't think you would be able to take over the stock that is on it just now?—No, I don't think they would be able to purchase that.

45,033. Supposing the gross rental of the land part of the island, apart from what is held by the crofters, to be over £200, would they be in a position to take over all that?—Yes.

45,034. And pay the rent?—Yes.

45,035. Was the name of the squatter you spoke of John Irvine?—Yes, that is the only one I remember about.

45,036. He paid no rent for many years?—No.

45,037. Are your peats not largely cut on Mr Adie's farm?—No, none of the townships I represent.

45,038. Do you know whether a large portion of the peats of the island are cut on Mr Adie's scattald?—I don't know I am sure. I don't know about the south part of the island. [*Mr James Rendall.*—Yes, we cut some there.]

45,039. Are the crofters given to scalping the scattald?—They did once, but they do not now.

45,040. When did they stop?—I don't know: they have not done much in my time, but a great deal was done before that.

45,041. They are not scalping any now?—No.

45,042. *The Chairman.*—How many schools are in the island?—Two.

45,043. And how many churches?—Just this one.

45,044. Has any scattald been taken from you?—Yes, all the best part was taken in by cottars.

45,045. But you have not lost scattald except in so far as it has been taken in by cottars?—No, except, of course, what was added to the Symbister farm in 1865.

45,046. They take it by simply appropriating a piece, fencing it round, and cultivating a portion of it?—Yes. There is a part to the southward of Marrister that was taken in by the landlord: it belongs to the farm.

45,047. *Mr Bain.*—But your croft never shared in that?—Yes, it was common the same as the rest.

45,048. That was before 1865?—Yes, it might be before that.

45,049. It was all common then?—Yes, all common then. It belongs to the farm of Symbister, and there are a few crofters who have it under rent from Mr Adie.

ROBERT WISHART, Symbister, Whalsey (33)—*examined.*

45,050. *Mr Bain.*—I understand this man, who is a joiner, is not a tenant in the island at all.

45,051. *The Chairman.*—I will see what he says, and if he is not a competent witness, of course, we will not take him.

45,052. *The Chairman.*—Where do you live?—At Symbister.

45,053. Are you a joiner to trade?—Yes.

45,054. Your name is appended to an application received by the Secretary for examination as a landless man. In whose house do you live?—In a house belonging to Messrs Hay & Co.

45,055. And what rent do you pay them?—£3, 10s.

45,056. Have you any land?—No, I have no land.

45,057. Have you not even a patch for potatoes?—No, none whatever.

45,058. And do you gain your living entirely by your trade?—No, not entirely; the trade is of little account in this island. I live partly by my trade and partly by other work.

45,059. Labouring?—Yes.

45,060. You do not go to the sea?—No: I have been at sea.

45,061. But you do not live by the sea at present?—No, not at present.

45,062. What is it you wish to say to us?—I wish to be a crofter if possible, to get a bit of land to cultivate.

45,063. You wish to get a holding upon this island if it can be obtained?—Yes.

45,064. What size of holding do you wish to get?—I cannot just say the size, but I would like to get a small bit. There are four crofts that were taken away from the crofters, that is the townships of Sodom and Whitefield.

45,065. Which are now part of the farm of Symbister?—Yes.

45,066. And I take it your idea is to get a holding there?—Yes, if possible.

45,067. With some arable land and grazing attached?—Yes.

45,068. In short, you would like very much to be as well off as one of the crofters in the island?—Yes.

45,069. Could you pay a rent for such a holding?—Yes, I think so. Whalsey, Shetland.

45,070. And could you enter upon such an undertaking and put up a house without assistance?—Well, the house belonging to the croft is still there. Robert Wishart.

45,071. You would propose to repair it and reconstruct it?—Yes, the four of us want to apply for the four crofts. There are four applicants, and two of them are stopping in the houses. The houses belonged originally to the crofts.

45,072. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—When were these four crofts added to the farm of Symbister?—About 30 years ago, I think. There are two of the crofters still alive who were on it.

45,073. Where are they?—They are on this island; they are old men now.

45,074. Do you know why these four were removed at that time?—No, I could not say; I think it was just because they wanted it taken into the farm as part of the grazing.

45,075. You think it was just in order to add their holding to the farm?—Exactly so.

45,076. And is the land under cultivation at present?—No, it is under grazing on the farm of Symbister.

45,077. *The Chairman.*—Are Messrs Hay & Co. located here as fishcurers?—Yes.

45,078. What extent of ground have they?—They have nothing but the shop and the station.

45,079. And is your house situated on the station?—Close by it.

45,080. And you work to them?—Yes.

45,081. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—When these crofters were shifted, did they get other crofts, or were they turned out?—One of them got an inferior croft and the other three were put into little houses for shelter. They were not put out of the island.

45,082. You do not remember about it yourself?—I do not.

45,083. *The Chairman.*—Do you belong to Whalsey?—Yes, I was born in Symbister.

WILLIAM JOHNSTON, Sodom, Whalsey (45)—*examined.* William Johnston.

45,084. *The Chairman.*—Do you live at Sodom?—Yes.

45,085. And have you any land?—No.

45,086. Do you desire to obtain a holding if it can be got?—Yes.

45,087. Where would you have it?—Either in Sodom or in Whitefield.

45,088. Do you know about these places being brought into the farm of Symbister?—No, that is a thing I don't know about.

45,089. Do you not belong to Whalsey?—No, I belong originally to the Skerries.

45,090. That is the Outer Skerries, is it?—Yes.

45,091. Could you take a holding if you got one, and put up a house?—Yes.

45,092. And pay a rent?—Yes.

45,093. Are you anxious to obtain such a holding?—Very anxious.

45,094. How do you earn a living at present?—By fishing and labouring.

45,095. Do you work to Hay & Co.?—Yes.

45,096. And are you paid by them according to your fishing?—Yes.

45,097. You have no wage from them?—I work ashore for them and earn 3d. an hour; some days I do nothing, and other days perhaps only a few hours.

45,098. Do Hay & Co. supply you with a boat, or have you a share of a boat?—The boat I was in Mr Hamilton had a share of, and I fished to him for some time.

45,099. And now you are fishing to Hay & Co.?—No, but labouring to Hay & Co.

45,100. Do you pay a rent at present?—Yes.

45,101. What rent?—26s.

45,102. For the site of the house?—Yes.

Whalsey, Shetland. — William Johnston.

45,103. And for the right to cut peats?—Yes.

45,104. Where do you cut your peats?—In the park of the Hoga, and park of Huxter, in Mr Adie's farm of Symbister.

45,105. What is the Hoga,—is that a bit of the farm?—No, I am in the Clett folks' share of the Hoga.

45,106. You cut peats on the part of the Hoga where the township of Clett go for their peats?—Yes.

45,107. And do you cut peats anywhere else?—On the park of Huxter belonging to Mr Adie.

45,108. That is in Symbister Farm?—Yes.

45,109. Now, is this land that you have in view grazing land, or arable land, or both?—Grazing land at present, but it has been arable land before.

45,110. How long is it since it was arable land?—About 30 years.

45,111. Do you remember the transaction that took place in 1865?—No, I was not here at the time.

45,112. *Mr Munro.*—Are there many people in the island at present landless who desire to get land?—A good number.

45,113. Can you give us any idea of the number?—No, really I cannot, but there are a good many.

45,114. The desire is strong amongst them, I suppose, to get land?—Yes, it is.

45,115. What size of a croft do you aim at yourself?—About the common run, I suppose; that will be about seven or eight acres arable and outrun.

45,116. Would that be sufficient to maintain yourself and your family without outside work?—It may not be sufficient, but it would be a great help with the bit of earnings we get otherwise.

45,117. You would still follow the fishing?—Oh, yes.

45,118. Can you cultivate a croft and follow the fishing satisfactorily at the same time?—Yes.

45,119. The family would cultivate the croft while you were away at the fishing?—Yes.

45,120. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did you hear one of the witnesses say, that if the crofters had the whole island they would still not be in a comfortable position?—Yes, I think I heard that.

45,121. Do you agree with that?—Well, of course, if they had the whole island it would be a great help in several ways, for they are severely hemmed in at present in every way. The average that they can have at the present time is about a dozen sheep to a croft, and what benefit can that do them? None. Some years again the crop is destroyed by the gust and they get no benefit from the earth. The only thing they have to fall back upon is the fishing, and when that fails too they have nothing to depend on.

45,122. And yet, in spite of all the difficulties, the chances of seagust, and the bad land, and sometimes bad crops, you still think you could make a good thing of a croft?—Oh, yes; it would be a great help at any-rate.

45,123. *Mr Gordon.*—Are these crofts of Sodom and Whitefield that you mention not just about the very centre of the farm of Symbister?—They are close to the township of Sodom; there is just a fence between them and it.

45,124. Are they near Skiberhoull?—No, further east.

45,125. That is in the very centre of the pasture of the farm?—Yes.

45,126. You could not have crofts there without great inconvenience to the tenants of the farm?—I don't think it would damage the farm much.

45,127. Are there any crofts at Sodom at present?—Yes two crofts, and only a fence between them and Symbister.

45,128. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—Is it not the case that the crofts at Sodom of which you speak, are merely potato patches, without any arable land?—I don't believe but what they are cultivated, every bit of them.

45,129. But at the present moment the crofts there are only potato patches?—They are regular crofts.

45,130. You say you could pay for a farm and build a house?—Yes.

45,131. Are you considerably in debt at this moment?—No. — Whalsey, Shetland. — William Johnston.

45,132. You owe no very large debts, do you?—No.

45,133. Now, you say a great many people want land and cannot get it in Whalsey?—Yes.

45,134. Can you tell us whether that may mean half a dozen or a dozen, or thirty or forty, or a hundred, or what?—I would not wonder if it was over twenty.

45,135. Over twenty in Whalsey at this moment who could stock land?—As to their capabilities I cannot speak.

45,136. Are these twenty men, men who could build a house and stock a farm?—I cannot speak for them.

45,137. Are these men of mature years, 21 and upwards?—Yes.

45,138. Have you ever been a crofter yourself?—No, but my father was.

45,139. You have never had anything to do with the working of a croft yourself?—No.

45,140. *The Chairman.*—How do you dispose of sheep in this island? Are they taken to Lerwick, or do drovers come here?—Some use them for themselves.

45,141. Is the value of the sheep mainly in the wool?—Mainly in the wool.

45,142. And is the wool of sheep grown on this island largely used by the female members of the community for knitting?—Yes.

45,143. And making hosiery?—Yes, but they cannot get as much as will keep them going.

45,144. Is there a considerable manufacture of hosiery here by the women?—A great deal.

45,145. And how is it disposed of?—Sent to Lerwick and further south.

JOHN JOHNSON, Sodom, Whalsey (34)—*examined.* — John Johnson.

45,146. *The Chairman.*—Have you no land?—No.

45,147. Are you a fisherman?—Yes, I have been a fisherman, but I am labouring with Hay & Co. now.

45,148. Do you pay a rent to them?—No, I pay rent to Mr Bruce.

45,149. What rent do you pay him?—I pay 12s. for the peats. I built the house myself: it is a small house.

45,150. Are you anxious to get a holding?—Yes: the house is too small; it is not comfortable, and we cannot make it larger.

45,151. Why not?—We cannot get liberty.

45,152. Have you applied for liberty?—Yes.

45,153. And was it refused?—Yes.

45,154. What was the reason given?—The tenants that have the ground won't give liberty.

45,155. The tenants will not consent?—No.

45,156. You heard the evidence given by William Johnston?—Yes.

45,157. Is he any relative of yours?—He is an uncle of mine.

45,158. Do you concur in the evidence he gave with regard to getting a new holding?—Yes.

45,159. Could you undertake a holding, and put up a house at your own expense?—Yes: I would get a little help if I required it.

45,160. You would have no difficulty in getting help?—No.

45,161. What was your share of the fishing last year?—I was not fishing last year; I was working ashore as a labourer.

45,162. Then, I suppose, I may take you as concurring in the evidence given by your uncle?—Yes. It is a croft I was wishing, if possible.

45,163. A croft such as we have on the island already?—Yes.

45,164. With some arable land and outrun?—Yes.

45,165. And a right of grazing?—Yes; one of the crofts at Whitefield.

45,166. Have you any stock yourself?—No, I keep none: I have no liberty to keep stock.

45,167. Do you belong to Whalsey?—Yes, I was born in the Skerries.

45,168. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—What land is your

house on?—On John Arthur's land, originally: John Arthur, Sodom.

45,169. It is on a croft?—Yes.

45,170. And you were refused liberty to add to your house,—is that so?—Yes.

45,171. Who built the house originally?—We built the house for ourselves; it was one of the offices belonging to the land we were applying for,—a barn or a byre.

45,172. How many apartments are in your house?—One room divided in two; and I have a wife and two children, and a mother.

45,173. Is there just one room, or two rooms?—We can only call it one room.

45,174. And one fire?—Yes, we have a small fire occasionally, but it is not very comfortable, the house is so small.

45,175. How far is the place where you live from the fence of the farm of Symbister?—The fence goes down by the side of our house: the land we are applying for is just alongside the house.

45,176. Was that the land you asked to build upon?—Yes, that is the croft we are wishing, or any land suitable about the farm.

45,177. But was there a croft next to the house you live in?—Yes, that one that the office belonged to.

45,178. What was the name of it?—Sodom.

45,179. And is anyone living in the dwelling-house of that croft?—Yes, Laurence Laurenson.

45,180. Is he a crofter?—No.

45,181. He has no land?—No.

45,182. How long have you been living there?—About 20 years.

45,183. Then, you came there as a boy?—Yes.

45,184. Was your father with you?—No.

45,185. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—You were not refused liberty by the landlord to improve your house in any way?—No.

45,186. It was the neighbouring tenants who would not give you permission?—Yes.

45,187. You do not remember Whitefield being occupied as crofters' houses, do you?—No, but there is very good evidence about it for all that.

45,188 As a matter of fact, it was so.

45,189. *The Chairman.*—Can you give us any idea how many men, like yourself, are in this island that have no land at all?—There is a good many.

45,190. Will there be more than twenty?—I think there will be three times that.

45,191. Scattered over the island?—Yes.

45,192. Are there any others in Sodom that have no land, except yourself and William Johnston?—No, unless Laurence Laurenson, who is an old man.

45,193. Has he no land?—No, he stops at the house on the land we are asking about.

ROBERT ANDERSON, Whitefield, Whalsey (29)—*examined.*

45,194. *The Chairman.*—Do you live at Whitefield?—Yes.

45,195. Have you any land?—No.

45,196. Are you with Hay & Co?—I fish for Hay & Co.

45,197. To whom do you pay rent?—To Mr Bruce.

45,198. What is your rent?—£1, 12s.

45,199. What do you get for that rent?—Just the four walls of the house.

45,200. And the right to cut peats?—Yes.

45,201. But no land at all?—No land.

45,202. Who put up that house?—Mr Bruce, I believe.

45,203. How long have you been there?—Over five years.

45,204. Where do you come from?—From Symbister.

45,205. Where was your croft on Symbister?—We had no croft there.

45,206. Were you a servant there?—My grandfather was cooper for Hay & Co. there.

45,207. And did he live on what is now the farm?—He lived in the township of Symbister, just above the beach. Whalsey, Shetland. Robert Anderson.

45,208. And your father, did he live there?—No.

45,209. Where did he live?—In Sandwick.

45,210. Have you the same desire as these other witnesses who have been examined to get a croft?—Yes.

45,211. Are you willing to pay rent for it, and to put up a house on it?—Yes, the house is up.

45,212. Where is the house?—The house I live in.

45,213. You just want land as near the house as can be got?—Yes, the land is just before the door: the house stands on the land.

45,214. Is there a fence in front of the house?—No.

45,215. Who occupies the land at present?—It is part of the farm.

45,216. And it is not fenced off from where you are?—No. It is fenced off from the rest of the townships.

45,217. Does the farm come close up to your door?—Yes, the house is standing on the farm.

45,218. What was your share of the fishing last year?—For the last five years the average has been £11 gross. I have no share as owner of a boat: I am only a hired man.

45,219. But it will be more this year, I suppose?—It is not more at present at anyrate.

45,220. Are you a married man?—Yes.

45,221. With what family?—Three.

45,222. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—Can you tell us the extent of Whitefield?—It is about 30 acres.

45,223. Of arable land?—Yes. During the last two years three families have had to leave the island for want of land, and take land in the Island of Yell.

45,224. *The Chairman.*—What are their names?—James Arthur was one.

45,225. What family had he?—A mother and two or three sisters.

45,226. He was not married?—No.

45,227. And the names of the other two?—Laurence Irvine and William Bruce.

45,228. Was Laurence Irvine a married man?—Yes.

45,229. What family had he?—Three or four children.

45,230. Was William Bruce married?—Yes, he had eight or nine children.

45,231. Where did they stay?—They stayed on the east side of the island.

45,232. What was the name of the place?—These two stayed in a place called Rooier, and James Arthur stayed at Nisthouse.

45,233. Did they try to get land on the island?—There was no chance for them to get land.

45,234. And they have got holdings in Yell?—Yes.

45,235. Who is their landlord there?—I cannot say.

45,236. That happened two years ago, you say?—Yes. A croft would be a great benefit to the like of us who have nothing to depend on but the fishing.

45,237. You have nothing but the fishing?—Yes, I have the Reserve.

45,238. Do many men on the island go to the Reserve?—About 100, I believe.

45,239. And there is a good deal got from knitting, I suppose, the hosiery by those who have wives and daughters?—Yes.

ZACHARY MACAULAY HAMILTON, Baltasound, Unst (39)—*examined.* Zachary Macaulay Hamilton.

45,240. *The Chairman.*—You are at present factor on the Garth estate at Baltasound in Unst?—Yes.

45,241. For how long were you tenant of the farm of Symbister?—For 19 years.

45,242. When did you leave it?—At Martinmas 1893.

45,243. You have nothing to do with the estate of Symbister now?—Nothing whatever.

45,244. Can you tell me the extent of the arable land of the farm?—I am afraid to say from memory

Whalsey, Shetland.

Zachary Macaulay Hamilton.

the exact extent, but I should think the whole of the arable land, including what was originally arable, but was in pasture during the currency of the lease, is about 72 or 73 acres.

45,245. This is all that has ever been cultivated?—Yes.

45,246. And, therefore, it includes Whitefield?—It does not include Whitefield.

45,247. But Whitefield has been cultivated, has it not?—Well, it has, but it can hardly be reckoned arable land; it was taken from the hill, and only cultivated for a few years.

45,248. Now, can you tell me the extent of Whitefield?—I cannot tell you the exact extent, but from the look of the eye I should say about 16 acres. [*Mr Gordon.*—The plan shows pretty nearly 30 acres]. Yes, but the arable land only goes about half across.

45,249. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—Can you tell us the extent of the scattald belonging to the farm of Symbister?—No, I cannot.

45,250. Can you tell us roughly what it would be?—Roughly, I should say 1100 or 1200 acres, including West Linga.

45,251–52. But not including the other small islets?—No.

45,253. And 72 or 73 acres of arable land?—Yes.

45,254. What was the rent you paid for it?—My last lease was the same as the present rent, £117, 10s.; that is after the deduction was made in respect of the land given to the crofters for increase of their holdings.

45,255. That was a sum of £9, 15s. or thereby?—I think it was about that. There was another piece taken off and given to crofters, mutually between Mr Bruce and myself, for which £2, 10s. was deducted, making £12, 5s. in all.

45,256. That was another bit taken off which was *ex gratiâ* given to the crofters?—Yes.

45,257. Do you remember the scattald when you came to it first?—Perfectly.

45,258. Was there any great difference between the scattald then belonging to the farm of Symbister, and that which the crofters hold?—There is a very great difference in the quality of the grazing on it, but that is simply owing to the stocking. The actual and natural quality of the land outside the fence is as good as it is inside.

45,259. Do the crofters over-stock the grazing?—They do, I think, very generally.

45,260. They use it differently from the way in which you would use it if it were in your possession?—Very much.

45,261. Now, looking at the part of Whitefield,—the 16 acres or 16 to 30 acres, would you, if you had the farm of Symbister, consider that the taking away of that bit of Whitefield would materially depreciate the value of your farm?—Most materially, for this reason: the scattald or hill ground lies out to the north, and this piece of 16 acres, or whatever size it may be, is the only bit of green ground pertaining to that scattald within reasonable reach, and you must either have your sheep entirely in upon the home farm, or they must be out upon the hill here and have this little bit of ground. The sheep, of course, want a little bit of butter to their bread the same as we do.

45,262. *The Chairman.*—Did you hold the farm under two successive leases, or only one?—Two leases.

45,263. For nineteen years each?—No, I took up the remainder of an old lease when I entered, which had fourteen years to run, and then I renewed for five years, which made nineteen years.

45,264. That was your total occupancy?—Yes.

45,265. Now, could we see your lease?—You can see my old lease, certainly.

45,266. I should like to see it, if you please. Now, when you took over the lease which had fourteen years to run, you took the farm, of course, as possessed by the previous tenant?—Yes, exactly.

45,267. What was the extent of arable then?—Just the same as it is now; there has been nothing either added to or taken from it.

45,268. How much of the arable land is old arable, and how much is what I might call new arable, or land under cultivation?—There are only about 33 or 34 acres under cultivation at present.

45,269. The rest is what we may call old arable?—Yes.

45,270. That could be made arable again, but has not been cultivated for a number of years?—Not for a number of years.

45,271. And not in your time?—Not in my time.

45,272. What extent of stock had you upon the farm when you were working it as tenant?—On the home farm I kept 320 ewes and about ten to a dozen cattle.

45,273. How many horses?—Just a pair of working horses.

45,274. You only required a pair?—Only a pair.

45,275. You were asked a question about over-stocking. Is it a fact that here each crofter puts what stock he chooses upon the scattald?—So I believe.

45,276. There is no limit?—There is no limit.

45,277. And each crofter looks after his own stock, such as it is?—Such as it is.

45,278. Was the enlargement granted by the Crofters Commission opposed?—No, we did not resist it.

45,279. Did you take up any plea of material damage there?—No. I knew the circumstances the people were placed in, and I think I could have objected successfully to the enlargement, but knowing their circumstances I was willing that they should have this, so under a joint-minute it was agreed to. [*Mr Bain.*—There were objections on behalf of the landlord, but these were afterwards adjusted. The landlord took the legal plea of material damage, but he gave it up afterwards.]

45,280. You said you knew the circumstances of the people. What were the special circumstances which induced you to take a conciliatory position in that matter?—The crofters of Clett and Sandwick were very much shut in. The general scattald of the island, to which they had a right, was at the other side of the farm, and they had no means of getting at it. As a matter of fact, a few of them had one or two sheep in the general scattald during summer; but practically they were unable to enjoy the use of it.

45,281. They were practically without grazing ground?—They were.

45,282. And you felt that it was a disadvantage that should be got over as far as possible?—As far as possible.

45,283. Is it your opinion that if these 2458 acres were grazed under proper regulations by those who presently have a right to the grazing, that would be sufficient for them?—I think so. I am quite certain that if it were grazed in the same way that the farm is grazed, in five or six years there would be no difference between the quality of the grazing inside and outside the fence.

45,284–85. Is the soil the same?—The soil is identically the same.

45,286. What soil is it?—Moss.

45,287. There is no limestone here?—No limestone.

45,288. I suppose it is correct, as stated by one of the witnesses, that the sheep feed during the later part of the year and in the beginning of the year on the shore at ebb-tide?—They always do: the native sheep do so, even if they have the very best of pasture.

45,289. Does it consist with your knowledge that there is a considerable hosiery trade done here?—That is done all over the Shetland Islands.

45,290. Would you say,—because you have a very thorough knowledge of this island,—would you say that the island is over-populated?—I think it is.

45,291. It seems to have a population of nearly 1100 including the islanders?—That includes the Skerries.

45,292. How many are in the Skerries?—I think somewhere about 170,—I am not quite sure, but I think about that.

45,293. That is the Skerries on the east side?—The Outer Skerries, where the lighthouse is.

45,294. The islands that were mentioned to us,—West Linga, East Linga, and the neighbouring islets on the east and west of Whalsey, are held along with the farm?—Yes.

45,295. Are they part of the farm?—Yes.

45,296. And included in the rent?—Included in the rent.

45,297. Would the assignment to crofters of these islands or some of them cause material damage to the farm?—I think so.

45,298. Why?—The islands are required for the shifting of the stock and the grazing of the stock. I should mention that only one half of the island of East Linga belongs to the estate of Symbister.

45,299. And the other half?—To the estate of Lunna.

45,300. But it is held as part of the one farm?—Yes.

45,301. But separately rented, I suppose?—Yes. It is rented by the tenant of Symbister, but there is a reservation in the lease that if Lunna resume their half the tenant gets an equivalent deduction.

45,302. Are these islands used for wintering purposes?—Yes.

45,303. *Mr Gordon.*—Are the two townships of Huxter and Clett still the worst off townships in the island for pasture?—Not Huxter, but Sandwick and Clett.

45,304. Does Huxter not participate in this extension of grazings which was granted?—Huxter did participate, but Huxter can get to the general scattald, such as it is.

45,305. It is at the very southmost corner of it?—It is.

45,306. Would it cause very material damage to the farm provided the portion of the hill grazings lying to the south of Huxter were given?—An increase of the extension they have already got would injure the farm, certainly, but not so materially as Whitefield would.

45,307. Looking at the map, I would think it would cause possibly the least injury of anything that could be done?—It would.

45,308. And would benefit those crofting townships that are at present the worst off for grazing?—Yes.

45,309. You have been a long time living in the island: perhaps you will tell us about those harbours at Symbister and North Voe. Are they pretty safe harbours?—North Voe is a pretty safe harbour; Symbister is not safe.

45,310. Is there any demand, or would there be a demand, provided there was a supply, for small holdings of say half an acre each there for potato land for fishermen?—I believe there would.

45,311. What do you think of the benefit to the island generally of giving up a small part of the farm of Symbister in the neighbourhood of one or other of these two harbours? How would that meet the wants of the island?—I believe it would meet the wants of the island very well.

45,312. Do you think they would be taken advantage of if they were available?—I believe they would.

45,313. Small holdings of potato land and house stances?—These would certainly be taken advantage of.

45,314. I think one of the witnesses mentioned that if they got the whole island it would not be sufficient to put them in a comfortable position, and I quite agree with him, looking at a number of people and the amount of available land; but a little might possibly be done for the relief of the congestion, especially of the cottars, by small holdings for fishermen?—Yes.

45,315. In the neighbourhood of one or other of the best of these harbours?—Yes,

45,316. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Do you know whether these islands that are now in the farm of Symbister were ever occupied by crofters?—I don't think so; not for many years at any rate. The proprietor, who kept the farm of Symbister in his own hands, always occupied the islands.

45,317. And you think these could not be granted without material damage to the farm?—Certainly, it would materially injure the letting value of the farm.

45,318. Then, with regard to Whitefield, that is the land that was formerly held by crofters?—I believe it was for a short time.

45,318A. Why do you think it was for a short time?—The crofters were not very long on it.

45,319. They reclaimed the land, did they not?—Not entirely: it was reclaimed by Mr Bruce, so I am informed, when he had it in his own hand.

45,320. Have you any idea how long it was held by crofters?—Only from hearsay.

45,321. And you think that could not be granted to crofters without material damage to the farm?—No, I think it would injure the letting value of the farm immensely if Whitefield was given, because it lies right in the middle of it.

45,322. But still the farm of Symbister existed when Whitefield was held by crofters?—Certainly, the farm of Symbister existed, but the whole stock belonging to the farm of Symbister was grazed *pro indiviso* along with the crofters over the whole ground.

45,323. I quite understand that; but Whitefield was occupied by them as their own holding, and was cultivated by them?—That is so.

45,324. So that it cannot be absolutely essential to the existence of the farm?—But the stock of Symbister Farm grazed over the crofts of Whitefield in winter the same as over the rest of the island. It grazed over the whole place.

45,325. Over the arable land of the place as well as the outrun?—Yes, the arable land also. As soon as the corn is cut and the crops in, then the hill gates are taken up and the stock allowed to graze over the whole place. There is no such thing as new grass.

45,326. It has never been cultivated since the crofters left it?—Never. It would be most injurious to the farm to cultivate it.

45,327. Then, do you agree that the arable land of Symbister is superior to the arable land held by the crofters?—Some parts are, and some are not. I don't think the intrinsic quality of the land is better, but it has been better done to.

45,328. Better managed?—Better managed. You can soon turn very good land into very bad by mismanagement and continuous cropping.

45,329. But the land in Whitefield has not been improved by the farmer?—No, it has been lying in grass, which, of course, improves it.

45,330. But was it not improved and reclaimed partly by the crofters?—I don't think so; I think it was reclaimed by Mr Bruce.

45,331. I think you mentioned yourself that some of it was taken in from its natural condition and made arable; do you say that the crofters did nothing of that?—It is only from hearsay that I am giving this evidence. I believe that Mr Bruce took it in, and wrought it as far as it could be wrought with horses, and paid the men so much a day for trenching it. That is my information; whether it is correct or not I cannot say, but, no doubt, some of the older men present will be able to tell you.

45,332. Presently, at any rate, there is no doubt that the grazing on the farm of Symbister is much superior to that on the crofters' scattald?—Undoubtedly.

45,333. And the cropping land is also better?—Part of it, not the whole.

45,334. Don't you think it would be a very great benefit to the people to have this land of Symbister divided among them, or what is your opinion?—I question if it would; I don't think it would be any benefit.

45,335. How?—Unless there were scattald regulations; unless they adopted the Grazings Act.

45,336. I quite agree that that is necessary, but you see that is the law now, and they can easily adopt it?—True, it is the law, but it is optional; and if they do not take advantage of it it is no good.

45,337. But let us suppose that they did adopt the regulations which you think—and I agree with you—are necessary, why should it not be beneficial for them to have this farm divided among them?—It would, no doubt, benefit them if they had that, but if they overstocked it in the same way as they over-stock what they already have, it would not be any benefit.

45,338. But there is no reason why they should not adopt sensible regulations with regard to stocking?—No

Whalsey, Shetland.

Zachary Macaulay Hamilton.

reason that I know of, but, as a matter of fact, it has not been done.

45,339. You are not aware whether it may not have been adopted in some townships?—Well, it was not adopted when I left the island.

45,340. The Act is not a very old one, and the people may be only just getting acquainted with it?—Yes.

45,341. Then, you have said that the women here are engaged in the knitting industry to a great extent. Don't you think it would be a very great advantage to the crofters to have sheep of their own, so that they would be able to have wool for their industry?—Undoubtedly.

45,342. Do you think they would be able to pay as good a rent for this farm if it were divided among them as is paid by the farmer?—I really cannot say that; at present, I consider that suppose it were divided up at its present rent, it would make the new crofts very much dearer than the present rents.

45,343. Even keeping in view the superior quality of the land?—Yes.

45,344. Then, is it your opinion really that the crofters hold at a cheaper rate than the large farmer?—It is.

45,345. Looking at the quality of the land they hold respectively you think so?—Yes.

45,346. I suppose the houses of the crofters have been put up by the people themselves, as a rule?—Oh, no.

45,347. Is that not the case?—All done by the proprietor. There may be an individual case where it has been done by the tenant, but the great majority have been put up by the proprietor, and until recent years kept up by the proprietor. Of course, after the passing of the Crofters Act the repairs and upkeep fall on the tenants.

45,348. It is rather an exceptional state of matters to hear of the proprietor building and keeping up the crofters' houses?—That is common over the whole of Shetland.

45,349. Without any help from the crofters at all?—Well, the crofters usually put on the roofs. The proprietor built the walls and supplied the wood and all that sort of thing, and the tenants put on the roofs. That was the usual custom.

45,350. Have the crofters made any improvements on their houses since the passing of the Act?—Some of them have improved immensely and some of them have not. Some are letting them go to destruction.

45,351. But you are able to say that several have improved their houses?—Yes.

45,352. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—I would like to understand the exact use to which the islands belonging to the farm are put?—In East Linga and the other two small islands we winter hoggs which we cannot do at home; and the large island of Linga West was used exclusively for Shetland stock, so as to be able to breed and rear them pure, while the small islands to the west were used for wintering their lambs, with the exception of Wether Holm, which was used as a grazing for feeding cattle.

45,353. What class of sheep is grown on Symbister farm?—Blackfaced ewes and cross lambs.

45,354. Is it the same class of sheep on the tenants' land?—No; native sheep, with the exception of the island I referred to.

45,355. *The Chairman.*—Mr Maccallum asked you about the crofters improving their houses. Can you tell me how many new houses have been built since the passing of the Crofters Act?—So far as I know, only one, since the passing of the Act.

45,356. But a number have been improved?—Yes, by taking off the old roof, raising the walls, and putting on felt.

45,357. What is the total acreage of Symbister Farm, the land leased to you?—I am sorry I cannot give you it exactly, but approximately it is between 1100 and 1200 acres, including the islands.

45,358. When you took over the remainder of the lease, what was the rent?—£170.

45,359. Was that an increase or a decrease on the previous rent?—It was the current rent. Whalsey, Shetland.

45,360. And what rent did you pay when you took the farm for five years more?—I got a reduction of 25 per cent., which made the rent £129, 15s., from which you have to deduct the additions given to crofters, £12, 5s. Zachary Macaulay

45,361. And that brings out the amount at which it now stands, £117, 10s.?—Yes.

45,362. Have you any cottars or farm servants living on the farm?—Farm servants.

45,363. How many?—Three.

45,364. Would you just tell us, for I think I forgot to ask you, what are the buildings on the farm?—There is the farm house, and there is a very extensive steading,—the most extensive steading in Shetland.

45,365. Is that of recent erection?—It was built about 40 or 50 years ago. It was built the same time as Symbister House, which was begun in 1828.

45,366. Are there policy grounds round Symbister House?—One park.

45,367. You spoke about continuous cropping by the crofters. Would you say that continuous cropping is almost a necessity on their part?—In some cases it is, in others it is not.

45,368. Are the holdings large enough to cultivate by rotation?—What I mean is that where there are three or four crofters in a township, if they chose to work in harmony with each other they could work their land in rotation, because then they could keep the stock off it in winter.

45,369. But taking it that each crofter keeps himself to himself as it were, there must be continuous cropping, I suppose?—Almost. Of course, some of them can fence in, and if they chose to unite the expense of fencing should be reduced.

45,370. *Mr Gordon.*—Is this very large steading, which you have described, in full occupation at present?—Yes.

45,371. Is it required for the wants of those 70 acres?—No, but at one time the whole land was cultivated, and then it was required.

45,372. The ceasing to cultivate a large proportion of the farm has been owing to its being found unprofitable, I suppose?—Yes, it was found that grazing paid better.

45,373. *The Chairman.*—Referring to the enlargement which was granted under the joint-minute that has been alluded to,—setting aside any question of material damage, do you consider that that enlargement is an adequate enlargement for those to whom it was granted?—Well, I cannot say that it is. [*Mr Adie.*—I consider it has been a great drawback to the farm; it excludes them entirely from any sea right].

THOMAS ADIE, Symbister, Whalsey (45)—*examined.* Thomas Adie

45,374. *The Chairman.*—You are the tenant of Symbister farm?—Yes.

45,375. When did you enter into occupation?—At Whitsunday 1893.

45,376. Do you hold it under a nineteen years' lease?—Yes.

45,377. Are you the lessee of the Outer Skerries?—No.

45,378. Is that your brother?—He was lessee.

45,379. *Mr Bain, acting as Agent for Mr Bruce of Symbister.*—You heard the evidence given by Mr Hamilton?—Yes.

45,380. Can you tell us the extent of the Whitefield portion of your farm?—I should think it would be about 76 or 77 acres.

45,381. Then, you agree with Mr Hamilton as to the extent of it?—That is the arable ground; but I consider that to be the very utmost that it is.

45,382. Supposing these 76 or 77 acres to be taken from the farm of Symbister, do you agree with Mr Hamilton in thinking that that would destroy the

value of your farm materially?—I do, owing to the way in which the hill pasture of the farm is situated.

45,383. And would the taking away of the island have a similar effect?—It would.

45,384. You would not willingly part with either of these?—No, I would not willingly part with either.

45,385. Your rent is £117, 10s.?—Yes.

45,386. I understand you have not yet got your copy of the lease from Mr Bruce?—No, the lease is signed, but I have not yet received my copy.

45,387. These are the Conditions of Let on which you took the farm, I believe (*producing document*)?—Yes, these seem to be the Conditions.

45,388. If the Court would prefer it, I will lodge a copy of the lease. [*The Chairman.*—If you please; that would be more regular.]*

45,389. *Mr Gordon.*—In reference to Whitefield, if that portion of the farm were put under crofters would it necessitate your driving the sheep through a very narrow neck of land between the crofting ground and the loch, before you got them from the arable part of the farm to the hill pasture?—Yes.

45,390. Is that your main objection to parting with Whitefield?—Yes; and the want of the arable land such as it is in the centre of the farm.

45,391. But it would be very inconvenient to have the sheep forced through this narrow piece of ground?—Yes, the farm is practically divided in two by the hill,—the Hoga and the home towns go together, and Whitefield and the backlying part of the hills.

JAMES RENDALL, Clett, recalled—*examined.*

Please your honour I would like to add a few words.

45,392. *The Chairman.*—We shall be glad to hear what you have to say.—I would wish you to take into consideration the crooked way in which the fence was run when we got the scattald. It was run in such a direction that two-thirds of the fence could have taken in twice as much ground, which made us pay double the money we might have paid for the fence.

45,393. The crooked fence is more expensive?—Yes, in the first place, it was made more expensive in that way; and in the second place, every shelter was fenced off for the farm and away from the crofters, so that in a severe winter our sheep would all die off if we did not protect them in our own crofts.

45,394. There is no protection to sheep from the shape of the ground?—No, there is not; it is mostly all bare and wet, and during winter it is mostly all bogs and peat moss.

* The lease, which is dated 7th May 1894 and runs for nineteen years from Martinmas 1893, with a break in favour of both parties at the end of the first ten years, was produced and found to be in the ordinary terms.

[ADJOURNED.]

FIFTY-FOURTH SITTING.

Lerwick, Shetland.

LERWICK, SHETLAND, July 24, 1894.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
MICHAEL HUGH SHAW STEWART, Esq., M.P.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
Rev. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

ANDREW SMITH, Crofter, Vadsgarth, Cunningsburgh (40)—*examined.* Andrew Smith.

45,395. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

45,396. The area of the croft is 1 acre 3 roods 22 poles arable, 1 acre 37 poles outrun, and a share in a common of 730 acres, divided equally with the tenants of North and South Cunningsburgh. The old rent of the croft was £3, 5s., and the 'fair rent' is £1, 13s.?—Yes.

45,397. Were you appointed as a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

45,398. Where was the meeting held?—In Cunningsburgh.

45,399. And were some others appointed along with you?—Yes.

45,400. Have you a written statement?—Yes.

45,401. Kindly read it:—

'At a meeting of South Cunningsburgh crofters, held 'on the 22nd July 1894, it was agreed to lay the 'following statement before the Royal Commission '(Highlands and Islands, 1892).

'In 1872 the present Mr John Bruce of Sumburgh 'raised the rents in South Cunningsburgh to a high 'figure. The Crofters Commission reduced these rents 'largely, in 1889. When the rents were raised 'nothing was said about taking away the scattald or 'hill-pasture. It was understood by the crofters that 'it would still be held by them as formerly. But, 'shortly afterwards, Mr Bruce, by his ground-officer, 'asked them to sign a paper giving it up. "You need '"not fear to sign it," the officer said, "you will still '"get your animals kept on the scattald."

'This promise was broken. Soon the best part of 'the scattald was enclosed, and the crofters' stock 'driven out. No compensation was given for this. 'The rent which had been charged before the scattald 'was taken had still to be paid. It was a great 'injustice, and caused much ill-feeling which has not 'died out yet.

'The present crofters wish back the scattald which 'Mr Bruce took in 1872.

'In 1889 they made an application to the Crofters 'Commission for part of it. The application was not 'in proper form, and was withdrawn. Another applica-'tion was made, but, in the interval, in order to 'defeat it, Mr Bruce sold the scattald to his brother, 'Colonel Bruce, who let it to another brother, 'Lieutenant Bruce.

'There is no hope of getting anything from Mr 'Bruce or his family.

'The scattald now let to Lieutenant Bruce would be 'a great benefit to the crofters if given to them. It 'would enable them in these hard times to keep sheep, 'which would furnish wool for knitting purposes. This 'is very much wanted. It would give employment to 'many. There is a demand for more land for pasture. 'The scattald referred to is nearly 1000 acres in 'extent, but its annual value is only about £55. It 'can keep over 1000 sheep well. In the neighbour-'hood there are the farm of Tow, the old crofts in the 'cliffs, and at Vadsgarth and Shumire (now forming

Lerwick, Shetland. — Andrew Smith.

'part of Lieutenant Bruce's sheep-run), the island of 'Mousa, Burland, and Pickigarth. All these were 'once occupied by crofters. There are people in 'Cunningsburgh and Sandwick who would willingly 'take up these old crofts.

'In the name of the meeting,

(Signed) 'ANDREW SMITH.,
Chairman.'

45,402. The meeting was held last night?—Yes.

45,403. What extent of common grazing have you?—I have no common grazing except the 3 acres which the Commission went over.

45,404. But have you any grazing in common with other crofters?—A share of the hill scattald that Mr Bruce left at the time he fenced the 1000 acres.

45,405. Then the other scattald you have been telling us about in this paper extends to about 1000 acres?—About that.

45,406. And would graze 1000 sheep?—That is Mr Bruce's statement of what he grazes on it.

45,407. Does he graze 1000 ewes on it?—Lambs or ewes,—1000 head.

45,408. Do you yourself remember when that grazing formed a part of the crofters' grazing?—I do.

45,409. It was taken away, you say, in 1872?—Yes, in 1872; it was taken from the tenants about the 16th day of June, when there was no market,—at least the crofters' sheep were driven outside the fencing at a time when there was no market for them. My father had at that time to sell his ewes at 2s. 6d. a-piece, what he could sell; and what he did not sell had to lie outside and die. When the sheep broke through the fences they were threatened with the shepherds' dogs, and kept outside.

45,410. What head of sheep stock had your father at this time?—Between seventy and eighty head.

45,411. To himself?—To himself.

45,412. What was the total stock kept upon the land at the time by the crofters?—The stock kept upon the land was somewhat more, because in the summer time the crofters' queys and stots were put to this hill along with the sheep, also ponies; and that allowed the grass they had to eat now to become bog hay for their winter feeding.

45,413. Do you remember the names of the townships that were in these places you have mentioned, which now form part of one compact grazing?—Yes, I can remember them. In Vadsgarth 3 acres belong to the house; 11 or 12 acres more land is in the farm. Then, there is another township adjoining that, which they call Shumire, and one adjoining that again called Blumire. These are all now in Mr Bruce's farm.

45,414. And what are the names of the others?—Catpond in the Clifts of Cunningsburgh, and Clevigarth. There were two crofters' houses in a place called Clifts, also four in Pickigarth and four in Burraland.

45,415. Were there any in Mousa?—There were two,—that was before I was born, but all the others are cases of crofts that existed during my recollection of thirty or forty years.

45,416. But is it the fact that at one time there were crofters on Mousa?—Most decidedly; the remains of their houses are there still.

45,417. What farm does that land, that you say is in one grazing, belong to?—The grazing farm that it belongs to, through the letting of it from one brother to the other, as I understand, belongs to Lieutenant Bruce.

45,418. By what name does the farm go?—The farm of Sumburgh so far as I know; it is all in one family.

45,419. Has there been, since the loss of that pasture in 1872, a great want of grazing felt by the tenants whom you represent?—Most decidedly; that is where all their grievance is.

45,420. And if proper means could be found, you desire the restoration of that land?—We do, decidedly, as one man.

45,421. The case you present to us is for restoration of these 1000 acres, or whatever the extent may be, of grazing which was lost in 1872?—Yes.

45,422. And you would be satisfied if you had that?—Yes, we would be satisfied if we had that, or if crofts were laid down. It is all one sheep-run. Lerwick, Shetland. — Andrew Smith.

45,423. *Mr Gordon.*—How many people were turned out of the pasture at the same time that your father's sheep were turned off?—The whole of the crofters belonging to the late Mr Bruce's estate at that time, exclusive of the few sheep that they keep on the said 350 acres that belonged to them then. The South Cunningsburgh scattald was all enclosed to the extent of about 1000 acres, and at that time, or before anything that I remember, there were hogg marches set down. Then the North Cunningsburgh tenants claimed the share of the hill scattald as theirs by marches up till the time when the Crofters Commission came, and the valuators came on it, and then they equalised North Cunningsburgh scattald and South Cunningsburgh, and made it all as one. All the tenants round about had to take their sheep in the month of June at the same time. They got no warning at Martinmas.

45,424. How many people were there at the time?—I could not say exactly, but I would think about fifty or sixty tenants that were holding sheep in the district at that time.

45,425. There would not be very many sheep to each of them?—Oh, they all had a good trifle of sheep. It is not exactly the produce of the mutton or the market, but it is the knitting that was the main thing. Now, the great drawback we have at the present time is that the sheep Mr Bruce has are no good: they are Highland blackfaces, and damage the croft as well, and the wool is no good. It is only by the produce of the women's work that the circumstances of the people in the place can be improved.

45,426. And is the application of which you spoke to the Chairman, an application for extension of holdings, or for new holdings?—Both for extension of grazings and for new holdings. There are a great many men who are willing to take the lands that may be laid down for new holdings.

45,427. Is there much arable land in this sheep grazing?—I cannot give you the average, but all the crofts that I mentioned are in this run.

45,428. And do you mean that the people were turned out of the crofts, as well as the sheep turned out of the hill, at that time?—The people were turned out of the crofts in this way; they were not turned out by violent evictions, but by taking the scattald, and by being rack-rented. It came to this that they could not pay their rents, and when that happened Mr Bruce just called a roup and sold all their effects. They had nothing left, and it behoved them to shift and go.

45,429. Did they remove from their arable crofts and houses at the same time that their sheep were removed from the hill?—Yes, about a year after, and some the same year.

45,430. How many people then left their holdings?—Eight farmers.

45,431. Eight farmers left their holdings at or about the time when the sheep were turned off the scattald?—Yes.

45,432. Is there any fishing done in the neighbourhood of these crofting holdings?—Yes, there is a fishing station.

45,433. Is there a boat harbour?—A little harbour called Aiths Voe.

45,434. Is it a safe harbour where people could prosecute the fishing with comparative safety?—That is hard to tell. I have prosecuted the fishing all my time.

45,435. Where is the nearest safe harbour?—There is none nearer than Lerwick.

45,436. And what distance are you from Lerwick?—Between 8 and 9 miles.

45,437. Are the people still living in that neighbourhood in the habit of bringing their fish to Lerwick?—In summer time the herring caught is all taken to Lerwick, with the exception of two or three boats.

45,438. Do the people there follow the white fishing?—They do, and some people cure for them-

selves; others send the fish to a merchant there, Thomas Tulloch, who is a curer.

45,439. Now, suppose the people were reinstated in these crofts, would Lerwick be the nearest market to which they could bring their fish?—Yes, except the present market they have with Thomas Tulloch.

45,440. Where is his place?—At Mailsaire, Cunningsburgh.

45,441. Is that near Aiths Voe?—Close to it.

45,442. Is there any secure harbour there?—It is a place where herring boats generally go.

45,443. Could you land fish there in ordinary circumstances?—Yes, except with gales from the south-east or southerly.

45,444. Do many of the crofters in that district follow the white fishing?—Mostly all follow the crofting and fishing together.

45,445. They follow the white fishing more or less along with the herring fishing?—They cannot do the one without the other, because the crofts are very small, and never could keep them, unless they followed the whole thing through.

45,446. Are there any people in your neighbourhood, or in the district which you represent, who are exclusively fishermen?—No, none. Well, there are a few cottars whose fathers have had land, but there is no land for them, so they just follow the fishing.

45,447. Are there many cottars there?—Not very many.

45,448. How many would there be?—There are only three or four in Cunningsburgh that follow the fishing specially.

45,449. Most of the fishing population of Shetland would prefer to have a small croft along with the fishing?—They think it would lighten them in the spring, when the weather is too rough to fish. They could then do a little work on crofts, and it is, as a rule, small crofts that do not take much ploughing, that they want. When the fine weather comes they return to the fishing, and, between the two, they generally make a fair living.

45,450. Do the crofters in this district prefer large or small crofts?—I don't think they would care about large crofts, that would keep them from the fishing.

45,451. They would like crofts that would not take up too great a part of their time?—Well, say one-half of their time.

45,452. Do they keep a couple of cows and a few sheep,—is that the general stock?—Yes, about that.

45,453. Are any ponies kept in your district?—A few.

45,454. Do you find the rearing of ponies profitable?—It would be, if there were anywhere to rear them, but they have no place to rear them on.

45,455. You find the want of land in the neighbourhood of your crofts operates against that?—Yes.

45,456. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is this farm of Sumburgh composed altogether of the scattald that was taken from the crofters?—Yes, it is composed of the scattald and the laid down land.

45,457. Then, was there a farm of Sumburgh before 1872?—There was a farm at Sumburgh-Head and a farm at Sandwick where the mansion house is. But there was no farm at Cliffs before it was taken from the crofters.

45,458. *Mr Munro.*—From the information you have given us here to-day I gather that there is considerable knitting and spinning industry carried on in Cunningsburgh; is that so?—Yes, and when the hills were taken from the crofters, if it had not been that there were merchants who supplied worsted, pity the women for that industry.

45,459. Does the scarcity of land operate against prosecuting that industry to sufficient advantage?—It does, because we cannot keep them, and now we have no chance to keep them at all. If we keep three Shetland ewes on the bit of scattald we have for each of us, the produce in the shape of wool for knitting would not repay us for the keep.

45,460. If you got back the scattald you were deprived of in 1872, and got an extension of your holdings, would that enable you to prosecute the knitting and spinning industry to better advantage?—It would.

45,461. You say you have not been able to obtain an extension from Mr Bruce?—We have asked, and been refused it.

45,462. Then, your only hope lies in a change of the law to enable you to get it?—That is all the hope we have, because the Crofters Act has been made a hammer for us from the day it came out. All the hope we have is from Parliament, and it is a good job we have a hope there.

45,463. You have no hope whatever of obtaining anything from Mr Bruce?—Nothing, except what the Act gives; we have nothing else to look to.

45,464. *The Chairman.*—You say the Crofters Act has been made a hammer for you; in what way?—I have hardly been out of this Court-house for the last six months since the Commission was here.

45,465. How do you mean?—Because I am always being taken up on innocency, and nothing has been proved against me yet. Mr Bruce thinks I am an agitator for the place, but I am nothing of the kind. Another thing is that we have very little show; I do not have very much show here; I am only a poor man without a pocket. Mr Galloway, the Procurator-Fiscal, is Mr Bruce's legal adviser, and I have no show to go to him, and I have no show to go to any other man. I have no money to afford it, and I am always here.

45,466. How often have you been here?—First of all, Mr Bruce put a barbed wire on the croft you rented to me. I told his servant that I was determined to have it taken off by legal steps within twenty-four hours as a danger to my children. I raised an action in this Court, which cost me a lot of both trouble and money, and, in the end, the wire was taken off. Then there was a fence broken down, no one knew by whom, but I was brought to the Court here, because they thought I had done it after the barbed wire business. I was taken in here and hammered away here, Court after Court, till latterly he slipped me away. There was no reason for it except just this; it is my belief that it was because I applied to the Crofters Commission. It is the truth I am stating.

45,467. You say, in the paper you have read, that you were asked by Mr Bruce to sign a paper giving up the scattald. Have you a copy of that paper?—No, the sheriff-officer took good care to keep all these papers. I think he or Mr Bruce has them all yet.

45,468. Now, suppose this land, by some subsequent process, were to be assigned to you and those you represent, in enlargement of holdings, would you be prepared to pay a fair rent for it?—Yes, most decidedly; that is just what we want.

45,469. Can you tell me how many cottars are in the township you represent?—I think there are three or four cottars without land all the year round, but it is just because there is no land to give them.

45,470. And do these cottars live by the fishing?—Yes, as they have no land of their own, they may get a little patch from others to grow a few potatoes on.

45,471. They do not pay any rent?—They pay rent for the cottage they live in.

45,472. To the landlord?—To the landlord.

45,473. To whom are you paying rent just now?—To Mr Bruce.

45,474. *Mr Small, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for Shetland Proprietors.*—Is your scattald allocated just now under the Commission Grazings Act? Has there been any application of that Act to your scattald?—That is a thing that we would very much like, so far, but if we were to get that Act to cover us in the meantime, it is no more than we have; we have only a peat bog belonging to the tenants; we need not care whether we have scattald or not.

45,475. Had you had any meeting to apply the principles of the Commission Grazings Act?—We had none, and none of the other proprietors alongside of us, because, although they are paying rent for the scattald, they do not feel inclined to quarrel with us, even if our sheep were to stray on to them, or theirs to us.

45,476. Then, there is no regulation on your scattald?—There is no regulation as yet.

45,477. How many sheep may there be feeding on

Lerwick, Shetland.

Andrew Smith.

the scattald?—I can give no estimate of that: I would have to go right from Quartf to the south, if I did that. I may have one, or two, or three, or four; my sheep may be here to-day and away to-morrow, and, if they come to Mr Bruce's fence, they may be poinded.

45,478. Have the cottars got sheep on the scattald?—They have no sheep in my district, and as to the other district I cannot say.

45,479. Do the cottars keep sheep on the scattald?—I dare not say whether they do or not; they may; I don't know.

45,480. Is the stock of sheep on the scattald in your opinion more than it will feed?—Yes, it is more than it will feed, because the crofters' stock, which feeds there in summer, has to be taken home in winter to be fed on sea ware, and to be hand-fed; but, if it were on the scattald all the time, I don't think the scattald would keep 40 sheep.

45,481. Then, you think the scattald is over-stocked?—It is only over-stocked in the sense that people keep them, and plenty people buy from the shops to feed them in winter.

45,482. Over what extent of ground do your sheep run at present?—I could not give you any estimate of that. I might have a sheep going from Mr Bruce's fence coming along there to-day, and it might be on the other side of the cliffs to-morrow.

45,483. You say your scattald is 770 acres; is this fenced in?—My scattald is 730 acres, and it is not fenced; only the one side that Mr Bruce occupies.

45,484. Then, as a matter of fact, your sheep and the neighbouring tenants' sheep feed in common?—Yes, most decidedly.

45,485. Have you any sheep on the south side of the enclosure?—None.

45,486. Have any of the other Cunningsburgh people?—I cannot say: they might have one, or they might have two or six; or, again, they might not have one.

45,487. You said you have been often in this Court?—Yes, I have, and you are well aware of that, are you not? Are you finding any depredation charges against me here?

45,488. Were any of the cases in which you were brought here criminal cases, at the instance of the Fiscal? [*The Chairman.*—I cannot allow that question to be put. You are entitled to ask whether the witness has been convicted of any criminal offence]. Have you been convicted in this Court of any criminal offence?—I have been convicted in this Court for a criminal offence, said to have been committed by me on John Bruce of Sumburgh's estate.

45,489. *The Chairman.*—What was the offence?—There were ponies belonging to a Cunningsburgh crofter who was in Lerwick, and he received a letter from his agent to receive the ponies. The ponies were thought and understood by me to be at the house in Tow. It was between 10 and 11 o'clock at night, and the man that had the ponies asked me to come along with him and drive the ponies to the public road.

45,490. What was the charge that was made against you?—The charge was breach of the peace.

45,491. There was no charge of theft?—Oh, no; that is one thing that he cannot say against me.

45,492. *Mr Small.*—Is there any rotation of crops in your land?—What do you mean?

45,493. How do you cultivate your arable land; do you follow a rotation of cropping?—In most cases, where the land is cultivated, it takes the one-half of the present croft to grow potatoes for the house, and it can do that only for five or six months; the other half is generally put under corn, or laid down in field or hay.

45,494. And the next year, what do you do with the ground?—The ground with potatoes is generally cleaned with manure and turned to corn again, and the other land is turned over to potatoes.

45,495. And the third year?—Well, if a man has only the two halves, what can he do? He cannot make a third out of the two halves.

45,496. Then it comes to pass that you put land in corn once every two years and in potatoes the third year?—The crofters that have some more land generally lay down some of it for a twelve-month and some for two years and then over again. In some cases they sow in rye-grass and let it lie that way, and others with more land put it in turnips.

45,497. Then, is it the case that your usual white crop is once in two years?—Where there are only small bits of land, but in the bigger holdings it is generally three or four years. In small holdings, where it is manured every year, there are plenty people who lay down the field one year and turn it over the following year.

45,498. Can you tell me the names of the eight crofters who were evicted?—I don't mean that they were evicted, but they were burdened out—Simon Smith, Shumire, and Arthur Smith, Blumire. The land that I now occupy was inside three acres, and was taken from a tenant.

45,499. What was the tenant's name?—John Jarmson or Adam Jarmson, Mr Bruce's ground officer. Then there were Thomas Tulloch of Catpund, Peter Tulloch, his brother, John Smith of Clivigarth, Arthur Gilbertson, and, I think, John Tulloch. The house is there yet. Then, there are two houses in Pickigarth, John Manson's and Magnus Smith's. Then there were the houses of Burraland; I could not distinguish by name the tenants who were there.

45,500. Where did these men go to, or what became of them?—I will tell you where they went to. I know some who were a little better to do at that time, and they went to America, whereby the tenants that were left to make room for the sheep run were shifted on to the ground that these tenants left. By some dying out and other families going away the place became vacant.

45,501. What became of Simon Smith, the first man you named?—Simon Smith was shifted to a cousin of mine in a place called Villans.

45,502. Where is that?—In Cunningsburgh.

45,503. Was that place better or worse than where he was before?—Oh, that I could not judge: I believe it might be better. But what signified that? He had to go without notice: everything was taken from him: his crop was sold, his cow was sold, and his debt was paid. His son got the land.

45,504. But he got another place?—Yes, he got a place by the said John Smith shifting to a place which another man left who went to America.

45,505. Did Simon Smith remain there?—He did not. He did not remain in Blumire.

45,506. Then Arthur Smith, what became of him?—Arthur Smith was shifted to another place where a man left and went to America: John Bruce knows it.

45,507. Was it a better place that he got?—It was much about the same. I would take the one place as soon as the other.

45,508. It was as good a place?—Well, it might or might not be: it was not so good for some things.

45,509. What became of Adam Jarmson?—Adam Jarmson was shifted to Midgarth; the woman who was in Midgarth was shifted to a little house, and her son is without land now, a cottar to Mr Bruce. He had to build a house, and he had no land at all. John Jarmson was put there. Mr Bruce gave Adam Jarmson the privilege of three acres of ground to keep a cow, and that is the bit of land I now have.

45,510. And what became of Thomas Tulloch?—He was shifted all the way over; and his son, what land had he?

45,511. Peter Tulloch?—Peter Tulloch has one son in the lunatic asylum, and his other son is away north.

45,512. *The Chairman.*—The main point of this man's evidence is that these people were not evicted, but, in consequence of proceedings, had to leave and find a place elsewhere. Where they went to is not of much consequence; he has deponed to details of the fact that they had to remove not so much by process of eviction as by what happened succeeding it.

45,513. *Mr Small.*—But still if they were removed to other places—

45,514. *The Chairman.*—The land that he mentions

erwick, Shetland. Andrew Smith.

was formerly in the occupation of crofters, whose names he has given: where they went to is of less consequence. You are quite entitled to show that these men got holdings as good or better in the vicinity.

45,515. *Mr Small.*—That is what I asked to bring out,—that they left not so much because they were compelled to leave as to better themselves.

45,516. *Mr Gordon.*—Is it a fact that they were rouped out? [*Witness*].—Yes, and deprived of everything: and where that did not suffice to pay the debt the sons were obliged to undertake to pay the remainder. Such cases have been before Sheriff Brand here.

45,517. *Mr Small.*—With regard to manuring your crops, is it the case that you take turf from your common pasture to lay on your soil?—In plenty cases it is taken from the bog, out of the peat banks. Formerly it used to be so, but now the tenants apply to Mr Bruce for a little bit of road to their peats, or a help with it. Then they had to turn to and make the road themselves, and if they have not a pony and cart they have to employ one, and it is just about as easy to get it from the landlord.

45,518. What I am asking is, do you take turf from your pasture to put on your individual land as manure?—And what I am answering is that they take it from the peat bog, and make manure of it with cows' dung.

45,519. Is it the case then that when this goes on year after year, it makes your pasture of less value?—Most decidedly, it makes it of less value when you scalp the ground, you are well aware of that; that is a thing we all know. But, in the present case, the tenants have very little chance to scalp any.

45,520. But they do scalp it?—I admit it has been done in time past, but it is not done now to any extent.

eorge Smith.

GEORGE SMITH, Villans, Cunningsburgh (37)—*examined.*

45,521. *The Chairman.*—Are you any relative of Andrew Smith?—Yes, I am his brother.

45,522. Your mother is Philly Smith?—Yes.

45,523. The area of the croft is 5 acres 1 rood 20 poles arable 3 roods, 35 poles outrun, and a share in a scattald of 730 acres, common to the tenants of North and South Cunningsburgh. The old rent of the croft was £4, 17s. 3d. and the new rent £2, 13s. Can you tell me how many crofters share in the 730 acres?—No, I cannot give you an accurate account of it.

45,524. Were you appointed a delegate at the same meeting at which Andrew Smith was appointed?—Yes.

45,525. And do you agree with the evidence he has given?—Yes.

45,526. Is there anything additional you wish to say?—There is nothing additional above what Smith has told you, except that Smith has told you the whole truth. But, as regards the signing of that paper that Mr Bruce sent with his officer, about the hill grazing, I was along with my father at the house when the ground officer came. Mr Bruce's officer stated that the tenants need not, in any wise, be frightened to sign the paper, as their animals never would be taken off the hill. The hill would not be taken from them, he said, nor their animals removed, and they would have the hills as formerly. But that only went on until 1875, until the 16th of June or thereabout, when there was not one animal left belonging to my father, or one tenant in Cunningsburgh, that was not driven out of the said hills. Not only were they driven out, but this I saw with my own eyes; the dogs belonging to the shepherds of Mr Bruce of Sumburgh, attacked the sheep and tore the skin off them, until the lambs stood sucking the mother with the skin torn down from the breasts.

45,527. What was the name of the shepherd?—William Gunn.

45,528. Is he there yet?—No, he is dead and away: Robert Gunn has been there since, and John Henderson is there now.

45,529. I understand then that you represent a meeting of people who are anxious to get back, if possible, this 1000 acres, or whatever the area may be, of scattald that was taken in 1872?—Yes. Lerwick, Shetland. George Smith.

45,530. And are you ready to pay a fair rent for it?—Yes, a rent fixed by you or any one else that may come and fix it for us.

45,531. Does this 1000 acres of land march with the land you have already?—It lies in close connection with it. There are a few crofts, both laid down crofts and laboured crofts, between us and the said scattald at present, but it is the very hill that lies closest to us: there is no hill between us and it; none whatever.

45,532. Is the 1000 acres fenced in?—Yes.

45,533. Was it fenced in after it was taken possession of by Mr Bruce?—No; he fenced it in before he cleared out our stock and put in his.

45,534. And your scattald of 730 acres is not fenced, I understand?—Had it been fenced, or had we been compelled to keep on it no more than it could keep, we would have been at starvation long ago. We have perhaps two or three to half a dozen sheep, which we keep for the wool, so that our women may do a little knitting for us in winter-time to help to sustain life. If it had not been for that we should have been driven out of the island through poverty or starvation.

45,535. At present, have you less wool of the kind used for knitting than the women could employ their time upon?—My lord, they do not have as much as would keep them for two months instead of twelve.

45,536. And you represent that if you had that additional ground to graze with Shetland sheep the women could be much more fully employed?—Yes, and they could keep the families in a far better situation.

45,537. Is the amount of Shetland knitting done far less than it used to be?—It is not one-sixth share of what it used to be before the land was taken.

45,538. The Shetland knitting is one of the principal industries of the island?—It is the only industry that my father had in his lifetime to live by. But now there is not enough wool, and my wife has to go out of the parish for it, and buy wool from the parish of Northmavine.

45,539. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did you say you could not give us the number of crofters who share in this scattald of 730 acres?—No, I cannot give you an accurate number of them. Mr Bruce is here and perhaps he can tell the number.

45,540. What is your occupation?—I am a fisherman and crofter: my mother is the crofter, and I live with her.

45,541. Do you go to the herring fishing?—Yes.

45,542. Do most of the crofters who live near you do the same?—Yes, mostly all.

45,543. *Mr Small, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for Shetland Proprietors.*—Can you tell me the name of the ground officer you spoke of?—I can indeed: many is the time that he was around. His name is Francis Smith.

45,544. Was there one Adam Jarmson?—Adam Jarmson was sheriff officer or ground officer to Mr Bruce; but remember, Adam Jarmson was done out before that.

45,545. It was not Adam Jarmson?—No, he was done out before then; Mr Bruce knows that, he need not put that into you. It was Francis Smith of Clumlee that came round with the paper; and his words were words of guile.

45,546. Was Jarmson dead?—He was not dead at the time; he was there too, but he was not in power.

45,547. You say you are a fisherman?—Yes.

45,548. Is it possible for you, being a fisherman, to work your croft as well as if you were not?—Yes, and twice as well. I require the fishing to sustain my family, and if it were not for that the croft could not keep my family for six months.

45,549. Does the croft not take you away from the fishing?—No, it does not, because the climate of Shetland is not always suitable for fishing, and when the weather is too rough I can get a better return by working at my croft than from the fishing. If it is the will of God to give me a piece of land to work on, it is not for food

Lerwick, Shetland.

George Smith.

for animals that I am here to-day; it is food for my infants and for my wife and mother at home.

45,550. What is the average number of sheep the crofters have on the scattald?—That is more than I can tell. I can tell the number I have: I have four ewes and four lambs to my mother's house.

45,551. Are there any of your neighbours who have large stocks?—No, indeed, there are no large stocks in Cunningsburgh now-a-days.

45,552. What stock of sheep will there be on the scattald altogether?—I cannot tell, but I will say one thing. If the bit of hill that was given to Cunningsburgh by Mr Bruce had been stocked by Cunningsburgh I question if it would have kept three sheep to each family.

45,553. Would your scattald not be better if it were regulated?—Indeed, if it were regulated it could not, as I say, keep more than three to each family summer and winter.

45,554. Would not it be better for you to have the stock regulated?—No, indeed, because the other proprietors who lie outside of us would drive us on to it, whereas just now they are giving us a chance to feed alongside of them. They are not for tyrannising us. If they were doing to us the same as you appear to wish to do, what would become of us?

Laurence Laurenson.

LAURENCE LAURENSON, Mail (44)—*examined.*

45,555. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes, or rather my mother's case; she is the crofter.

45,556. What is her name?—Ann Laurenson.

45,557. There appear to be two holdings; one of 6 acres 1 rood 15 poles arable, 35 poles outrun, and another of 5 acres 1 rood 30 poles arable, and 5 acres 2 roods 23 poles outrun; and in the third place there are 2 roods 2 poles outrun: the share of the hill is $\frac{6}{65}$ of 29 acres and a share in the scattald of 730 acres. The old rent was £10, 5s. and the new rent £5, 12s. Who are the others who share in the 29 acres?—The crofter tenants round about.

45,558. The tenants of Mail?—Yes, Mail and Beolka and Milltown and Midgate and Yural and Claphoull.

45,559. Were you appointed a delegate along with the other witnesses who have been examined?—Yes.

45,560. And you have the same line of evidence to give, I daresay?—Yes, just the same.

45,561. Do you agree with the evidence you have heard?—Yes.

45,562. Have you any special addition to make to it?—No special addition, but I have suffered a good deal,—Mr Bruce's servants told me I would suffer for what I told you before the Crofters Commission, and I have suffered a great lot.

45,563. What did you suffer?—You asked me where were the sheep pastured, and I told you the truth: I said some of them went through the fence sometimes; the Shetland sheep have the nature of going through the fence, as they want to get back to their own pasture. Very shortly after the Crofters Commission left Shetland, Henderson, the shepherd, came into our house one night and made a disturbance, and argued about fair rents and about the evidence I had given before the Commission, and said I should suffer for what I had said. The disturbance which he made so afflicted my mother that she was taken ill and had to get the doctor. He also poinded some of my sheep.

45,564. How many sheep did he poind?—He poinded six head, and the first amount was only 10s.

45,565. Did you pay that?—Yes.

45,566. That was for your sheep trespassing on Lieutenant Bruce's ground, I suppose?—Yes: and the second poind I paid to a lawyer was 26s. 6d. for our sheep going through the fence. There was no fence to keep them out, and they went back naturally, to the part where they had been reared. His assistant shepherd came to our house and told me he had poinded two of our sheep. My brother was going to the fishing, my mother was very ill, and my sister was dying of cancer of the liver, and I said it was impossible for me to go for the sheep. So the sheep were driven away, and what became of them I don't know, unless they were sold.

Lerwick, Shetland.

Laurence Laurenson.

45,567. How many sheep did you part with at that time?—We lost two that we never got any account of at all; we found three others, and one was driven to Lerwick and sold.

45,568. If you got this additional pasture we have heard about, would these local difficulties be got over?—Yes.

45,569. You would have enough room for grazing purposes and for growing wool for knitting?—Yes, we continued at that till last May, and I had to dispose of forty sheep at any price I could get. The ewes were dropping their lambs, and I went thirty miles to Delting to sell them.

45,570. Is there a great deal of strong feeling in the district with regard to this matter of the land that was taken in 1872?—Yes, that is the cause of the great distress we are in.

45,571. And that feeling has continued since the land was taken?—Ever since, but things have been worse since the Crofters Commission visit.

45,572. They got worse after that?—Far worse. There was some living before then, but none after.

45,573. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is there less knitting going on there now since the scattald was taken away?—There is no knitting at all, because there is no wool to be got: and what wool there is is so coarse in quality that it won't be taken in the Lerwick shops. But if we had the fine Shetland wool that we used to have they would take it.

45,574. But they have a little stock left,—you do not surely mean to say that there is no knitting at all?—There is some knitting.

45,575. But a great deal less than there was formerly?—A great deal less.

45,576. Is there a very great difficulty in getting pure Shetland wool?—Yes, there is, because sometimes our ewes go through with his tups, or rams, or whatever you call them, and wool of the cross-bred sheep is not so good.

45,577. Is there anyone in your district who takes an interest in the knitting industry, and who tries to procure pure Shetland wool for you?—No. Those who need it just send to the shops.

45,578. The crofters have to buy wool; and do they buy much pure Shetland wool in your district?—They have not much Shetland wool at all; the animals are so poor from want of feeding, that they can raise no fleece to speak of. If we take it off when they are poor, the animals die.

45,579. From what district do they get the pure Shetland wool?—From North End, from Delting. I bought seven pounds from a woman at Delting.

45,580. I think it was said that 1000 acres were taken away, and 730 acres left on the scattald?—Yes.

45,581. Was it the better part of the scattald that was taken away?—Yes. What was left was just the bits where the peats were taken from. My father had to pay £20 for lifting that fence before we could get that bit that we got: he had to pay £20 for the lifting of that fence.

45,582. All the best of the scattald has been enclosed?—Yes, indeed, and our animals are not like animals since the scattald was taken.

45,583. *The Chairman.*—What is it you say about the fence and the £20?—It was for a small bit of hill that we got from Mr Bruce. He enclosed it first of all, and took it into his 1000 acres. My father and some other men went to him and asked for the small bit, and he condescended to give them a small bit; but before he would lift his fence at Scroo he had to give him £20.

45,584. The fence put up had to be removed?—Yes.

45,585. And what was the extent of the land you got?—Well, it is said to be 300 acres.

45,586. Is that in addition to the 730 acres?—No, it is along with the 730.

45,587. Had your father to bear part of the expense of shifting the fence?—Yes.

45,588. What was the amount of his expense?—It was £20 he had to pay for removing the fence, but there was £2 given down at the end of it, making £18.

45,589. The crofters among them had to subscribe £20?—Yes; but whether it was subscribed or not, my father had to be good for it.

45,590. And was your father's share £20?—No; he had to give £2; some gave 5s., others 10s., and others £1. We were better able to pay, so we paid more than others perhaps.

45,591. Had the 300 acres, which you got in the way you describe, been part of the land formerly in the occupation of the crofters?—Yes.

45,592. And is the 300 acres in your possession now?—Yes, that is all the scattald we have.

45,593. Is it part of the 730 acres?—Yes, and it is very bad scattald: there has not been a drop of water there these two summers. There is not a fountain of water there, and, in consequence, the animals cannot nourish their stock properly.

45,594. *Mr Small, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for Shetland Proprietors.*—What is your total sheep stock?—The total of our sheep stock, when the hills were taken first of all, was sixty.

45,595. What have you now?—We have very few now. Last year we had a stock of sheep, but Mr Bruce's servants have killed our sheep: we find them dead day by day. I had forty ewes dropping their lambs and took them to Delting to sell them.

45,596. That is not an answer to my question: what sheep stock have you now?—We have none upon the 300 acres except one ewe. The lamb died, because the pasture was so bad that she had no milk for it. Then we have four ewes on our home grass.

45,597. What is the total account of your mother's sheep stock?—We have one in the 300 acres; and four in the home grass, and about a dozen or fourteen sheep going up to Lady Nicolson's march, which never tasted Mr Bruce's grass at all nor our own piece of scattald,—they won't stop on it.

45,598. Do you mean to tell this Court that you have not more than thirty sheep altogether?—We put thirty-eight to Northmavine. No, we have not more than twenty sheep.

45,599. Have you any in the Sandwick scattald?—We have one; one that we lost. John Manson found it this year, so we have one one-year old on the Sandwick scattald.

45,600. Do you mean to say then that you have not more than twenty sheep altogether?—One in the 300 acres, four in the home croft, fourteen or fifteen running about, and one in Sandwick scattald.

45,601. Well, say five and twenty altogether?—I am neither saying that we have five and twenty or six and twenty.

45,602. Is that all that you have?—I am not speaking of the lambs, but only of the sheep.

45,603. Are these your own or your mother's?—They belong to my mother. My brother and I had a few, but none of our sheep lived except those that went through the fence.

45,604. But what is the total sheep of the family, taking the whole of them, no matter where they are feeding?—I have two, and my brother has not one at all. We have twenty or twenty-one altogether, but more may be found, and if so we will know them, for they are all marked.

45,605. Can you tell us exactly where this 1000 acres of scattald you are speaking about is?—Yes, it is the South Cunningsburgh hills.

45,606. What is its west boundary?—The West Cliffs.

45,607. And the sea?—Yes.

45,608. And on the east?—The East Cliffs.

45,609. And the sea again?—Yes.

45,610. What is the breadth of it?—More than a mile.

45,611. Is there any difference between this scattald and the other scattald on the north and south sides of it?—Yes, there is a difference.

45,612. What difference?—It was always a better scattald; it was said to be the best scattald in Shetland. No other scattald kept so good sheep as it did.

45,613. Are you speaking of the present time?—I am speaking of the present time and every other time.

45,614. Seeing this scattald was enclosed twenty years ago, is it any better than the other scattald round about?—Yes, it is better now, because it is scarcely half stocked; some parts have scarcely an animal on during the whole twelve months.

45,615. Before 1872 you say that the whole of the animals were feeding promiscuously?—Yes.

45,616. Then, it was just the same as the neighbouring ground?—No, this scattald was always the best: there were no bogs or broken-down bits, but what the crofters got was a broken-down place full of bogs.

45,617. But has the enclosed 1000 acres improved during these twenty years?—What is to hinder it from improving, when there has been no sheep on parts of it for twenty years?

45,618. Well, it has improved?—It was good enough before: there was no better in Shetland that ever I saw.

45,619. Is it overstocking that has prevented the rest of your scattald from improving in the same way?—We have no scattald to improve; we have nothing but what we take our peats from. There is nothing to overstock on; it could not keep a few cows in proper condition.

45,620. Are there more sheep on the scattald than it can feed?—It cannot feed the sixth of what is on it; the animals that are on it are not like sheep.

45,621. Then you say it is largely overstocked?—Yes, far too largely. [*The Chairman.*—Your case is that you do overstock, and that you cannot help yourselves?—It is six times overstocked because they must do it].

45,622. Would you be able to pay a rent for this land if you got it?—Yes; that we would.

45,623. Would you be able to take over the sheep stock that is on it?—The wool grown on these sheep is of no profit to us; they will not take it at the shops.

45,624. You would not take over the stock? (*No answer*).

45,625. Is it the case that you were convicted in this Court of any offence?—Yes, I have been may be a score of times since the Crofters Commission sat here; Mr Bruce has often hauled me up.

45,626. Were you convicted at the instance of the Procurator-Fiscal for any offence?—Yes, I have been.

45,627. What were you convicted of?—There were four of our ponies pounded, and I paid it to Mr Robertson here,—I and Andrew Smith and another man. I was bidden to go along on my way home and get our ponies. I went and rapped at the door; the assistant shepherd, Joseph Moare, came, and I said 'I 'want our ponies,' and he said 'You will not get them.' He and I came out and we were talking together: we were in very good spirits and we spoke about other things. He said it was looking to be bad weather, and I said yes, but I said whether it was bad weather or good weather it was better than we deserved: and there was not a word more said about the ponies.

45,628. I must repeat my question, which you have not answered. What were you convicted of?—Henderson came up when we were together. He was drunk and quarrelled with Andrew Smith. He struck Andrew Smith, and through trying to take Henderson's hands out of Andrew Smith's throat I was convicted of breach of the peace.

45,629. Are you a fisherman?—I was a fisherman once, but my mother is now between eighty and ninety years of age, and she will not let me go more to sea as she has no person to look after her, and could not bear the idea of my leaving her.

45,630. You said that Mr Bruce had said something to you: did he say anything to you personally?—When did I say that?

45,631. You said that Mr Bruce said you should suffer for what you had told the Crofters Commission?

Lerwick, Shetland. Laurence Laurenson.

—I said Mr Bruce's servants; and they say so to this very day,—that I would suffer for what I said to Sheriff Brand.

Laurence Tulloch.

LAURENCE TULLOCH, Labourer, Blett, Cunningsburgh (44)—*examined.*

45,632. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—I am not a crofter, I am a cottar.

45,633. And do you pay a rent for your house?—No, I stop with my father-in-law, but I want a piece of ground. I have a statement here.

45,633A. Please read it to us.

To Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands, 1892). Statement of Laurence Tulloch, Blett, Cunningsburgh.

'My father, Thomas Tulloch, was forced to leave the 'croft of Catpund in 1875 to make room for a sheep 'run which Mr John Bruce of Sumburgh took in for 'his own use.

'My father's father and grandfather had occupied 'the croft.

'The rent was nearly doubled from 1852 to 1875.

'My father kept from four to six cows, and had 'freedom for sheep and ponies.

'I remember four other crofts near my father's which 'are now included in Mr Bruce's sheep run.

'The taking of the hill pasture from the crofters 'has been a very great loss to them. When the fishing 'fails they have nothing to fall back upon. The people 'greatly desire to get back the hill pasture.

'There are other parts in the neighbourhood which 'were once occupied by crofters. I refer to the large 'islands of Mousa, now without an inhabitant, Burrland 'and Pikigarth. I think these should be restored to 'the crofters.

'Many would gladly occupy them.'

(Signed) LAURENCE TULLOCH.

45,634. You have no land at present?—No.

45,635. And you want to obtain a holding?—Yes.

45,636. Could you pay the rent of a new holding if you got one?—Yes.

45,637. And put stock upon it?—Yes.

45,638. And build a house?—I would have to.

45,639. And what you invite us to do is to inspect the ground, and consider whether there is land in the neighbourhood that would be available for such a purpose?—Yes.

45,640. What rent does your father-in-law pay?—£4. My father was evicted out of a croft in the Cliffs, which now forms part of John Bruce's sheep run.

45,641. What is your father-in-law's name?—Laurence Halcrow of Blett.

45,642. Was his case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—No.

45,643. *Mr Small, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for Shetland Proprietors.*—Is it the case that you had a croft already?—Yes, I had a holding, and I was rack-rented out of it.

45,644. How long were you in it?—Four years.

45,645. What was your rent?—£6, I think.

45,646. How far did you fall behind with your rent in these four years?—The year I left, I was £3, I think, in arrear, and I paid all that up.

45,647. Had you any other croft after that?—Yes, but I could not stop there.

45,648. Why could you not stop there?—It was inconvenient for the fishing.

45,649. On what estate was that?—On the Symbister Estate.

45,650. What rent had you to pay for it?—I think it was some £3.

45,651. Are you a fisherman?—Yes.

45,652. You say your father was removed: where did he go to?—To a small house.

45,653. Where?—In the Cliffs,—in the same place or close by, on the same property. Lerwick, Shetland.

45,654. What rent had he to pay for it?—I think it was £1, or £1, 5s. Laurence Tulloch.

45,655. Where were you at that time?—I was away sailing at the south.

JOHN MALCOLMSON, Crofter, Flanderstown, Cunningsburgh (61)—*examined.* John Malcolmson.

45,656. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

45,657. The area of the croft is 1 acre 3 roods 31 poles arable, 18 acres 1 rood 34 poles outrun, and one share in the common of 730 acres: the old rent was £2, 2s. and the new rent £1, 7s. Were you appointed as a delegate along with those other witnesses?—Yes.

45,658. And do you wish to give the same evidence?—Yes.

45,658A. Do you concur with the evidence you have heard?—I do, in everything, only there are a few things that have not been said.

45,659. What is it you wish to say?—I was accompanying the officer when he came time after time to the house.

45,660. You mean to clear off the sheep?—Yes. He said first that Mr Bruce was going to take the hills. He came again and told us he was going to fence the hills,—to put on the north fence. The next time he came, when the fence was put on from sea to sea, from south-east to north-west, he told me himself that the fence was going to be re-crossed three times,—put in three parts,—and we would have to give him the number of our sheep and pay for them and the ponies and cattle, but they would never be removed, but at Martinmas we would pay so much per head,—4d. for a sheep, 6d. for a cow, and 1s. for a horse. We only gave in a small quantity, and some men never gave them any. I did not give in the wintering of my sheep. The men are all dead now but myself,—Adam Jarmson and Halcrow and me.

45,661. What was the name of the man who made these statements to you?—Francis Smith, Mr Bruce's ground officer.

45,662. Is he there now?—I do not know whether he is living or dead.

45,663. He is not there, at all events?—He is not transacting any business, so far as I know.

ROBERT COGLE, Fisherman, Quee (41)—*examined.* Robert Cogle.

45,664. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No, I am not a crofter; I am a fisherman. I did not come here to speak of my own case or anybody's case in particular; I was chosen as a delegate by several people, both in Cunningsburgh and elsewhere, to appear before this Commission to make a general statement on the land question.

45,665. Well, we shall be glad to hear your statement.—'Some parts of it may not exactly come within the 'scope of your inquiry, but I shall try to confine myself 'to the more salient points. First of all, I will ask the 'question, what is the root of all evils connected with 'the land question? If the above question was put to 'me, I should answer without hesitation "the feudal 'system." Some, however, on hearing this will doubtless exclaim "Why! the feudal system was abolished 'long ago." Now, it is quite true that feudalism, in its 'primitive form, does not now exist; but that it does 'display itself at the present time it is impossible to 'contradict. It is necessary to bear in mind that the 'theory of every person in the country having an 'inherent right to live on the soil was recognised, so to 'speak, simply because it suited the political aspirations 'of the nobility to do so. The price, however, paid by 'the lower classes was one at which most of them 'would shudder in this 19th century: and yet some 'would have us revert to the old system,—they are 'doing so at the present time to my knowledge. They

'would even make us believe that it would suit the 'interests of occupiers of land to do so. The reports of 'some of the resolutions moved at the meetings of the 'Highland Land League, regarding the restoration of the 'ancient rights of the clans to the soil are ample proof 'of this, although some of its leaders advocate another 'kind of feudalism, to which I shall refer farther on. 'This state of matters existed for several centuries, 'during which the aristocracy endeavoured from time 'to time to shake off their condition of vassalage to the 'sovereign; but they never fully accomplished it until 'the year 1660 when, by the payment of certain sums 'of money and the promise of more to follow, also by 'representing that the means of national defence could 'be obtained by pecuniary remuneration, they managed 'to make themselves absolute masters of their domains. 'A change of policy was now inaugurated by which the 'landlords, for so we must now term them, instead of 'endeavouring to retain the masses on the soil adopted 'the maxim that power consisted of wealth alone: con-'sequently they substituted *feu-duties, casualties*, and 'the system of exacting *rent*. These took the place of 'conscription, or services in time of war, like the *tallage* 'and *scutage* of mediæval times in England. Land for 'agricultural purposes was let to the highest bidders; 'the number of occupiers was reduced; protection 'duties were levied on foreign produce, in order to 'enable the farmers at home to pay higher rents. And 'when the Corn Laws were repealed, small farmers 'and crofters were evicted to make room for graziers 'and sheep farmers. But the latest and worst develop-'ment of modern feudalism has been the laying down 'of large tracts of land to deer forests and letting 'these to sportsmen, who, like the Yankee millionaire 'Winans, have more money than they know what to do 'with.

'Matters having reached a crisis, legislation at length 'took place with a view to reform the land laws, such 'as the establishment of the Land Court in Ireland, the 'Crofters Act in Scotland, and latterly, the Small 'Holdings Act; but these, though productive of some 'good, have been more or less a failure. And why? 'Simply because they were all based on feudalism, or 'dual ownership in land, and consequently confirmed 'the very evils they were intended to remove. Until 'our legislators are fully cognisant of the fact that the 'produce of the soil taken at its normal value, and in 'the face of foreign competition, cannot pay for dual 'ownership, all attempts at land law reform must 'prove abortive. Without wishing to anticipate the 'concluding portion of my article, I may remark that 'the Ashbourne Act in Ireland is the only step in the 'right direction which the legislature has taken yet; 'and though defective, it has given great satisfaction 'wherever it has operated.

'Now, I have an article on the proposed land 'nationalisation scheme, but I will pass that over, as I 'wish to call your attention specially to a system we 'have in Shetland, with which some of you gentlemen 'composing this Commission may not perhaps have 'any acquaintance,—the ancient Udal system. [*The 'Chairman.*—Oh, yes, we have a slight acquaintance 'with it]. Well, perhaps others may not, and in any 'case my remarks on this head are not lengthy.

'In the former numbers I have tried to demonstrate 'the fallacy of the system of too many parties having 'an interest in the soil, and, I propose now to call 'attention to the Udal or Allodial system of owner-'ship in land,—a system which is undoubtedly more 'ancient than the feudal, and which had its origin in 'Scandinavian countries. To begin with I shall give 'the following brief description of it from the pen of 'a writer who possesses a thorough knowledge of the 'subject in its technical peculiarities, Mr Gilbert 'Goudie, Edinburgh, a Shetlander, and a member of 'the Society of Antiquaries. [*The Chairman.*—I 'think we may pass that quotation over; we can read 'the passage for ourselves in Mr Gilbert Goudie's 'work]. The above quotation is a *multum in parvo* 'view of the Udal system; and the difference between 'it and any other form of land tenure is too obvious 'to be ignored. The Udaller held his lands *a Deo et* 'sole alone. "He was a peasant, for he tilled his own '"land, and claimed no distinction among his free '"neighbours; but he was also noble, for there was '"no hereditary order superior to his own. The King '"might wed the Udaller's daughter, or match his own '"daughter to the Udal-born without disparagement, for '"he himself was but the Udal-born of a larger '"Udal." (*Balfour's Oppressions of the Islands of 'Orkney and Zetland*, Intro. p. xxxi.). The only 'burden to which Udal property was originally 'subject was the *skatt*,—a tax contributed by the 'Udal proprietors for national defence, and other 'incidental purposes; but when land was not cultivated 'it was not paid. Since the Orkney and Shetland 'Islands became subject to Scotland and latterly to 'Great Britain, the rights of Udal proprietors have 'been greatly impaired by innovations of various 'kinds; but, notwithstanding the efforts made by Earl 'Patrick Stewart and others to crush the system, 'there are still a number of occupiers in these islands 'who are owners of their crofts under the old system. 'Their position when contrasted with that of crofter 'tenants is somewhat as follows:—A. A crofter tenant 'is occupier of say 10 acres of arable land and outrun, 'together with a corresponding right of grazing in the 'scattald or hill pasture. He pays a rent of £5 per 'annum and the half of the local taxes, which may be 'called £1 more,—total £6. B. A Udal proprietor 'is occupier of his own croft, also of 10 acres of arable 'land and outrun, together with a corresponding 'right of a grazing in the scattald. His croft is also 'entered in the Valuation Roll as £5 per annum, but 'although he has to pay the whole of the local taxes, 'and the imperial and ecclesiastical charges as well, 'the sum total will only amount to about £2, 10s. per 'annum. That is where the difference comes in. Now, 'if such a system were adopted throughout Great 'Britain, and all the land utilised which is at present 'devoted to sporting purposes, it would ameliorate the 'condition of the artisan classes and others perhaps to 'as great an extent as land nationalisation. The occu-'piers of agricultural subjects could then be in a posi-'tion to compete in the market with foreign producers; 'consequently, the continual drain of money to pay for 'our supply of food from other countries would be 'greatly diminished. Another evil of considerable 'magnitude, viz., absentee landlordism, would be era-'dicated: although that does not prevail so much here, 'it has been a great curse, I believe, in Ireland. Money 'screwed from rack-rented tenants would no longer 'find its way to the gambling dens of Monte Carlo or 'elsewhere, and the general public would reap a special 'benefit, both directly and indirectly. Feu-duties, 'casualties, and rack-rents would then become relics 'of a byegone age. The number of cultivators of the 'soil would speedily increase, while the urban popula-'tion would not be augmented by abnormal causes 'which have had their origin in feudalism and land-'lordism: and in a very short time, even full-blown 'socialists would begin to see that private interests in 'land would become a blessing instead of a curse, as 'they have so frequently alleged.

'Some will doubtless exclaim—"Why, the Udal '"system of ownership in land may be very good; but '"how can it be attained to without a complete revolution '"in our social *status?*" Well, I do not think there 'would be any very serious difficulty in accomplishing 'the change, as one step has already been taken in this 'direction, and under a Conservative administration 'also. I refer to the passing of the Ashbourne Act for 'Ireland; a scheme which has been found to operate 'in a most beneficial manner in the localities to which 'it has been extended. And Mr Gladstone, in 1886, 'proposed a more gigantic measure, which he declared 'would not involve any additional burden on the tax-'payers. Be that as it may, the experiment is 'certainly worth the trial—as the land itself would be 'security for any credit involved. The present class 'of landlords would be compensated for their vested 'interests, and the payment being extended to a

Lerwick, Shetland. Robert Cogle.

'certain number of years, say thirty, the instalments 'would not be oppressive on the purchasers, who would 'look forward with expectation, instead of having to 'undergo the Sisiphus-like performance of paying rent '*ad infinitum*.

'One frivolous objection urged by some against Land 'Purchase is, "that consolidation would set in anew." 'That is what socialists all say. As I have already re- 'marked, the Roman agrarian law might form a very 'good precedent for the prevention of such a sequel. 'In former times under the Udal system the land be- 'longing to an Udal proprietor was divided among his 'children; and although I do not altogether approve of 'such a procedure, yet it might be advantageously used 'in any case where the subject was of considerable 'extent.

'It has also been alleged, "that any scheme of land '"purchase would be of no use without a compulsory '"clause, as no landlord would be willing to sell unless '"it suited his interests to do so." There may be some 'force in this argument; but it is equally certain that 'there has been no dearth of land in the market, owing 'to sequestration and various other causes. There 'follows a quotation from Mr Labouchere's paper:—

'"During last year (1892) forty-seven estates in '"Scotland were offered for sale at Edinburgh, the '"aggregate reserves amounting to £1,414,895. Of '"these properties, only thirteen have been sold, which '"altogether realised £217,525, so that any capitalist '"who desires to invest in Scottish land will find no '"difficulty in doing so."—*Truth*. Now, I may say 'that since the Crofters Act passed, here in Shetland 'there has been more land in the market during the 'seven or eight years than there was perhaps in the 'fifty years before that.

'It is probable, however, that capitalists are 'beginning to discover that land cannot pay in a dual 'sense. "Facts are chiels that winna ding;" and 'truth is generally some time in making progress, but 'in the end it must prevail. Now, if any scheme 'could be devised in order to enable the occupiers of 'land actually in the market to purchase their holdings, 'as an experiment, and if the parties concerned would 'avail themselves of it to such an extent as to make the 'supply insufficent to meet the demand, the question 'of compulsory sale could then be taken into consider- 'ation. But, as all legislation is experimental at first, 'the optional principle should be given a fair trial.

'In concluding these articles I may be allowed to 'say that I have tried to view this vexed and all 'absorbing question from various standpoints. I have 'pointed out in a manner which should convince every 'candid and unprejudiced person that all the existing 'evils connected with the tenure of land have had their 'origin in feudalism. I have also tried to point out 'the absurdity and injustice of land nationalisation, 'and that the interests of the occupiers would be as 'much embarrassed under it as they have been under 'feudal oppression. I have given a brief description of 'the Udal system, and, I think, there can be no question 'as to the benefits it would confer on occupiers of land, 'were it adopted in Britain. I may here remark, that 'in Scandinavian countries, where the greater part of 'the land is held under Udal tenure, we seldom or 'never hear of any agrarian agitation; nor is there to 'be seen such enormous wealth on the one hand, and 'such abject poverty on the other, as is daily wit- 'nessed throughout the precincts of this great empire 'on which "the sun never sets." Lastly, I have re- 'ferred to land purchase as a judicious method of 'accomplishing the end in view; and though I do not 'for a moment pretend that such a scheme would usher 'in the millenium or the golden age; yet the time 'would ultimately arrive when the metaphor from Holy 'Writ concerning every man's "sitting down under '"his own vine and fig tree" might be fulfilled in a 'somewhat literal sense. Indeed, it would appear 'from I Kings, Chap. XXI., that the tenure of land in 'those days was of a very absolute description; and that 'it bore a striking resemblance to the Udal system of 'ancient Scandinavia. It was evidently impossible for 'even the king at that period to obtain the legitimate 'property of any subject, except by fraudulent or 'violent methods, and when those were resorted to, they 'did not fail to call down the vengeance of Heaven on 'the perpetrators of such injustice. *Esto perpetua.*'

Lerwick, Shetland. Robert Cogle.

(Signed) ROBERT COGLE.

QUEE, CUNNINGSBURGH,
SHETLAND.
24*th July* 1894.

45,666. Did you write that out yourself?—I did, My Lord, except the quotations.

45,667. Who wrote them for you?—I got them from other parties. There are only two or three quotations. Of course, I have not read all the quotations which I have inserted in my paper,—there is one from Henry George, which I have endeavoured to refute; and I have also a quotation from Gilbert Goudie, and another from *Balfour's Oppressions of Orkney and Shetland:* but I wrote all the rest myself, and it expresses my own views.

45,668. Then, you are appearing here not as a delegate but to express your own views?—I am appearing as a delegate, because I have explained my views to a good many people, who appeared to fall in with them, and they asked me to attend before you.

45,669. Were you appointed a delegate at a public meeting?—I was, and also by the people privately. I was appointed elsewhere, and also at a recent meeting.

45,670. Is there a general desire in the district you represent to acquire holdings by purchase?—I could not say; but a good many people are beginning to think that it might be of some benefit. Some years ago they did not seem to look on it favourably, about the time of the passing of the Crofters Act, and for a few years subsequent to that time; but they are beginning to see that the outcome of the Crofters Act is not all that was expected at one time.

45,671. And do they think they would be better if they could purchase their holdings?—A good many of them do, if they could purchase them under some such scheme as the Ashbourne Act, as it is well known some of the people are purchasing their holdings by paying yearly instalments of even less than the rents they were paying before,—even where those rents had been fixed by the Land Court.

45,672. Is it the feeling of the majority of the people you represent that they should have opportunities to purchase holdings, or is that feeling only confined to a certain number?—I could not say as to that, but a good many people are seeming to look upon it more favour- ably than they did a few years ago, at any rate.

45,673 Are their minds not made up on the subject, then?—Not all. Some, I know, would prefer to go on under the present system; but others would be favour- able to land purchase.

45,674. Which are the larger number,—those who would prefer to go on under the present system, or those who would go in for land purchase?—I could hardly say at the present time; it takes a little time to get people to make up their minds.

45,675. Your ideas, I suppose, are just gradually find- ing their way?—Yes.

45,676. Perhaps they have not yet been thoroughly considered by the people?—No.

45,677–78. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You seem to have given a good deal of attention to the subject of land tenure. You are a fisherman, I think, professionally?—Yes.

45,679. Would you advise any fisherman to purchase a croft, if he had facilities for doing so, as well as con- tinue the fishing?—Well, he could please his own mind about it. If a fisherman wanted a croft say at a certain rent, and if he found he could purchase it outright by paying an annual instalment of about the same amount as the rent for thirty years, why should he not do the one as well as the other?

45,680. Can a man follow the fishing thoroughly and at the same time do justice to a croft?—It depends on the size of the croft. Here in Shetland, and, I believe, also in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, the

greater part of the population try to do both, so far as I can learn.

45,681. Yes, but do you think that is a good system?—They seem to think it is, as it gives them two strings to their bow; some years the fishing may prove a failure, and other years the crop may prove a failure, and when the one fails the other may not. I believe that is the idea that most have.

45,682. *Mr Munro.*—I suppose you consider that it would be a good thing for a fisherman to have a bit of land to fall back upon when the fishing could not be followed with advantage?—Yes.

45,683. You point to a general scheme of land purchase as a remedy for the existing state of matters. Now, have you ever considered the difficulty that purchasers might have in paying up principal and interest, under a land purchase scheme?—Well, I don't pretend to be an expert in financial matters; but so far as that goes, people who have more knowledge of the matter than I have favour schemes of that kind.

45,684. I suppose that if the people bought the land they would be likely to take more pains in cultivating it than they do as tenants?—It is natural to suppose so; we would all suppose so. If they did not, they would be foolish; I would say that much.

45,685. *Rev. Mr Macallum.*—I think you said you were appointed a delegate at a meeting held last night?—Yes.

45,686. Do you think the people who were at the meeting agree with your views?—Some of them do, and others did not seem to have made up their minds. Some of them were undoubtedly of the opinion that land could not pay two parties, and that if something in the way of land purchase could be got to enable them to become the owners of their holdings, it should be tried.

45,687. But even in your own scheme, do not you propose to have the two parties? Do you not propose to buy out the landlord in the first place?—Oh, certainly; I do not think it would be right to rob the landlord any more than any other person.

45,688. But you say you would prefer a scheme of land purchase because you would get rid of the dual ownership in land. But then you see, even in your own scheme, you have to pay the landlord, and you have to pay the cultivator?—I don't refer to that exactly. I refer to a person occupying and cultivating his own holding, the same as crofters do at present.

45,689. But supposing you got them settled in your way, would they not have to pay yearly instalments to pay up the purchase price?—Undoubtedly, they would, for a certain term of years. I don't know how long they pay under the Ashbourne Act in Ireland, but at the end of a certain time it becomes their own, as I understand.

45,690. Do you prefer this scheme because you think that under it these yearly instalments would be smaller than the fair rent that was fixed?—I understand they are so in Ireland under the Ashbourne Act; but, even if they were a little more the purchaser would look forward with expectation to a time when they would cease, whereas under the present landlord and tenant system he has nothing of the kind to look to, but just a weary struggling on, or a Sisiphus-like punishment until the end of time.

45,691. But don't you think it reasonable to suppose that the instalment would be larger than the fair rent?—I could not say positively about that.

45,692. Do you think it is a fair rent at all if it is higher than the yearly instalments would be for paying out the landlord altogether?—I could not say; I do not pretend to be a judge of what is a fair rent. My own opinion of what is a fair rent would be this: if a cultivator, taking the produce of the soil at its normal value, could obtain enough to pay him a living wage (the 'living wage' theory has great force nowadays), and also to recompense him for his outlays expended in connection with the management or working of his holding or croft, then the surplus, if any surplus is left, the landlord ought certainly to get. But if there is no surplus left, how can it pay two parties?

45,693. You have not made clear how you get rid of the two parties. But the point is this: do you think it is a fair rent if it is higher than the yearly instalments that would have to be paid under your purchase scheme?—I could not say as to that. At any rate, a purchaser would look forward to a time when the payments would cease.

45,694. [*Question repeated*].—I don't quite follow your question: I have already said I don't know exactly what fair rent may be.

45,695. You know that the Crofters Commission have to fix a fair rent where required. Under your scheme there would have to be yearly instalments made to pay out the proprietor. Now, do you think it is a *fair* rent that is fixed by the Crofters Commission if it is higher than the instalments that would be payable under your scheme?—I could not say.

45,696. Don't you see it would necessarily be unfair?—Fair or unfair, if the rent has to be paid from outside sources, as unquestionably is the case, it would be far better to pay it in the shape of purchase money. [*The Chairman.*—You are not following the question exactly].

45,697. I only want to get your opinion as to the fairness of this rent. Would the rent really be fair if it were higher than the instalments payable under a land purchase scheme approved by you?—No, I don't think it would.

45,698. So that under the Crofters Act the rent that is paid must surely be less than the rent that would be paid under your system?—Oh, I don't know as to that.

45,699. You have admitted that already?—I don't know as to that: at any rate, I would say this—

45,700. You need not say anything more. Then, you have admitted too that the rates under your system would be more than doubled?—Do I say so?

45,701. The question is, would they not have to pay both tenant's and landlord's rates?—Oh, yes, I am quite well aware of that; I have thought over that subject.

45,702. The rates would be doubled?—Yes, certainly.

45,703. And besides that, there are also other taxes, such as ecclesiastical assessments?—Oh, I know all about these too.

45,704. So that the holder would have to pay more than double?—For a certain period only.

45,705. For all time?—Yes, for all time, of course: the occupier, if he is owner, has to pay the whole of the taxes.

45,706. Don't you find the rates are particularly high in Shetland?—The poor rates in some parishes are very high.

45,707. Are they not abnormally high as compared with Scotland?—I don't know.

45,708. Can you tell us what the rate is at present?—I do not have any data at hand to show, but in some years they are more than in others. But they are generally regarded as very high.

45,709. And are not the school rates particularly high?—They are not so high.

45,710. Are they not over 3s. in some parishes?—Oh, no.

45,711. I refer, of course, to the double rate?—Not in the parish where I live.

45,712. We have had information that they are as high as 3s?—I could hardly think that, but it may be so: I would not dispute it.

45,713. You see all these burdens would fall very heavily under your scheme?—I am quite well aware of that, but I look forward to a time when the payment of rent would cease.

45,714. But, in the meantime, there would be this higher rent to pay every year,—that is to say, the instalment would be higher than the fair rent every year,—and more than double rates; and with all these demands to meet in the present hard times, do you think the crofters could endure that?—If the crofters have to pay their rents from outside sources, as is the case with the great majority of crofters in Shetland, even where the fair rents have been fixed by the Com

Lerwick, Shetland.

Robert Cogle.

mission, they have to pay them by means of the fishing, or the Naval Reserve money, or from money earned by sailing south, or money remitted by friends abroad, —if the rents have to be obtained from these outside sources and not from the crofts themselves, it is much better for those rents to go on for a certain period towards the purchase of the holding and cease at the end of that time, even allowing the rates to be double.

45,715. But these instalments must certainly be higher than the fair rent, and extend over a long period of years,—that is perfectly clear. And would there not be some difficulty in tying the crofters too much to the land? Would there not be a difficulty in disposing of these crofts again if they wished to begin some other occupation? Is it not much easier for them to leave the croft and get compensation than under your system it would be to dispose of the croft?—Some of them had to fight through the Sheriff Court for compensation for improvements.

45,716. But they are entitled to it?—I know they are, but they have had to fight for it in the Sheriff Court all the same.

45,717. *The Chairman.*—As to the desire for land purchase under some such scheme as you point at, is that a general desire in the island, or is it confined to a few in your district?—Perhaps there may not be a general desire as yet, but, I think, the desire is gaining ground. I have no hesitation in saying that, though I would not take it upon me to say that there is a general desire.

45,718. Did you read that paper to the meeting?—Yes, not to yesterday's meeting, but to a meeting last year.

45,719. You have not read it to the crofters whom you represent since last year?—No.

45,720. And you did not read it last night?—No.

John Nicolson.

JOHN NICOLSON, Sandwick (45)—*examined.*

45,721. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No, the croft was taken from me.

45,722. When was it taken from you?—In 1891.

45,723. Who is your landlord?—Mr Bruce.

45,724. Have you a statement to submit?—Yes.

45,725. Just read it, please.

'Statement of John Nicolson of Sandwick.

'I was forced to leave my holding three years ago. 'Mr John Bruce warned me out for no fault whatever 'but to make room for two tenants (women) who had 'occupied holdings at Burraland. I greatly desire 'another holding. I am able and willing to stock a 'holding of a moderate size. I have a family growing 'up. There is plenty of ground in Sandwick for new 'holdings. Recently, six crofters were removed from 'Burraland, which is now a farm in the hands of 'Lieutenant Bruce. It is an excellent place for one or 'two new holdings. There is also the island of Mousa 'once occupied by several crofters: there is not one 'crofter on it now. It is a fine island. I am certain if 'these places were offered for new holdings many would 'gladly seek them and soon stock them. I know 'several men like myself anxious for holdings, but 'none can be got. Some whom I know would greatly 'prefer to remain in Shetland rather than go to the 'sailing or to other lands, if they could get small 'holdings.'

(Signed) JOHN NICOLSON.

45,726. You say there is plenty of ground in Sandwick. What ground is that?—Burraland and Mousa.

45,727. Is that grazing presently in the occupation of Mr Bruce?—Yes.

45,728. Sheep grazing?—Cattle and sheep, and ponies.

45,729. Well, we will see that land when we visit the district.

Lerwick, Shetland.

James Robertson.

JAMES ROBERTSON, Willil, Levenwick (62)—*examined.*

45,730. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

45,731. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

45,732. I see from the Crofters Commission Report that the area of your croft is 6 acres 22 poles arable, 9 acres 3 roods 3 poles outrun, and one share in the scattald of Wardhill, 398 acres divided into 58 shares, of which 24 were dealt with. The old rent was £7, and the fair rent is £4, 12s. Have you a written statement?—Yes. 'I and other crofters in Levenwick 'had a right to the pasture of Virdifield Hill. It was 'taken from us by Mr John Bruce. He asked us to 'sign away our right. We were told if we refused to 'do this that part of our arable ground would be taken 'from us. On account of this we gave up our right. 'The Crofters Commission assigned to us a part of 'Hallalee Hill, but if we put on any stock there they are 'poinded when once within the gate. Our case is a very 'hard one. We cannot get grass for our animals for 'love or money. We want a part of Virdifield Hill, 'which is at present let as a sheep farm to Robert Gunn. 'There is any amount of grass there. It takes me to my 'knees almost, and our animals starving.

'For myself and other tenants on the Sumburgh 'Estate at Levenwick.

(Signed) 'JAMES ROBERTSON.'

45,733–34. What is the extent of Virdifield?—I could not say.

45,735. Is it fenced in by Mr Bruce?—Yes.

45,736. And it now forms part of his grazings?—Yes.

45,737. Was that land of Virdifield at any time in possession of the crofters?—Yes, from time immemorial. I had two yards there, one bigger and one lesser planta-cruives, and I have had a yard sometimes with cabbage, sometimes with corn, and sometimes rye-grass. But now I have got none of that, it was all swept away.

45,738. When was the place swept away?—Mr Bruce put in a shepherd who poinded the sheep.

45,739. When was it that these yards or planta-cruives were taken from you?—Two years ago.

45,740. And has there been some irritation in the district in consequence?—Yes, I heard nought else.

45,741. You say the Crofters Commission assigned a part of Hallalee Hill, but if you put on any stock there they were poinded when once inside the gate. Was that land given in enlargement of holdings?—We were holding the hill at the passing of the Act, and we thought we were entitled to hold it still, but when the Crofters Commission came—

45,742. But it was not assigned to you by the Crofters Commission, was it?—Well, I could not say.

45,743. There was no application for enlargement by taking land from Hallalee Hill. You are not made to pay rent for it now, are you?—Yes; we pay rent for it.

45,744. Were you appointed a delegate at a public meeting?—Yes.

45,745. When was it held?—It was held about a week ago.

45,746. *Mr Small, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for Shetland Proprietors.*—How many tenants were there altogether at that meeting?—There were only two besides myself, at Levenwick. There are only three in all there.

45,747. You said that somebody made threats to take away your arable land, who was that?—I said Mr Bruce told us that if we did not sign to clear from the hill, part of the arable land of our holdings would be taken from us.

45,748. Is it not the case that Mr Bruce said that you were to get arable land in lieu of the pasture?—No, no such thing.

45,749. Did Mr Bruce not divide up a piece of land and give you a part of it?—No. There were three tenants there: Mr Bruce divided the land and he gave

my brother a part, and he gave some to a schoolmaster, Malcolm Goudie, and he gave my brother a piece off the other end: and he divided it betwixt other two neighbours, Magnus Smith and me, and we had no more land.

45,750. You got land at that time from Mr Bruce?—We got the land divided, but we had no more land.

45,751. Did you get that simultaneously with lessening of the pasture?—Yes, but we have no more land than before, but rather less.

45,752. But at the time your pasture was lessened you got more arable land?—No, I did not get more.

45,753. More than you had before?—No, I did not.

45,754. Did not you say you got a share of it along with other people?—Long before. It went by merks, the town was by three merks. I took a man, an educated man too, to measure my arable land here when I put it in to the Commission. He found my acreage to be 3½ acres arable and 4½ outrun, and a good part of that was rocks; I could only keep three sheep on it. Surely, I have need of wool as well as others.

45,755. *The Chairman.*—Is this Mr Gunn a farmer?—He is a farmer, a servant to Quendale.

45,756. And he has this ground from Mr Bruce?—Yes.

45,757. Has there been any litigation about Virdifield,—any dispute in the Court here?—Yes, there have been disputes about it, and they went to Mr Lennox, I think, and he told them that he thought they would have a right to it, as they held it at the passing of the Act.

45,758. But was there any decision by the Sheriff upon the matter?—Not so far as I know.

JOHN BRUCE of Sumburgh (57)—*examined.*

45,758A. I should like to be allowed to give my evidence at this stage. There have been some statements made by the witnesses just examined, which would lead one to suppose that I said one thing and did another. I do not exactly understand the charges, but I take this opportunity of giving an unqualified denial to all such statements.

Then, with regard to the farms which the Cunningsburgh tenants called the farm of Sumburgh, and stated to be one sheep run or one holding, you will find them accurately described in the Valuation Roll. They are four or five separate holdings, occupied by different people. I may state that on my property I have no farm which comes up to the £100 level, and only four above the £30 level. The whole of the remainder of my estate is in the hands of the crofter class.

There was a statement made with regard to the Island of Mousa, to the effect that Mousa was at one time occupied by crofters. That may have been so, but it is so very long ago that I cannot tell you anything about it. I don't think there are any remains of crofters' houses on it, and if crofters were ever there it must have been 100 or 150 years ago.

Then, with regard to this sheep run in Cunningsburgh called the Cliffs, which formerly formed part of my estate and which seems to be very much coveted by some of my crofters, I would say that this enclosure lies in the middle of a long range of pasture extending from Scousburgh in the south to Quarff in the north. It is owned by different proprietors, but there was no fencing, and no restrictions as to the number of stock that any of the tenants liked to put on the ground, and the consequence was that in many cases a crofter who paid a large rent had a very small stock on that pasture, while a crofter who paid very little rent, or a cottar who paid no rent at all, had perhaps the largest stock in the district. The result of this was excessive over-stocking.

A great deal has been said about the superior quality of that scattald and also of Virdifield. Of course, when a scattald has been enclosed and drained and lightly stocked, it rapidly improves. As far as I know, there is no difference in the quality of the ground on the one side of the fence and on the other; it is simply a difference of treatment. As to those tenants who at present wish more scattald, it would do them no possible good if this fence were thrown back, unless some different system of management were to be pursued. At present their scattald is overstocked, and, in my opinion, they would very soon overstock any addition they might get, and the land would go back to its old state. I think before they ask for an enlargement of scattald, it would only be reasonable to require that they should take advantage of the means at their disposal to have the scattald they at present hold regulated.

45,759. *Mr Gordon.*—You heard what the first witnesses said, not about evictions, but clearances of the crofts and the sheep being put off the ground. Could you point out on the map the ground that was cleared?—Yes. I may say that no tenant was turned out of the ground: they were removed in every case with their own consent. No doubt, I may, in some cases, have brought a certain amount of pressure to bear upon them, but eventually they were removed with their own consent, and in almost every case where a man was fit to take a better holding he got one. Where he was not fit to get a better holding, he was otherwise provided for. [*Refers to map and points out area referred to*]. Blumire and Shumire were miserable places where no man could live, and the tenants were removed to better places. Vadsgarth was the only other place enclosed at the time. It was held by my own ground officer, and he gave it up when no longer able to hold it, and retired on a pension from the estate. The pasture is larger than the crofters say, but it does not carry the stock they spoke of.

45,760. Do you agree with these witnesses that giving them back this scattald would improve the condition of the crofters in that township?—I don't think it would improve them one iota.

45,761. All the crofters speak to the advantage which they obtain in this country from the few sheep they keep, and it is a fact that at the present moment the wool of the sheep is extremely dear?—Well, in the few cases where a man can get a large stock on an undivided scattald, he might make something of it; but where a man can only have a few sheep, in my opinion, the thing is not an advantage but a drawback to him. He spends far more time and trouble looking after the sheep than the returns can pay him; and from the fact of his having these few sheep, he is constantly wandering over the scattald looking after them. That, in my opinion, leads him into habits of indolence, and gives him a disinclination for steady employment. You will generally find that these men with a few sheep are poor men; the best off crofters I have have no scattald at all.

45,762-63. They do not, as a rule, adopt any system in the management of the pasture, I presume?—No, I have made two or three attempts in my time to get a club farm started, but they never succeeded.

45,764. Why not?—Well, individualism is very strong here,—each man likes to have his own, and he thinks always that luck will favour him and he will be able to get a big stock. It is a constant war between one neighbour and another who shall get up the larger stock; and a sharp man very often goes out at night with his dog and clears other people's stock off the best of the ground and puts his own on it. A great deal of that goes on.

45,765. If your ideas were carried out and a club stock established, are you not of opinion that the condition of the crofters would be improved?—By having shares in a club farm?

45,766-67. Yes, for sheep and ponies, with a certain amount of what might be called 'intown' pasture along with the arable land, for the keeping of cattle?—If the club farm paid as a speculation,—if they had a good shepherd to manage it, and it paid, of course, they would get a good income from it as from any other investment in which they might put their money. But, in most cases I fear the club farm would not pay. If a fair rent is paid for the land, a club

Lerwick, Shetland.

John Bruce.

farm has a great disadvantage as compared with an ordinary farmer. In the latter case there is one skilled individual at the head of the affair, who was probably bred to his business and will manage it in such a way as to make it as remunerative as possible. In the case of a club farm you may have twenty to fifty owners; they may appoint a director, but in all probability they will dispute his authority or management. They will also constantly dispute with each other about the proper management of the stock, and the consequences are that it will fail where an individual may succeed.

45,768. But that would mean that a club stock system was not being properly followed, if individuals were allowed to interfere with the manager?—Yes.

45,769. Now, I find, as a general rule, in going over the islands that wherever a proprietor or a large tenant holds stock, they are not the stock of the island, but an imported stock, such as black-faced ewes or grey-faced lambs?—Yes.

45,770. Is it your opinion that the ordinary Shetland sheep cannot be kept with the same profit as the grey-faced lamb?—Well, there is a difficulty about the ordinary Shetland sheep. I have no doubt if you could command the top price that is always paid for really fine Shetland wool and could keep the Shetland sheep as we keep blackfaces and cheviots, the Shetland sheep would pay remarkably well for the wool. I am not well up in the subject of wool, but my idea is that the Shetland sheep when well treated deteriorates in wool; if you wish to get really fine Shetland wool you must starve the sheep by overstocking the pasture; and you must be prepared to lose fifteen to twenty or twenty-five per cent. of your sheep every winter from actual starvation in order that the remainder may grow the finest wool. If, on the other hand, you tried these sheep on a properly managed farm and did them well so that you had not more than the average mortality, and had a fair crop of lambs from them, my belief is that you would find your Shetland wool would rapidly deteriorate in quality. At least, that is my experience. I got splendid crops of lambs, and they fed very well, but the wool got bad in quality, and sold only for the price of cheviot wool.

45,771–72. Would not the deterioration in the wool be to some extent made up by the size of the lambs and the price you would get for the wedder lambs?—Of course, it would.

45,773. And no doubt good feeding would lengthen the wool and increase the quantity?—Yes, but you have a lighter sheep, and I think any sheep farmer will tell you that side by side the Shetland sheep as a mutton-producing sheep cannot compare with the black-faced sheep.

45,774. That is quite true; but taken otherwise, the wool of a Shetland ewe is worth double that of a black-faced?—Yes, fully that, and if you can keep up the quality, even more than double.

45,775. It would be needless, I fancy, to suppose that the crofters in Shetland would go in for black-faced ewes,—even if they were more profitable to the grazier they would be less profitable to the Shetland crofters as a wool-producing subject?—Shetland crofters have, I think, in some cases gone in for black-faces, or more frequently for cheviots. Some of my crofters go in for cheviots.

45,776–77. The only sheep I have seen on the crofters' pasture are Shetland sheep?—Yes, that is the rule; but where they go in for different breeds is where a man has a small place,—not common but to himself.

45,778. But still you are not clear that the improvement in the sheep would lessen the actual profit from the croft: it might lessen the quality of the wool but it would increase the quality of the sheep and the quantity of the wool?—The moment you do away with the quality of the wool you do away with the inducement to keep sheep of the Shetland breed.

45,779. Yes, but still it might be greatly increased in quantity and little deteriorated in value?—The Shetland wool if allowed to deteriorate becomes very like cheviot wool. They sometimes cross the Shetland sheep with the cheviots and you get a very good sheep after a few years,—one-eighth of Shetland and seven-eighths of cheviots makes a remarkably good sheep.

Lerwick, Shetland.

John Bruce.

45,780. And how would the value of the wool compare at present with cheviot wool?—I have sold wool from sheep half Shetland and half black-face as grey-faced wool for about the same price as grey-faced wool.

45,781. That would not be any profit?—No.

45,782. But, how would this crop of the Shetland and the cheviot sheep stand as regards the value of the wool?—It would be cheviot wool.

45,783. And would it be improved cheviot wool?—I doubt it, though at first it might be a little finer.

45,784. *Mr Munro.*—You say that if the crofters got the scattald restored to them of which they have been deprived, in your opinion, it would not benefit them. May I ask you what you found upon in coming to that conclusion?—In the present state of matters there is no regulation in the scattald, and supposing, for the sake of argument, that there are 8000 to 9000 acres in this stretch of hill which they have at present, the addition of 1000 acres to that hill would not make any appreciable difference. I don't think it made any difference to them when I took it away, and I don't think it would make much difference if they got it back: it would just be a little more of this same scattald.

45,785. But you heard the crofters complain bitterly of having been deprived of it?—Because outside the fence the ground is as bare as the back of your hand, and inside the fence it has been enclosed and drained for a good many years and is now in a beautiful state. Of course, it is very much better now than when they had it; but if they got their stock in there it would very soon deteriorate. If on the other hand it were divided into parts and each man got one part, it would no longer be scattald.

45,786. Don't you think the crofters are pretty fair judges of their own interests, when they say they would like the scattald to be restored?—I don't think they are.

45,787. Do you not think that they, at least, think they could use it to some advantage if they got it?—I don't think they would be contented; they would always want a little more. It is quite natural that they should; any farmer who sees fine fields adjoining his farm will tell you it would be an advantage for him to get them if he could get them cheap enough.

45,788. But they would not want their scattald restored to them unless they really and sincerely thought it could be turned to some advantage?—They must have the idea that it would enable them to get larger stocks, and to a certain extent it would, but the advantage would be small, and confined to a few of the most active among them.

45,789. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Can you tell us how many crofters share in this scattald of 730 acres that we heard about?—Roughly speaking, the number is about 50, but the Valuation Roll will give the accurate number.

45,790. *Mr Maccallum.*—The crofters in Shetland depend, I suppose, mostly on the fishing?—As a rule, most of them do.

45,791. And you would also agree that the knitting industry is also a most important industry, the knitting industry for the women?—Oh, yes.

45,792. They depend much more on these two things than on the actual agricultural produce of the land?—Well, the great bulk of Shetland crofts are poor and small. Where you have a really good croft the crofter either becomes a very bad fisherman, or gives the fishing up altogether.

45,793. No doubt you will see that it is of great importance to encourage these two industries, the knitting and the fishing?—Oh, yes.

45,794. Now, the material that they use for the knitting must be this pure Shetland wool?—Yes, or I believe a large number of finer wools are used for the finer Shetland work, merinoes.

45,795. But the particular worth of the Shetland hosiery depends upon its being made out of the pure native stuff?—Well, that is the general idea.

45,796. And if purchasers thought that other wools

were used, the manufacture would at once fall in value?—I daresay it would, but I am not a wool expert.

45,797. Now, previous to 1872, I suppose that this scattald was stocked with Shetland sheep?—Yes.

45,798. These provided the raw material for this industry?—Yes.

45,799. So the taking away of that scattald meant a considerable interference with the important industry of knitting?—It meant the lessening of the production of Shetland wool, to a small extent.

45,800. Was not the half of the scattald taken away if 730 acres remain and 1000 were taken away?—If you refer simply to that scattald; but there is a collection of scattalds, as I was trying to explain on the map, extending over a district of some ten miles which are practically all one scattald and over which the crofters' sheep feed promiscuously. What was taken away was only a proportion of these large areas.

45,801. However, it is more than these fifty crofters have now?—Nobody can tell what they have.

45,802. According to the Crofters' Commission blue-book?—According to that blue-book they ought to have 730 acres, but *de facto* they pasture over some 4000 or 5000 acres along with tenants from other properties, without any regulation whatever.

45,803. There is this further point: this was stocked with black-faced ewes, was it?—Yes.

45,804. And the sheep from the crofters' scattald go in there and get mixed up with your stock,—is not that so?—No, not much. After the passing of the Crofters Act, as one of the witnesses pointed out, there was a good deal of friction. Some person put these tenants up to the idea that if they only persisted in putting their sheep into this scattald they would acquire a right to it, or something of that kind, and the consequence was, that their sheep had to be poinded, and there was a good deal of friction for some time about that. But before that there was really no friction, and it has passed away again now.

45,805. But has not there been some crossing of the native sheep with the black-faced?—Not by coming to my townships; but there has been crossing by some of the crofters buying a cross-bred sheep and slipping him into the hill, by the way of improving his own stock as he calls it.

45,806. But not by the stock on these farms that came to the neighbourhood of the crofting townships?—No.

45,807. They say so themselves, I think, or words to that effect, that their stock has been more or less spoiled in the quality of the wool, by getting mixed with farmers' sheep?—I don't think that is so in this district. The sheep are not what you would call very good Shetland sheep in that district,—they are a little bit crossed. Different sheep have been bought from time to time by the crofters and slipped into the hill, so that the sheep are now somewhat changed.

45,808. These men say that the industry of knitting has gone down in the particular district on account of the withdrawal of the scattald; are you aware of that?—I think that is fallacious. The girl on a croft can knit a certain amount of wool, and she never stops for want of material to knit with.

45,809. They also say they are obliged to purchase the wool?—If they had it of their own, they would not require to purchase it.

45,810. If they had this scattald, they would not have to purchase it?—It is a question of pounds, shillings, and pence: they would either have the wool or else buy it, and it might be more profitable to buy it than to raise it.

45,811. Could you give us any idea of the value of a Shetland fleece of ordinary average value?—If you go to the very fine sheep,—I really don't know much about the matter, but my idea is that the clip seldom exceeds 1½ lbs., which would be worth 3s. a lb. or so, so that the actual value of the fleece of the pure Shetland sheep would be equal in value to that of the cheviot fleece.

45,812. And when it is spun and knitted what is its value?—I think the knitters pay something like 1s. 6d. an ounce. This morning I saw a shawl said to be the finest ever made in Shetland, the owner of which wants £36 for it. It is a full-sized lady's shawl, and weighs something like 2 ounces.

45,813. Your principal objection to their taking the use of this scattald is that in the meantime there are no proper regulations as to grazings?—My principal objection is that if they pay a fair rent for it, they are incapable of managing it so as to make their rent out of it.

45,814. Are they not quite as capable of putting the regulations provided by Act of Parliament into force as people elsewhere?—They ought to be: the men don't want to do it.

45,815. Do you think it would be an advantage that they should put these regulations into force?—I think before they ask for more, they ought to be obliged to put these regulations into force, and let people see if they can manage a common stock. My opinion of common grazing is that it is almost impossible to manage it in any way so as to make a profit to the holders.

45,816. But these regulations have been put into force in other parts, and why should they not be here?—They have had no experience of the working of it here.

45,817. You say that you give an unqualified denial to the statements made by the crofters here, with regard to your dealings with them?—Where they say that I said one thing and did another, or that I acted in any underhand manner, I give such statements a most unqualified denial. It is impossible at this distance of time for me to remember all the little conversations that may have taken place, and in many cases the words of my servants are put into my mouth,—I don't know whether they were spoken or not.

45,818. But there is no doubt, I suppose, that there was an increase of rent in 1872?—There was a revaluation, yes, and in very many cases an increase of rent.

45,819. And a great reduction has been given by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

45,820. And at the same time that this increase of rent took effect, there was the enclosure of this scattald?—I am not prepared to give you the dates, but it was somewhere about the same time. It was all part of one scheme.

45,821. The withdrawal of the scattald and the raising of the rent?—The withdrawal of the scattald and the re-valuation of the property.

45,822. You call it re-valuation?—Accompanied by a re-division in most cases. The former system, as I daresay you are aware in Shetland, was the old 'runrig' system, where a township was held by two or three, and each man had a patch of the good and a patch of the bad all over. Generally speaking, that was abolished about that time, and the farms were squared into lots so that a re-valuation was absolutely necessary.

45,823. Do you think there is any truth in what was stated to us with so much emphasis and so repeatedly, that the crofters were misled into signing the paper they did sign about the withdrawal of the scattald?—Not a word of truth.

45,824. You think they were not misled?—Most emphatically not.

45,825. But they are a truthful people, are they not?—The people who spoke here about that, with one exception, did not speak from personal knowledge; they spoke merely from hearsay. They did not sign the paper.

45,826. Some of them surely spoke from personal knowledge?—There was one old man who did.

45,827. Don't you think he must have been misled?—I do not.

45,828. He could not make a deliberate misstatement about it?—I believe he made a deliberate misstatement.

45,829. And still you believe that they are a truthful people?—That is not the Norse character, I am afraid; it is not one of our characteristics.

45,830. To be truthful?—No. We have a great many very good qualities in the Norse character, but

Lerwick, Shetland.

John Bruce.

truthfulness is the very last I would include among them.

45,831. Do you include yourself in saying so?—I am speaking of the Norse blood, of which I have a share. I think anybody will admit that the Norse character is certainly not a truthful one.

45,832. And you are a Norseman yourself?—I come from the same stock originally: we all do.

45,833. There is no doubt in your own mind about the genuineness of the desire of the people to get back this scattald?—Oh, there is no doubt about it.

45,834. They made an application to the Crofters Commission for it?—Yes.

45,835. And they were not successful in that application?—No.

45,836. Can you tell us how it came about that they failed?—As far as I understand the Crofters Act only allowed enlargement from farms that were of a greater yearly value than £100 a year. I met the application by a statement that this was not worth £100 a year. But I don't think the case was ever tried on its merits,—there was some technical difficulty in the way: it was thrown over, I understand, on account of some technical error.

45,837. Now, is it the case that since that application was made the scattald has been sold by you to your brother?—Yes.

45,838. So that that is an effective bar to the crofters getting it?—Under the existing clause.

45,839. You have put an effective bar between them and the scattald by selling it to Colonel Bruce?—I am not a lawyer, but I believe so as far as the present law is concerned.

45,840. *The Chairman.*—There were two applications I understand to the Crofters Commission, and the first application I believe was withdrawn as incompetent?—Yes.

45,841. Then came the second application, when the plea was raised, I presume by you, that the true landlord had not been called owing to a change of ownership?—Yes.

45,842. And that application has not, I think, been disposed of finally?—I think your lordship is correct: I simply stated that I was not defender.

45,843. Who would have been the proper defender?—My brother, Colonel Bruce.

45,844. And had there been a transference of the property to him?—Yes.

45,845. For valuable consideration?—Yes, the title was purchased.

45,846. And that is the position of the matter at present. Now, a number of the crofters have said that they were asked to sign a certain paper. Is that the fact?—To give up the hill?

45,847. Yes?—It must be the fact: they all agree about it. I do not remember about that paper, but it is highly likely that I would send round the ground officer with a paper explaining what I intended.

45,848–9. Do you not recollect, as a matter of fact, whether you did or did not send round the paper?—I have heard them all say so, and, I think, it is most likely I did. I looked for the paper they spoke of, and I could not find it. That rather staggered me; but at the same time I think I must have sent round the paper.

45,850. You would observe from their evidence that they concurred,—not one or two, but I think four or five,—in saying that they were asked to sign it?—The matter was brought up before the Crofters Commission. I think there is not the slightest doubt that I did send round the paper.

45,851. Since you have looked for the paper and cannot find it, can you tell us what is in it?—I cannot; but it would be simply explaining what I proposed, and asking their concurrence.

45,852. Can you throw any light on this point,—whether you instructed the officer who went round with the paper to say to the crofters that if they signed the paper their stock would not be taken off the hill?—No, the one had nothing to do with the other. After the place was enclosed, I made an offer to give it as a club farm. I do not think the people are telling what they actually believe to be untrue, but, I believe, they are confounding in their own minds what was said on one occasion with what was said on another.

45,853. Are you able to say whether when the officer went round with the paper, he had any instructions to say anything to them with reference to the taking of the stock?—He would have no verbal instructions from me to say anything to them except what was down on the paper.

45,854. You observe they all say that when they were asked to sign the paper, they were told at the same time that their stock would not be taken off the hill?—Well, they apparently had a meeting last night, and it is down there in that document written by Mr Clark. Probably, some man said so at the meeting, and they all concurred, and now, of course, they all swear to it, but I don't lay much stress on that. I don't suppose these men know very well what was said.

45,855. You think that whether they intend to do so or not they are misrepresenting you?—Well, I doubt the statement; at the same time I am not in a position to disprove it.

45,856. If the statement is incorrect, then whether they mean it or not they are misleading us?—Yes, but I don't assert that; I don't say that my ground officer may not have made a foolish statement.

45,857. May not he have made such a statement gathering your views from what passed in conversation between you and them?—I don't think it is likely; but he may have made a statement which they or some one of them may have understood in this way: and now it has been bandied about from mouth to mouth until it has assumed its present form.

45,858. In point of fact, was there stock at the time when that paper was signed kept on the hill?—Probably.

45,859. For how long?—Two or three months. The place would be enclosed before any stock was removed. The fences were put up, and I then told them my intentions.

45,860. Do you remember this, that when the stock was being removed, a great deal of irritation arose and some pretty strong measures had to be taken by the shepherd and his dogs to get the stock taken off?—No, that is quite a mistake: there was no such irritation.

45,861. Were they quite willing to remove the stock?—Well, there was perfect peace,—there was no difficulty between the shepherds and them.

45,862. You heard one witness describe rather graphically how his sheep were torn at the throat by the shepherds' dogs,—had you any information about that?—No.

45,863. Have you any recollection of any resistance of any kind, or protest of any kind by the crofters, on the proposal of the local managers to remove the sheep?—No: the objection on their part was met by my giving them that 300 acres, and they were quite content, or expressed themselves as being quite content.

45,864. They accepted the situation with perfect goodwill?—Yes.

45,865. Then, if they did so, how comes it that we had such an exhibition of irritation in the witness-box to-day?—That is the result of the agitation since the Crofters Act was passed.

45,866. And bad advice from some one?—That is what I think; that is my opinion.

45,867. And is not, you think, founded upon anything that took place when the sheep were removed?—No, I think not. Of course, I don't say that there might not have been a certain amount of bitter feeling, but it was not given expression to.

45,868. How do you know there was bitter feeling?—I do not say there was: there might have been.

45,869. Do you believe there was bitter feeling?—No, I don't think so.

45,870. Why do you say there might have been?—If you assert that there was, I cannot deny it: there might have been more feeling than was expressed, but so far as it was expressed there was none.

45,871. You have no reason to suppose from any-

thing you saw or any exhibition that took place, that any irritation existed?—Exactly.

45,872. Are your relations with them just now cordial and friendly?—With most of them.

45,873. Not all?—There are half-a-dozen men who appeared here whom it would be difficult to please: there are always a few discontents.

45,874. Do these men represent the feeling of others?—No, they do not.

45,875. Then, if they say they represent the feeling of others they are mistaken?—They may have been appointed delegates.

45,876. And if so, they represent the feelings of others,—may we not take that as correct?—They may have been empowered by a number of others to make a certain statement.

45,877. But, I suppose, you concede that in so far as they are representative witnesses they correctly represent the views of those who appointed them?—No they do not. These are extreme views, and the persons who express them give their own views, which are not representative but simply tolerated by the people they represent.

45,878. You think they carry the expression of their views in the witness-box much farther than the meeting they were authorised to represent?—Much farther than any of their constituents would state them. Most of the witnesses you have examined to-day have been before the Sheriff here on criminal charges.

45,879. I think the question was only put by Mr Small with regard to two of them, and in each of these two cases the man was convicted of breach of the peace?—I simply mention that as an indication of the character of the witnesses.

45,880. You said, I think, that crofters on your estate who are best off are those who have no pasture at all?—Yes.

45,881. Is it your view, speaking with all the knowledge and experience you have as a Shetland landlord, that the crofters in Shetland who have pasture would be better if they had none?—Oh, well, that depends on various circumstances.

45,881A. But stating it generally, are you of opinion that the Shetland crofters who have pasture would be much better if they had none at all?—They would be much better,—a man who has a share in an undivided pasture would be much better if he had his share divided out to himself and enclosed, so that he could get the full command of it.

45,882. But, I understood you to say that the Shetland crofter who has pasture is apt to fritter away time in looking after a few sheep which might be more profitably employed?—Yes. In some cases, where a man has good pasture and has a couple of hundred sheep on the hill, it pays him to devote his time and attention to them; but a man who has only four or five sheep had far better stay at home and let the sheep attend to themselves.

45,883. You placed a great deal of weight upon the fact that before these witnesses could be heard properly for restoration of this pasture, they should be called upon to manage in a better way the pasture they have?—Yes.

45,884. Is this your view then, that suppose a proper system of management were adopted for the pasture you have, such a system of management as would meet with your approbation (and you are well qualified to judge), would you be willing to consider favourably a proposal for assigning that pasture?—It would amount to this; would I let to a number of small tenants a place instead of letting it to one single tenant. Most certainly I would, if, in my opinion, these small tenants were able to manage it profitably and pay me a rent,—if I had a confidence in their management.

45,885. You have no objections in essence to let a number of crofters—not an excessive number—have the management of this pasture under proper regulations?—I would have none.

45,886. You say there are about fifty crofters grazing on 730 acres?—Yes.

45,887. I suppose you would concede that that area of pasture is considerably too small for such a number of crofters?—Yes, as compared with some other places, and subject to my expressed opinion, that common grazings are as a rule most unprofitable and unsatisfactory, but you know that in our end of the country the pasture is very small for the arable land. If you come down to Dunrossness proper, you will find that I have fifty-two or fifty-three crofters there in a scattald of 380 acres. We cannot compare with places in the north of Shetland, where the arable land is comparatively small and the hills very large. In our district the hills are very small compared with the arable ground.

45,887A. But, I suppose, you would be in favour, if the thing could be carried out properly, and without injuring anyone that those men who have only 730 acres should have some moderate extension of grazing?—It would depend on the way in which they got it,—the scheme under which they got it.

45,888. But suppose they got it under a scheme of which you entirely approve?—Oh, then, I would have no objection whatever.

45,889. And you would be in favour of such a thing being done?—Certainly, if I saw a prospect of any material increase in the prosperity of the people.

45,890. *Mr Small, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for Shetland Proprietors.*—Have you anything to say about John Nicolson, Sandwick, and the acres of arable land he got?—John Nicolson said he was removed, and he spoke the truth.

45,891. Yes, but with regard to the land that he now asks for?—That was Burraland. There was a place called Burraland from which there were four tenants removed, and John Nicolson asked for it. The tenants had been working this place on the old Shetland system, until they had worked the place completely out, and they could not make a living on it: they all removed of their own accord, being indeed very anxious to get away from it. No tenant would have taken it in this state for the land was done, so I put a fence round it and drained it, and sowed in grass seeds, and put in manure, and it is improving now gradually as a grass park. As to this man Nicholson, his grievence is true enough. He was a waiter in the south, who married a wife and came home to live with his father. He wanted the farm, and I gave him this farm, after the passing of the Act. It was not one of my own farms, but one of my brother George's. He was rather a disagreeable tenant, always making difficulties and disturbances, and generally was not an agreeable man to have in the place, and I told him I would not keep him, so I turned him out. Not, perhaps, that I would have turned him out under ordinary circumstances but I wanted the place for two people who came out of Burraland.

45,892. With regard to this pasture of 1000 acres, to prevent any misapprehension I should like to ask you whether before it was enclosed that pasture was confined to the tenants who have these 730 acres now?—No, it was open to any tenant from Quarff to Scoresburgh.

45,893. What is your opinion generally with regard to the expediency of fishermen having crofts?—Well, you know, in Shetland a man cannot fish all the year round as he does in the south, and I think, as a rule, it is a good thing for a fisherman to have a little croft. My own idea is that a fisherman, who is really a good fisherman and attends to his work, should not have more than three to five acres at the outside.

45,894. Of arable land?—No, altogether. I am talking of a man who practises spade husbandry. There ought to be two classes of crofters I think. When the crofter is able to keep a horse and plough with his neighbour, and where he has a good arable croft he is generally an independent man and does very well. Such a man generally drops the fishing, or only follows it occasionally. But all that a man who regularly goes to the fishing wants is a good milk cow and a pig and poultry, and you will find that in his case, three to five acres of common quality is quite sufficient.

45,895. Three acres and a cow?—Yes, three acres and a cow. Our acres, as you know, are sometimes very poor. That would give him from one to one and a half acres of arable land, which would be quite enough for him to cultivate with a spade.

45,896. Then, with regard to the method of cropping, have you anything to say about the average Shetlander's cropping?—The average rule with crofter farmers is that they are deteriorating the land very rapidly, except where they bring in enormous quantities of new soil, and in that case they are generally ruining some other place, by scalping the land. In Dunrossness we have rotation of cropping, both on part of my estate and on part of Mr Grierson of Quendale's estate; and although that was originally introduced, and in a measure forced upon the crofters, yet they now see the advantage of it, and would not give it up on any account. Fencing is not required because no animals are allowed at large during any season of the year. These crofters are all well-to-do, and if one of these crofts became vacant there would be a very great demand for it.

45,897. That is not general, though, is it?—No; except in Unst, I don't know any other place where the same thing exists, but it ought to be general throughout the islands.

45,898. Have you had any difficulties since the passing of the Crofters Act in regard to the up-keep of houses and the improving of houses by crofters?—The crofters in very many cases are improving their houses.

45,899. And building new houses?—And building new houses, in very many cases. But that was going on before the passing of the Act. I have no doubt that in some cases crofters are building houses now who would not have done so if it had not been for the passing of the Act; but, on the other hand, I am afraid that is more than counterbalanced by stopping the improvements which were mutually going on between the landlord and the tenants, where the landlord was improving or helping the crofters to improve the houses. I could not say that the rate of progress on the whole has been very much altered one way or another.

45,900. Have you anything to say about the repair of fences?—I have this to say, that it is very difficult to get crofters to keep up fences. In many places where fences were kept up by the landlord prior to the passing of the Act they are now going down to destruction, and it is almost impossible to convince crofters that the liability to keep up these fences falls upon them.

CHARLES THOMSON, Quoyhouse Unst (46)—*examined.*

45,901. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

45,902. Was your case dealt with by the Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The croft is on the Buness estate belonging to Mrs Ursula Edmonstone; extent 7 acres, 1 rood, 26 poles arable, 18 acres, 12 poles outrun, no scattald, except one-third of 27 acres: old rent £6, 5s., fair rent £4, 8s.]

45,903. What is it you wish to say?—I would like to say before you proceed further, that there seems to have been some misunderstanding among the crofters in Unst as to your proceedings. They expected that there would be a sitting held at Baltasound.

45,904. So there would, if names had been sent into us, but we do not hold meetings unless we get the names of people who are to be examined?—So I merely spoke to a few of your party whom I happened to meet, and there was a meeting among us afterwards, when it was arranged that two of us to whom it would be most convenient should come to Lerwick here. I understand the Commissioners wrote me but I never received the letter.

45,905. Did you not see the advertisement in the Shetland newspapers?—No, I did not see it.

45,906. We advertised it over the length and breadth of the Shetland Isles, in the Shetland newspapers. There were local paragraphs from time to time, and there were advertisements for two consecutive weeks in the *Shetland Times* and in the *Shetland News*, making intimation that we were to hold public sittings in the county of Shetland, and that parties desiring to give evidence were to send their names to the Secretary; but we never got any names?—I wish to say that there is no convenience in our place for myself or any of the others: our great complaint is the want of scattald among some of us.

45,907. I understand you have no scattald at all?—In the township where I live there is no scattald worth mentioning. A sheep farm goes round three sides of it, and the fourth side borders on the water, so that we have no liberty at all.

45,908. The bit of land you are most concerned about is the Ness of Quoyhouse?—Yes. That anciently belonged to the township of Quoyhouse, which consists of three crofts lying together, but that was taken in by the sheep farm.

45,909. What sheep farm?—The sheep farm of Cliff.

45,910. Well, we know something about that land, for we have been over it recently. Your croft lies at the top of Loch Cliff?—Yes.

45,911. What you desire to represent is that you are without scattald. You were appointed at a meeting, and the meeting wished to submit to us through you that they would like an extension of grazings?—Yes, what I chiefly want would be a portion of scattald somewhere adjoining our farm, because it is extremely difficult to get the rent without having some portion of scattald to put cows on. I speak for my two neighbours and myself.

45,912. Are there only four crofters in Quoyhouse?—Only three, but there is none with pasture. It would apply to more than that still, because the scattald is of very little account.

45,913. Could you pay rent for additional scattald if you got it?—Yes, we would be prepared to pay for that piece among us three.

45,914. That is the township of Quoyhouse?—The Ness of Quoyhouse.

45,915. Do you yourself carry on any trade?—Yes, I am a joiner to trade.

45,916. *Mr Gordon.*—The piece of scattald that you refer to is part of the farm of Cliff at present?—Yes.

45,917. Who is the tenant of Cliff?—Hugh Inkster. Our peat is in the same place too, and we are much inconvenienced for want of peat.

45,918. Is there any peat on that bit?—The peat right for the three houses was there.

45,919. At present you have to take your peats across the water?—Yes.

45,920. From the crofters' land?—From the west side of Loch Cliff there.

45,921. But is it from the crofters' land, or from the farm?—It is from a piece of scattald.

45,922. We saw some men there boating over peats when we were there?—Well, it is just there.

45,923. Would these be some of your township men?—Yes, they were my next neighbours.

45,924. We noticed one taking peats across the water?—Oh, yes, that is one on the outside: he lives above the loch near the road. He transports all his peats from there.

45,925. Did that scattald land ever belong to your township?—Yes, it belonged exclusively to the township of Quoyhouse; it never belonged to Cliff.

45,926. Cliff was a township of itself?—Yes, and the scattald of Cliff lies along the Decks of Cliff.

45,927. And there is pretty good land there?—It is said to be the best in the island. And the young fellows would be glad if they could get a bit of land to carry on crofting.

45,928. You are not prepared to speak to Cliff in general but to that part called Ness?—No. My wife's father was there a good while, and had to leave when it was laid down.

45,929. *Mr Alexander Bain, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for Mrs Edmonstone of Buness.*—Your case was dealt with when the Crofters Commission was down there?—Yes.

45,930. And at that time your arrears were some

Lerwick, Shetland. Charles Thomson.

£13 odds?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The arrears were £13, 14s. 2d., of which the sum of £9, 14s. 2d. was cancelled, and £4 ordered to be paid in two equal instalments.]

45,931. *The Chairman.*—Have the arrears been paid?—Yes: there is some of it in the agent's hands: it has not been just quite settled, but it is all right so far as that goes.

45,932. You are still in arrear?—A little, not much.

45,933. How much?—I cannot say.

45,934. How many rents have you paid since 1892?—I have paid all but one, and that one I am keeping. I spoke to the landlord about it the other day.

45,935. *Mr Bain.*—Did you pay last year's rent?—No, that is the rent that is due.

45,936. Did you pay the £4 that the Crofters Commission ordered you to pay?—I wrought on the estate of Buness, and my wages have still to be settled. The matter has only to be squared up.

45,937. The Crofters Commission fixed your rent due at November 1892 at £4, 8s. so that in 1892 there was £4, 8s. due, and in 1893 £4, 8s. more: was either of these two sums paid?—I paid the 1892 rent.

45,938. Can you tell us who occupies the Ness of Quoyhouse, the place that you want?—It is all taken in along with the sheep farm of Cliff.

45,939. Occupied by Mr Hugh Inkster?—Yes.

45,940. Is he a crofter?—He is a big farmer.

45,941. Can you tell us what his rent is?—I could not tell you that.

45,942. Is he a tenant on the Buness estate?—No.

David Stickle, Pettester, Baltasound (30)—*examined.*

David Stickle.

45,943. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter or a cottar?—I live with my father who is a crofter.

45,944. What is his name?—Andrew Stickle.

45,945. Was his case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The area is 2 acres, 2 roods arable, 3 acres outrun, and a sixth share of 387 acres of scattald. The old rent was £4, 15s. and the fair rent is £2, 10s.: the arrears amounted to £15, 12s. 11d., whereof there were cancelled £13, 2s. 11d. and ordered to be paid £2, 10s.]

45,946. Has your father paid up his arrears?—Yes.

45,947. And has he been paying the fair rent?—Yes.

45,948. Do you carry on any business?—I am a fisherman.

45,949. And what do you wish to represent to us?—Through not having the privilege of a meeting of the Commission in Baltasound, there are a few crofters who wish to express that they are in great distress owing to the scattald having been taken from the crofters and put into the sheep farms. They would be glad to get it back at a Fair Rent.

45,950. Were you appointed as a delegate at a meeting?—Yes.

45,951. How many attended the meeting?—There were not a great many at the meeting: they came off to the steamboat, and we expected the Burrafirth men and the Westing men the same night that your yacht left.

45,952. How many would there be altogether?—About 20.

45,953. What scattald were you deprived of?—The scattald belonged to the Westing people.

45,954. Is it close to Pettester?—No, it is a long way from Pettester,—on the same side but further south.

45,955. What farm is it now incorporated with?—The sheep farm of Collister.

45,956. How far is that farm from Pettester?—About 4 miles to the south-west.

45,957. And is there a road to it?—No.

45,958. Has Mr Sandison, the merchant, got that farm?—Yes. [*Mr Small.*—It is the late Major Cameron's property].

45,959. I suppose you don't know anything of the taking away of these scattalds of your own knowledge?—No, but my father was put off the croft belonging to Buness, 22 years ago at Mailand.

Lerwick, Shetland. David Stickle.

45,960. And who has it now?—Mr Edmonstone.

45,961. But you are not making any claim about it?—No.

45,962. Do you wish to get a new holding yourself?—Yes.

45,963. Where?—I am sure I could not exactly say at the present time. Of course, there are a good many who want a holding though not perhaps just at once: they would consider for the future where it would be chosen.

45,964. Where are the places that would make holdings?—They could get very good crofts in the whole of the sheep pasture.

45,965. What sheep pasture do you mean?—I mean Cliff for one, and Burrafirth, which is not quite so good as Cliff, but you could get some there. Then at Collister and South Belmont.

45,966. We have been looking at the whole of these places. Do you carry on any business?—No, I am just a fisherman.

45,967. *Mr Gordon.*—Suppose that the township of Pettester wants pasture, why should you go all the way down to Collister to get it?—We do not want it from there at all; it is the tenants belonging to the west side who want it.

45,968. Are there any tenants in Collister just now?—No.

45,969. Are there any in Houlland?—No.

45,970. Does the pasture of Houlland come close up to the township of Pettester?—Yes, it does.

45,971. And would you suggest the farm of Houlland or any part of it as a suitable extension of grazings for the township of Pettester?—Oh, yes, some of it.

45,972. Which part of it?—The south part and the west part: that is according to the way the fence runs.

45,973. There is a fence between the township and you?—Yes.

45,974. Was there an old crofting township to the south of you, between you and the scattald lands of the crofters at Baliasta?—Yes.

45,975. There are one or two small crofts there yet, I think, along with the shepherd's house?—One.

45,976. Are there any crofts at all on the west side?—Yes, there is one.

45,977. Is there a croft at Dale of Woodwick?—There has been a separate croft, but there is none there now.

45,978. Is there a shepherd's house there now?—No.

45,979. Are there ruins there?—There were three houses formerly, and two of them are in ruins, but one still stands.

45,980. There is one place which, I think, neither you nor the other witnesses mentioned, immediately to the north of Springfield, presently occupied by the Earl of Zetland. Perhaps you don't know anything about that?—I know the place.

45,981. That is Muckle Hoe. Do you know that hill?—Yes.

45,982. Who occupies that besides the Earl?—There is a small piece to the westward of it,—I am sure I cannot exactly say who is the proprietor, but a man occupies it for pony breeding.

45,983. This farm of Cliff, to which you and the previous witnesses referred, is not near the arable holdings of the man who is tenant of the farm?—No.

45,984. It is some miles distant, is it?—About a couple of miles.

45,985. *Mr James Begg, Solicitor, Lerwick, Agent for crofters.*—I suppose most of the district from which you come is laid down for sheep farms?—Yes.

45,986. What was formerly in the occupation of crofters is now mostly under sheep?—Yes, on the south and on the north, and on the east is all Cliff.

45,987. It is not only the scattald land that has been enclosed?—No, both scattald and crofts.

45,988. Land which was formerly used for the purpose of raising crops?—Yes.

45,989. Is that land suitable for crop raising?—Oh, yes, both for crop and stock.

45,990. Is it more suitable for cropping than for stock-raising?—In some places it is, but in others it is good for both purposes.

45,991. Are you prepared to stock a croft if you should get one?—Yes.

45,992. Without assistance?—Yes.

45,993. Would you be prepared to build a steading on it?—Oh, yes, and so would a good many more on the island.

45,994. Is there much distress in your district owing to the crofts being taken away?—Yes, there is some in our district, and a great deal more in other parishes in Unst.

45,995. What do the people do who have been turned out of their crofts?—A good many have gone to the Colonies.

45,996. A great many had to leave the island?—Yes.

45,997. Is it possible to prosecute the fishing well now-a-days?—Some years, of course, the fishing does very well, but in other years very little; that is what makes a good many go in for a croft as well as the fishing, because in a bad year you have the croft to fall back upon.

45,998. Is it difficult to find crews for the boats?—Sometimes it is, and sometimes not.

45,999. Supposing new crofts were given, would it improve the fishing?—To a great extent, for I believe there are a great many young fellows in the south country who would come back and stop if they could get the chance.

46,000. How do the rents paid by the big farmers there compare with the rents paid by the crofters?—The rents paid by the big farmers are generally lower than those paid by the crofters.

46,001. From what you know of the matter, would you consider it more advantageous for the proprietors to have their lands laid down in crofts than in big farms?—That is my opinion, but, of course, others may think differently.

46,002. But if all the crofters were in a position like yourself and there was a prospect of their paying their rents regularly, would it be to the advantage of the proprietor to have the land laid out in crofts rather than in sheep farms?—Oh, yes, I think so.

46,003. *Mr Gordon.*—Suppose the farm of Cliff was again put under crofters, how many crofters do you think it could accommodate comfortably?—I would say there is a fair amount for three just now.

46,004. And what rent do you suppose the three could pay for the whole farm?—I don't know. The rent of that is somewhere about £70, but, I think, the proprietor only charges the occupier some £62: he gave him a reduction of £10, I think.

46,005. And do you think you would find three crofters willing to give £62 for the whole farm?—Some would do it.

46,006. Would you be one of the three who would?—If I fancied a croft there, I would.

46,007. Your best harbour I fancy is Baltasound?—That is the only harbour there is for big boats.

46,008. That is the harbour where the whole of your part of the island would gather before going out to fish?—Yes.

46,009. Now, is Baltasound a convenient place for you to get at from Pettester?—Well, it is in summer time, but not very convenient in winter, for it is a very bad road.

46,010. Are you acquainted with the farm of Mailand?—Yes.

46,011. Would that be a convenient situation for crofters as regards the harbour?—Oh, yes, very convenient.

46,012. Is there anything more convenient in the neighbourhood?—I could not say.

46,013. Is that the nearest land at present let to a farmer with the exception of Ordale and Hamar?—Yes.

46,014. There is a considerable extent of old arable land on that farm?—Yes.

46,015. Have you any knowledge as to how the people left that place,—whether they were evicted or left of their own accord?—They were forced to leave it.

46,016. Was it within your memory?—Yes, I can just remember it.

46,017. It is rather an exposed place, is it not?—Yes a little from the south-west.

46,018. But that, in your opinion, is about the most convenient ground for a fishing crofting population or township?—Yes.

46,019. I don't think Collister, which I have been over, would be a very suitable place for fishermen?—I could not say except for small boats.

46,020. You have no road or access between Collister and Baltasound?—No road.

46,021. There is a kind of track from Westing to Baltasound?—Yes.

46,022. But not a cart road?—No.

46,023. But is there not a cart road from Westing to Uyeasound?—Yes.

46,024. Do the fishermen of Westing go to Baltasound?—No, to Uyeasound.

46,025. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you know the Haa and Skaw in the north end of Unst?—Yes.

46,026. How are these places occupied just now?—Skaw is occupied by sheep, I think, and ponies and cattle, but there are two crofters there.

46,027. Were there more crofters in that place formerly?—Oh, yes.

46,028. Are these men crofters under the Act, or do they hold from the tenant?—I could not say.

46,029. There are old crofters' houses there, I suppose?—Yes, there are some of the ruins still standing.

46,030. How many old crofters' houses are there?—I could not say exactly how many.

46,031. Is there a considerable area of arable ground there left out of cultivation?—Yes, there is a good deal.

46,032. And if crofts were formed there, would they be conveniently situated for fishing? Is it a good place for fishing?—Yes, for small boats, but not for big boats.

46,033. Is there any land suitable for forming new crofters' holdings about Baltasound, which is the principal harbour?—There is none about Baltasound nearer than Mr Craig's holding.

46,034. That is the farm of Ordale?—Yes.

46,035. Is there a considerable portion of that farm left out of cultavation, the arable ground of it?—Oh, yes.

46,036. Is the greater part of the arable land left out of cultivation?—A good part of it, at all events.

46,037. Would you consider that that farm of Ordale is mainly a pastoral farm?—It is partly both.

46,038. No doubt if holdings were formed there, they would be very convenient for the fishing?—Very convenient.

46,039. Is there any other land there that might be suitably formed into crofters' holdings at Baltasound, say on the north side?—No, there is no other place except Hamar on the north side.

46,040. Is there not a good deal of ground there?—There is a lot of arable ground; I could not say how much there is, but it might be the size of two small crofts or so.

46,041. There is no part of it cultivated?—No.

46,042. *Mr Bain.*—You tell us that the Cliff farm would make three nice crofts. Can you give us the names of three crofters who would take that farm at a rent of £62, and take over the stock presently on it?—I would not specify the names of three: I could specify the names of three who would take the farm, but I did not say they would take over the stock. I don't know that they should be forced to take over the stock.

46,043. Did any man send you here as a delegate to say that he would take a third share of Cliff farm?—No, not at all.

46,044. You say you remember the evictions from Mailland?—Yes.

46,045. How long ago is that?—About twenty-one years ago.

46,046. And how old are you?—Thirty.

46,047. So you would then be about nine years of age?—Yes.

46,048. Do you remember the circumstances connected with these evictions?—No, but I can remember the people being put out.

46,049. And you don't know why?—Yes, because it was going to be laid down for sheep farming.

46,050. Did the crofters get other crofts beside them?—Yes.

46,051. They all got other crofts?—Yes, but not all under the same proprietor.

46,052. But they all got crofts round about?—Yes.

ZACHARY MACAULAY HAMILTON, Baltasound (39)—*examined.*

46,053. *The Chairman.*—How shall we describe you, Mr Hamilton?—I am factor for the estate of Garth and Bressay, also a farmer and fishcurer.

46,054. What is the name of your farm?—Garth.

46,055. Have you more than one farm?—There are three places—Garth, Swinister, and Scatsta.

46,056. Is Scatsta an island?—No, it lies on the east side of Sullom Voe.

46,057. *Mr Small, Solicitor, Lerwick.*—Take the Garth estate of which you are factor: what is the total acreage of the estate?—The total acreage of the estate is a little over 24,000 acres.

46,058. How much of that is in the hands of crofters?—About 15,000 acres.

46,059. And can you give us the rentals of the crofting and the non-crofting portions respectively?—The non-crofting rental is a little over £700, and the crofting rental is a shade over £800.

46,060. Is it the case that you spent a good deal of money on the non-crofting part of the estate, in fencing and draining?—Yes, we have.

46,061. And, in your opinion, could it be subdivided for occupation by crofters without detriment to the occupation of the large holdings?—No, I do not think it could.

46,062. You have heard it stated that some of these tenants in the neighbourhood were evicted,—is that the case?—Not in Garth estate to my knowledge.

46,063. Are there any vacant crofts on the estate at present?—There are several crofts that I could not get re-let to crofters which I have had to let as grazing to any one who would take them.

46,064. Did you advertise them?—I advertised them, and could not get crofters to take them.

46,065. Then, would you say that there is or there is not a demand for crofts?—I say that there is a demand for crofts if the crofters can get the kind of crofts they want, and where they want them, and how they want them, and as they wish them. But as to crofts that are presently occupied by tenants and become vacant, if there is the slightest drawback such as the want of peats, or distance from fishing, you simply cannot get a crofter to take such a croft even at the judicial rent.

46,066. What is your opinion as to a man being both a crofter and a fisherman?—I think no man can serve two masters. I don't think it is at all a good thing to combine the two occupations.

46,067. You think he would make more of his croft if he were not fishing?—Far more.

46,068. And make more of his fishing if he were not crofting?—Certainly.

46,069. In your opinion, should a fisherman have any land besides his house?—I think he should have a little bit of land sufficient to keep one cow perhaps and raise potatoes; I think that would be an advantage.

46,070. At about what rent would you expect he should have that?—Say from £3 to £3, 10s.

46,071. On the other hand take the case of a crofter who is not a fisherman; how much land do you think he should have in order to make a livelihood?—I should say he ought to have at least ten acres arable land, and twenty to thirty of scattald.

46,072. What stock would he be able to keep on that?—If it is anything like good land, he should be able to keep say five cattle, twenty sheep, and two Shetland ponies.

46,073. Is there any regular rotation of crops carried on by the crofters?—On some parts of the estate there is; in Delting for instance.

46,074. In Unst?—One or two places in Unst.

46,075. Is it the rule or the exception?—It is the exception.

46,076. What is the ordinary rule of crofters' cultivation?—A white crop and potatoes, time about.

46,077. Biennial?—Yes.

46,078. What effect has that upon the land?—It reduces it very much.

46,079. Do you think the average crofter's holding is capable of producing much better results than at present if it was better wrought?—I think so, decidedly.

46,080. Is there much scalping on the scattald?—Not so much now as there used to be, though there is too much yet.

46,081. For using as manure?—Yes.

46,082. And that deteriorates the pasture I suppose?—Yes.

46,083. What is your experience in regard to the keeping in repair of the buildings, the houses and offices on crofts, by the crofters?—The crofters have hardly yet realised that under the Crofters Act they are bound to keep all their buildings in repair. It is very difficult to get them to realise that.

46,084. And as the result of that?—As the result of that a few of the more intelligent ones, and perhaps better-off ones, have done a lot in the way of improving their houses; but a number are simply letting their houses go to ruin. When the house becomes uninhabitable they leave, and you cannot get another crofter to take it. I had a case last year of a crofter who had his judicial rent fixed. He left and I could not get a crofter to take his place, though I offered it at a fair rent, and, in fact, at less.

46,085. Are you aware of vacant crofts on any other estates besides those you represent?—Yes, I believe there are vacant crofts in the valley of Tingwall, one of the best agricultural parts of Shetland.

46,086. *The Chairman.*—Is it your opinion that according to the present crofting system in Shetland, a township is the better of having a scattald or common grazing?—I think it would be better if each individual crofter had his scattald for himself. If the scattald is held in common it is generally abused, one trying to take advantage of the other.

46,087. Do you make that as a remark applicable to the whole of Shetland?—Yes.

46,088. The stronger oppresses the weaker?—Yes.

46,089. The young man of forty takes the benefit of the grazing which belongs to the widow?—Quite so; that really is the case.

46,090. Is that found in every large scattald?—I am afraid so.

46,091. Would the Grazings Act meet the difficulty?—To a certain extent it would.

46,092. But given proper regulations for the management of the scattald and due attention to the interests of each individual, are you in favour of every township in Shetland having a common grazing?—I am in favour of every crofter having scattald, but I am not in favour of a common grazing.

46,093. But you would have every crofter to have a scattald?—I would have every crofter to have a certain amount of scattald.

46,094. And for 10 acres arable, you would assign, I think you said, 20 to 30 acres of scattald?—Yes. Of course it depends on the quality of the ground a good deal.

46,095. You are aware I daresay that a large number of the townships at present have no scattald?—In some places in Shetland, but there are not very many which have no scattald.

46,096. Well, I have been endeavouring to get a list made up of the townships in Shetland which have no scattald, and it is as follows,—you will correct me if I

Lerwick, Shetland.

Zachary Macaulay Hamilton.

am wrong in regard to any particular place :—Uregarth, Stove, Kews, Watergarth, Northdale, Coldback, West Scraefield, Haroldswick, Huyea, Northwick, Mucklepund, Braehead, Banks, Baliasta, Gue, Scraefield, Alma, Burrabrake, Cullivoe, Cunnister, Gutcher, Raga, Bankhead, Delting, Heglibister, Tingwall, Linga Isle, Tingwall, Saundersfield, Mailland, Noness, Boatshouse, Scarvister, Aithsness, Coldback (Delting), Toft, Fleck, Wiltro, Scatness (no scattald : have share in Horse Island), Fladdabister, Starkigarth. [*Witness*].—Coldback has a large scattald, if you refer to Coldback in Unst.

46,097. What scattald has it a share in?—It skirts on both sides of the road from the dykes of Mailland to the dykes of Uyeasound.

46,098. There are four crofters there who have no scattald?—They may say they have no scattald but they occupy it.

46,099. How do they occupy it?—By putting animals on it: John Harper and Agnes Moar are the names of those who have scattald, and they scat on the scattald outside the dyke and right to the dykes of Uyeasound.

46,100. *The Chairman.*—John Harper and Agnes Moar are entered in the Crofters Commission Report for 1892, as having no scattald.

46,101. *Mr Gordon.*—They do put their cattle on that little bit between the public road and the march of Ordale, but that is simply a piece of waste ground with ten times as much stone as soil?—The whole scattald is of that description.

46,102. Then, you come to the hill of Ordale, which is bare on that side but good when you get over; do you say that is their scattald?—As a matter of fact, if you are dealing with questions of right, they have really no right to scattald, but, as a matter of fact, they do use it.

46,103. *The Chairman.*—They have no scattald which forms part of their holdings under the Act of Parliament?—No.

46,104. And any privilege of grazing they exercise at present they might be excluded from at any moment?—They might.

46,105. Then, they have no scattald?—At Cullivoe, No. 18 on your list, the tenants have over 3000 acres. I gave them that since the Crofters Commission was here.

46,106. They had it not at the date of the visit of the Crofters Commission?—No.

46,107. And they have it not now under the Act?—Well, it is by an agreement under the Act.

46,108. Have you given it to them as part of their holdings under the Act?—No. Then Cunnister (No. 19) has scattald.

46,109. Where?—In the scattald of Cunnister in Garth. I think there are 21 or 22 acres. Some of the tenants in Gutcher (No. 21) have scattald.

46,110. Under the Act of Parliament?—Yes. There are different estates there cut up into little bits. At Boatshouse again (No. 28), if that is Boatshouse in Whalsey, it has a fifth share of the scattald.

46,111. What scattald?—I don't know the extent.

,112. Is that the bit of land we heard about the other day?—Yes. Then No. 32, Toft, has scattald.

46,113. Subject to the exceptions you have named, this is a list of thirty-seven townships without scattald?—Well, I ought to say that there are a number of names in the list that I don't know about. [*The Secretary.*—With regard to Cunnister the entry in the Crofters Commission Report for 1892 is Thomas Moar, 4 acres 3 roods 23 poles arable, and 8 acres 1 rood 24 poles outrun, held in common with seven others; also ¼ of a common of 31 acres].

46,114. Is that 31 acres scattald or township grazing?—It is practically scattald.

46,115. It is not outrun?—No.

46,116. Now, if you had the doing of it, would you give to each of the crofters living in these townships, a separate piece of scattald land proportionate to the arable of his holding?—I would, if it were available.

46,117. And so far as they have not that at present they have some ground of complaint?—I think so, but I think it is as well to mention that many of these townships are the property of one proprietor, whereas the scattald lands about is the property of another, so that it is a somewhat difficult matter to adjust.

Lerwick, Shetland.

Zachary Macaulay Hamilton.

46,118. How many crofts have you under your supervision at present for which you have been unable to find tenants?—Since I began to manage the Garth estate in 1885, ten crofts have become vacant by the tenants leaving voluntarily. These crofts varied in rent from £20 to £2, 10s., and after keeping some of them in my own hands for a year or eighteen months I have succeeded in letting them, some at a rise and some at a reduction, with the exception of one in Unst, which I could not get let as a croft.

46,119. You have only one unlet crofter's holding?—Yes, I let it as a grazing, and there have been other crofts let as grazings in the same way.

46,120. Is there not also an unlet croft at Coldback?—Yes, there is; it was kept in the proprietor's hands for some time, and then let to Mr Sandison.

46,121. How many pieces of land that were at one time separate holdings are at present in the hands of Mr Sandison?—I really could not say.

46,122. A good number?—A good number.

46,123. He has added holding to holding?—Well, he has added them, but he has also been induced by the proprietor to take them.

46,124. I don't mean that these holdings are contiguous,—most of them do not march with each other, I suppose?—Most of them do not.

46,125. But putting together all the land he has got, he is now the holder of a very large area?—Undoubtedly.

46,126. Paying rent to different proprietors?—Paying rent to different proprietors.

46,127. Do you know his total rent for land?—I do not.

46,128. He is the largest merchant in his locality?—Yes.

46,129. I think he is both a fishcurer and a general merchant?—Yes.

46,130. Are the three farms which you hold from different landlords?—No, they are all on the Garth estate and they all march together with the exception of a little bit on one of them.

46,131. May I ask what is the total rent you pay for this year?—The total rent under the lease is £365, but I got a reduction of £50 some years ago which has been continued since.

46,132. Do you hold under a nineteen years' lease?—Yes.

46,133. From what date is it running?—From 1878.

46,134. For all three places?—Yes.

46,135. And you work them all, I suppose, as one farm?—All as one farm.

46,136. Are these grazing farms or arable farms?—Entirely grazing.

46,137. May I ask whether you hold any other land in the Shetland Islands except these farms?—Not now. Of course, there are the islands in Yellsound belonging to these farms, which have always gone with them.

46,138. What islands are these?—The island of Linga and the island of Little Roe. I hold them as part of the farm.

46,139. I suppose they are good for wintering?—Fairly good.

46,140. You have no land in Bressay?—No.

46,141. But you are factor for Bressay?—Yes.

46,142. *Mr Gordon.*—Our attention was particularly directed to some of these crofters at Coldback. Would you have any difficulty in getting a tenant for that croft that Mr Sandison occupied?—I would; I could not get a tenant for it.

46,143. Would it not have been advisable as a matter of estate management to give it as an extension of grazings to these four people?—They would not take it; I have offered it repeatedly.

46,144. The information I got is different. They complained very bitterly of this man coming in be-

tween them and the burn that is at the bottom of their crofts?—Yes, but this croft does not lie contiguous to their land.

46,145. It lies contiguous in this way that although the croft is situated on the north side of the township, it contains or includes land which passes along the west side or bottom of their four crofts?—That is so.

46,146. Therefore it lies contiguous to their crofts,—they have a strip which runs from hill to water except where this bit interferes with it?—Yes, that is so.

46,147. I would think it would be a sore matter for these crofters if in going down with their peats or for their water to the well they must pass through Mr Sandison's land?—We would be most happy to give it to them, but they won't take it. They tell you they want it, but they won't give a fair rent for it.

46,148. Would they give the rent the Crofters Commission might put upon it?—I don't know what the Crofters Commission might put upon it.

46,149. Would you be content to give it to them at that rent?—I don't know. I consider a fair rent is just what you can get for it.

46,150. It is rather an invidious thing for them to see this foreign gentleman, who has plenty of money without it, coming and cutting the grass immediately below their pieces of arable land. It is a piece of nice bog grass?—If they give the same rent for it as Mr Sandison is paying they would get it at once.

46,151. But Mr Sandison, who is a monied man, may be able to give a little more money than they could? Then, if you travel a mile further south you come to other two crofts?—Yes, at Watlee.

46,152. He would participate in this little bit of scattald?—Yes.

46,153. It is not 100 acres altogether, is it,—I should say about 80 acres?—I cannot say without the plans.

46,154. The portion of ground to which the scattald of Coldback referred would not exceed 80 acres in extent, and it is very poor stuff?—There is really none of the scattald there worth much.

46,155. But this is rather a good crofting place, both Watlee and the northmost part of the township?—Very fair.

46,156. And I fancy taken together they are possibly the best of the little township?—I don't know that: of course they look well now, having been laid so long in grazing. The grass looks very much better.

46,157. I merely make these remarks because of your own statement about that croft not being lettable: I should have fancied they would let very well?—You cannot get tenants for them. I am satisfied that if I were to advertise these three crofts just now I would not get half a dozen applicants, and in all probability these applications would be from men of straw, who would be absolutely unable to pay for them.

46,158. Yes, but a little of what is called consolidation might be beneficial there,—to give it to the people who are really on the ground now as outrun, if they would pay a reasonable rent for it?—I have no objection whatever to give that croft to the people in Coldback provided they give the same rent that I am getting.

46,159. Well, that may be quite a fair view: I did not look upon it with that object, but I did look upon it as being a subject which they represented as rather interfering with the other crofts in the township?—But supposing I were to let it to another crofter, it would interfere with them just the same as it does at present.

46,160. That is why I suggest that the people who are there already could occupy it to more profit than a stranger coming in?—Yes.

46,161. *Mr Munro.*—You have stated your opinion very decidedly that a crofter cannot cultivate his croft properly and be a successful fisherman at the same time?—That is my belief.

46,162. Now, do you say so as a matter of opinion, or as the result of your observation from coming in contact with those whom we may call crofter fishermen?—As the result of my observation for the last ten years, since the fishing came to be followed in big boats. Formerly the crofter fishermen who prosecuted the fishing had their boats at home, and only went away in fine weather: they could work away at their crofts, and did so, and, as a matter of fact, their crofts provided them with bread for the whole season. Then about the year 1878 or 1879 they began to use these big boats, which can only lie in a safe harbour, perhaps at a distance of three, four, six, or seven miles from home. On 1st March they go away to these big boats and leave their poor wretches of wives and daughters to cultivate the crofts. The result is that the work is not half done, and I see a very marked difference in the produce of the crofts now.

46,163. I may tell you that hitherto we have had very considerable conflict of testimony on this point. Some agree with what you now say, and some disagree. Now, have you ever known a single case of a crofter fisherman who cultivated his croft successfully?—Yes, I have known of a crofter fisherman who had an acre and a half, if you call that a croft; he occupied it successfully.

46,164. But not anything beyond that?—No.

46,165. You consider it an advantage, however, for a fisherman to have a small piece of land?—Certainly, say from two to three acres but not more.

46,166. Now, on this point of rotation of cropping, you have stated that at present the crofters cultivate their land in such a way as to prove disadvantageous to the land itself?—And to themselves also. I state that as a general rule, to which no doubt there are some notable exceptions.

46,167. Is that not largely owing to the restricted area of the crofts?—No, I think it is largely owing to the crofts being mixed up very much one with another. They are mixed up to such an extent that really they cannot manage to keep the stock off them. Down in Dunrossness where they keep the stock out all winter they work their land in rotation and it is very much more profitable. In Delting, where there are a few crofters, they work the land in rotation, and they would not now revert to the old system.

46,168. And you think that if they got larger crofts, they would still pursue the old system?—I am afraid they would. The Shetlanders are very conservative in their way of working, although perhaps not in their politics.

46,169. *The Chairman.*—Is it the habit of the Shetland crofters to trust more to the fishing for their livelihood than to the holding?—Undoubtedly.

46,170. And do you say that any Shetland crofter would be willing to take what we might call a self-sustaining holding, or would he rather have a holding where he has to trust to the sea as well as to the land?—A very few might take a self-supporting holding, but the majority would prefer a small holding and go to the fishing.

46,171. They are all bred fishermen?—As a rule, they are.

46,172. They take to the sea at a very early age?—Yes.

46,173. You said a good deal about your inability to find tenants for some holdings under your management. Do you know of any such holding on other estates with which you are not immediately concerned?—I believe there are such, judging from the local papers. I have seen a number of crofts in Yell and other places advertised.

46,174. How many altogether?—Last winter I believe six or eight in Yell were constantly advertised.

46,175. That is not more than half a score or a score altogether out of thousands of holdings?—Well, of course, they are only advertised when they become vacant.

46,176. But you don't know of more than a score of crofts for which six occupants cannot be got at present?—No, not at present.

46,177. *Mr Maccallum.*—How do these crofts become vacant?—By the tenants giving them up.

46,178. What do these tenants betake themselves to?—In the case of the last croft that I referred to, the crofter made a moonlight flitting after his judicial rent had been fixed. He thought perhaps that the Crofters Commission had not been quite fair to him.

46,179. Was that Tulloch in Bressay?—No, a man in Unst. As I say he made a moonlight flitting and departed; I believe he took a room and is now prosecuting the fishing alone, and I am told he says he was never better off in his life than he is now.

46,180. He has become a fisherman?—He was a crofting fisherman before, but he now devotes himself entirely to the fishing.

46,181. Was his croft a large one?—It was valued by the Crofters Commission at £3, 18s., I think, if my memory serves me. His name is David Williamson, Snabrough, Unst.

46,182. Had the croft a good scattald?—The scattald is not very much, but, of course, he had just the same right as his neighbours.

46,183. But it is a small scattald?—It is not a large scattald. [*The Secretary.*—I find from the Report of the Crofters Commission for 1892 that the scattald is 8000 acres. The old rent of the croft was £5, 15s., and the fair rent £3, 18s.: there were arrears amounting to £19, 8s. 7d., of which £13, 8s. 7d. were cancelled, and £6 ordered to be paid. The extent of the scattald is 8000 acres, common to several proprietors in proportion to their merklands. The total number of merks is 834, of which 535 belong to Major Cameron; and of these 535, 227½ merks are allocated to non-applicants and 307½ to applicants, including withdrawn and dismissed cases. The share of scattald effeiring to 307½ merks is divided into 72 shares, of which 57 were dealt with by the Crofters Commission].

46,184. Is that the croft you had a difficulty in letting?—Yes, I could not get it let.

46,185. Did you offer it to the other crofters of the township?—They would not have it.

46,186. But did you offer it?—I did not; I advertised it, and if they had wanted it they could have had it.

46,187. But you did not suggest it to them?—No.

46,188. So that you don't know what their minds might be?—I have no means of ascertaining their minds unless they communicate with me.

46,189. With regard to the other crofts that are becoming vacant, can you tell us generally why these are being given up by the crofters?—One great drawback is the want of peats. Where there is a difficulty in getting peats there is always a difficulty in getting crofters.

46,190. It is not because they think the working of the croft would interfere with their fishing,—they have some other objection, such as the want of peat?—Quite so, or probably the house has become deteriorated, and they do not want to be at the expense of repairing it.

46,191. So you do not find that crofters are giving up their crofts from the fear of the working of them interfering with the fishing?—Oh, I don't think so.

46,192. And do you think it is the opinion of the people generally, that they are the better of having a croft even for the prosecution of the fishing?—I think so, provided it is within a reasonable distance of the fishing and of a harbour.

46,193. You do not doubt at all that there is a good deal of arable ground presently in sheep farms that might be occupied profitably by crofters?—Do you mean with profit to the crofters or with profit to the proprietor?

46,194. I mean where they could make a comfortable living and pay a fair rent, in the same way as crofters do in other parts where they succeed. Don't you find arable land in the neighbourhood for instance of good harbours, presently occupied as sheep farms?—There may be.

46,195. Then, there has also been going on a good deal of taking away of the scattald from the crofters?—In some cases.

46,196. And the people generally have not benefited by the process which has been going on?—The people generally have not, but, I think, the amount of scattald taken from the crofters generally is not more in proportion to the arable land laid down along with it than what presently exists for the crofters' arable land. I mean to say that the arable land which is at present laid down has a right to a certain amount of scattald, and the scattald which is enclosed is not more than its right entitles it to.

Lerwick, Shetland.

Zachary Macaulay Hamilton.

46,197. But the laying down of land for sheep farms has proved rather detrimental to the crofters, don't you think?—I don't think it has proved detrimental to the existing crofters: it may have proved detrimental to a few individual crofters, who happened to be on this or that particular place when it was laid down.

46,198. The introduction of the black-faced sheep has been rather against them, has it not?—I don't think so.

46,199. Why not?—Formerly, before black-faced sheep were introduced, you could buy Shetland wool at 10d. a lb., but now that the production is limited the price has risen to 2s. 6d. a lb. That has increased the income of the crofters very materially.

46,200. But don't you find that there are a great number of people working at that industry who cannot get the material and who have to buy it?—Yes.

46,201. Then, is it not against them to have to buy it at a high rate?—Oh, certainly it is against them to buy it, if they ever could produce it themselves; but I don't think they would ever produce the quantity they use. A certain amount always had to be bought.

46,202. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Do you think then that if the production of Shetland wool was considerably increased it would affect the price of it?—Undoubtedly.

46,203. That is they would not get such a high price for it as they get now?—They certainly would not.

46,204. *The Chairman.*—Can you give me any idea of the extent of the hosiery trade in Shetland,—the turnover?—I am sorry I cannot.

46,205. Perhaps there is no means of ascertaining it?—It is a very extensive trade.

46,206. And that trade is carried on to a large extent not for cash but for supplies,—a sort of system of barter?—It used to be, but it is more for cash now.

46,207. Not entirely?—Not entirely, but very generally except in some out of the way place.

46,208. Is it not a very common thing for merchants here and in Baltasound to make advances against hosiery to be manufactured?—I am not aware of the system they work upon.

46,209. But there is an enormous export of clothing from Shetland to the south every year?—Enormous.

46,210. And it is an article very largely purchased by people in Scotland?—Very largely.

46,211. *Mr James Begg, Solicitor, Lerwick.*—You said that you considered that the fisherman should not have a croft. Do you consider that the native Shetlander is a good fisherman?—I do, first class.

46,212. Do you consider that he is a bold fisherman?—I do.

46,213. Is it your experience that he is always ready to go out in any sort of weather when a Scottish fisherman would go out?—When he is not a crofter but a fisherman pure and simple that is the case; but when he is a mongrel, or one who combines the two occupations, he is not so ready.

46,214. Then, you think the fact of his having a croft spoils his fishing?—I do, decidedly.

46,215. Do you not think it would be better for the people of Shetland if they paid more attention to their crofts than to fishing?—No. In the nature of things Shetland is not a good agricultural country: it is only one year out of ten that you get a safe crop, while it is only one year out of ten that you get a failure in the fishing. Therefore, by all means, let the crofting go to the wall if the two are to compete.

46,216. Does that apply to the rearing of stock?—Not to grazing; that is quite a different matter.

46,217. Suppose there were crofts laid down for grazing purposes, and let to crofters, would that not pay them instead of raising crops?—It would pay them undoubtedly: the crofters take crofts for grazing now, those of them who are in a position to do so. Many of them do it.

46,218. Has the fishing of late years been prosecuted

successfully by the Shetlanders?—Yes, fairly well. Of course, it is not always the same.

46,219. How does this year compare with former years?—This year shows a very great improvement. I believe the amount of fish caught this year would compare favourably with what was caught eight or ten years ago. Perhaps they have not realised so much for it, as prices are not quite so high, but still the average price is very good.

46,220. In regard to the selling of the Shetland wool, you said the price used to be 10d. a lb. and now it is 2s. 6d.?—Yes.

46,221. Is it not the case that a great deal of the traffic in wool among the knitters is done upon the truck system?—Not so far as I am aware, but I really don't know anything about the particulars.

JAMES CULLEN GRIERSON, Younger of Quendale (31)—*examined.*

46,222. *The Chairman.*—I understand you wish to give us some information?—Yes; I should explain that my father intended to be present but he found himself unable to attend.

46,223. And you appear on his behalf?—I manage my father's property, and am factor for Mr Scott of Melby, and Mr Macqueen of Burravoe, also Ayres of Sellivoe, and Mrs Spence of Burra.

46,224. In these properties that you have to deal with, including both your father's and others that you are factor for, could you tell us where there are any vacant crofts?—On the Melby estate where there are about two hundred crofters, I have eleven crofts vacant at present: and on Mr Macqueen's property at Burravoe there are eight vacant crofts out of about sixty tenants.

46,225. You have been unable to get these let?—We have advertised the former but have not got tenants; and the latter were advertised some time ago, but not lately.

46,226. You are factor for Mrs Spence of Burra Isle?—Yes.

46,227. On her estate there are a number of tenants who are simply fishermen, and have no holdings?—There are one hundred and thirty-five tenants in the island, of whom thirty-five are fishermen cottars. Their holdings are upon this footing: they take a lease of a twelfth of an acre of ground on the shore of Hamnavoe, which is a very good harbour. They get a lease for their own life and the life of their wife, and they erect dwellings for themselves at a cost of £70, or £80, or £100. They pay their rents regularly, and do nothing but prosecute the fishing.

46,228. Are there any arrears due by them?—Not a penny.

46,229. Compared with these, do the men who belong to the crofter fishermen class pay their rent as well?—I find the crofter fishermen class are considerably in arrear; and not only that, but the land is not at all so well worked as it should be. The crofter fisherman has to have his land worked by the women when he is away at the fishing, with the result that the crops are not anything like so good as they might be. I think that came out in your examination at Burra.

46,230. *Mr Munro.*—Had you any application for those vacant crofts?—I have three applications at present for them from the island of Whalsey, for the ones in Burravoe.

46,231. And how are you unable to come to terms with them?—We have not come to terms yet.

46,232. Is there any specific reason for not coming to terms?—On account of the estate changing hands, and then there is the question of the repairs to be done to the houses.

46,233. But would you be willing to let those crofts at a fair rent?—Oh, yes, we are willing to let them at the Commission rent. We do not hope to get any more than that, but if we do that, they will have to repair the houses themselves. I would like to make a statement about one point which has not come up to-day, and that is that the Crofters Grazings Act seems to be on this island a complete failure. We have, as your lordship is aware, made several attempts to get the stock regulated, but the difficulty is this: we have a finding of the Sheriff-Substitute who finds that it is only the crofters who are entitled to regulate their own stock, and that any non-crofting tenant on a scattald along with crofting tenants is entitled to put on any stock he chooses.

46,234. *The Chairman.*—And there is a good deal of occupation of scattalds by men who are crofters and others who are not crofters?—Yes. For instance, take Aithsting; out of 152 tenants, 40 are non-crofting tenants on lease, or tenants at will.

46,235. And you say that they effectually prevent the carrying out of the regulations under the Act?—Yes, because they say you cannot compel us to carry only a certain stock on the scattald. So that, as a matter of fact, the rent as between man and man comes to be unfair: a man paying £4 or £5 of rent has not nearly so much stock as one paying very much less. Then, again, if you have an overstocked scattald it is impossible to get up a head of sheep.

46,236. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—How long have some of these vacant crofts that you spoke of been on your hands?—There is one at Scarvister, in the parish of Walls, which has been vacant now for three years.

46,237. *Mr Maccallum.*—The failure of the Crofters Grazings Act is not because the crofters are unwilling to put it into force, but because of a difficulty in the Act itself?—Yes, as illustrated by the finding of the Sheriff-Substitute.

46,238. That it does not bind the non-crofting tenants?—That is so. In fact, it is quite the reverse: in the estates with which I have to do the crofters are anxious to regulate the stock.

46,239. *The Chairman.*—You would be under no difficulty in applying the Grazings Act to a scattald exclusively grazed by crofters?—Not the least.

46,240. And you say there is a desire on the part of the crofters to apply the Act?—On most estates. There is only one on which they are not anxious to apply the Act, and that is on account of that decision of the Sheriff: I advised them that it would be useless in that case.

46,241. You mentioned vacancies in the crofts at Melby, what was the cause of these vacancies?—The men went away, some to other estates, and two abroad.

46,242. The vacancies arose in the natural course of things?—Perfectly so; not one was ejected.

46,243. Had you taken proceedings to recover rent or arrears from those who have now left?—No, not against any of the eleven, or against the Burravoe men. The Burravoe vacancies occurred, curiously enough, immediately after the last Sitting of the Crofters Commission.

46,244. Is it not the fact that the Burra tenants are singularly migratory?—Yes, I am aware of that; they do not seem to consider it an advantage to remain stationary.

46,245. There were a number of cases where migration took place immediately after the passing of the Act?—Yes.

46,246. And the effect was that these people put themselves outside the operation of the Act?—Yes.

46,247. These migrations in Burra, I suppose, arise to a considerable extent from the idea of getting a very good spot for fishing?—I think that has something to do with it. But the feeling, especially among the younger men in Burra, is against taking a croft at all, but to take a stance for a house and prosecute the fishing.

46,248. But they do not think of a stance without a potato patch?—They have nothing but a yard at the back: they could grow potatoes there but it is only $\frac{1}{12}$th of an acre altogether.

46,249. They have no potato ground properly so called?—No, nothing like that.

46,250. Burra is particularly well situated for fishing?—Yes: they can follow the haddock fishing during October, November, December, and January,

Lerwick, Shetland.

James Cullen Grierson.

then the cod fishing comes on, then the early herring fishing and the late herring fishing.

46,251. They are particularly well situated then for following the fishing?—Yes, the same as the Scalloway men, only with this advantage that they are closer to the ground.

46,252. *Mr Gordon.*—Would you kindly explain how you came to give up the attempt to apply the Grazings Act in consequence of the cottars?—It is not the cottars, it is the non-crofting tenants,—those who hold under lease. It has been found here that the crofters only have power to regulate their own stock. The word used in the Act is 'crofter', and the Sheriff read into it the designation of the crofter as given in the Act of 1886, which, of course, excludes leaseholders.

46,253. But by-and-bye, when the lease under which these people occupy the land at present comes to expire, you can then arrange the matter?—The landlord could then bring pressure to bear upon them, and say if you won't adopt this Act I will not relet the places to you, but, in the meantime there is this difficulty.

46,254. It would be a terminable difficulty, however?—I presume it would.

46,255. *The Chairman.*—Are there a considerable number of tenants holding under lease in Shetland who would be crofters but for their leases?—I would not say a considerable number but there are a few.

46,256. How many do you think?—I think perhaps about two on my father's estate.

46,257. And how many in Melby?—I should say perhaps four or five.

46,258. And how many in Burravoe?—I believe only two.

46,259. Then are you able to speak of other estates in Shetland?—No, not on that point.

46,260. But these are persons who would be crofters but for their leases?—Oh, clearly. On all the estates which I manage there is only one farm of over £100.

46,261. Which is that?—My father's Home Farm of Quendale.

John Sandison.

JOHN SANDISON, farmer, Coldback, Unst (36)—*examined.*

46,262. *The Chairman.*—Are you tenant of Coldback Farm?—I am joint-tenant with my father.

46,263. And you hold a number of other lands?—Yes.

46,264. How many?—I really could not say from memory.

46,265. How many blocks of land do you and your father hold?—Scaw, Sandwick, Framgord, Easting, Collister, Houlland, Watley, Garden, and the Home Farm.

46,266. What total rent do you pay for these pieces of land?—We pay £65 for Outer and Inner Skaw; £100 for Houlland; £54 for Sandwick; £30 for Easting, for one part of it and £14 for another to the Earl of Zetland; £16 for Watley; £8 for Gardon; and £99 for the Home Farm, but that includes the business premises. If I recollect aright the valuation of the business premises is £50.

46,267. From how many landlords do you hold?—I forgot to mention Hammer in Baltasound which includes the crofting township of Clibberswick.

46,268. And do you draw the rents of the crofts?—Yes.

46,269. How many crofters are there?—Four.

46,270. How many landlords do you hold land from?—The Misses Spence, the Earl of Zetland, Major Cameron, and Miss Mouat.

46,271. And I understand that you and your father carry on business as fishcurers and merchants?—Yes.

46,272. And you are the owners of vessels?—Fishing boats.

46,273. How many fishing boats?—I cannot say exactly, but somewhere between fifteen and twenty.

46,274. You mean a considerable fleet for the herring fishing each year?—Yes, sixteen or seventeen I think.

46,275. I suppose the Valuation Roll contains a correct list of the holdings you have in the parish of Unst—Outer and Inner Skaw; Ronan; park 1 Sandwick, park 2 Sandwick; Stourhoull; Vatchless; Broomhill; two farms of Watley; hill pasture; house, Greenwalls, booths, &c.; farm late Bruce's; Mansfield farm; Garden farm; Hannigarth; Houlland, with grazing there and at Baliasta; farm and house, Collaster; grazing Coldback; Isle Hunie; blacksmith's farm, Uyeasound; grazing at Springfield; isle of Grunie?—Yes. Some of these are small crofts included in the Home Farm.

Lerwick, Shetland.

John Sandison.

46,276. Is Mansfield included in the Home Farm?—That is occupied by a crofter.

46,277. Does he pay rent to you?—Yes. We pay the proprietor £6 for Mansfield, and it is let to William Johnston at the same figure.

46,278. Then, how is the farm of Gardon held?—That is occupied by us exclusively.

46,279. And Hannigarth?—That is included in Sandwick.

46,280. Now, you say there has been some mistake made by one of the witnesses which you desire to correct?—I wish simply to say that the enclosed part of the croft occupied by us does not extend beneath the crofters' holdings, There is meadow land lying immediately below the doors of the houses in Coldback, and there is another piece of grass land, from 6 to 8 acres in extent further on towards Uyeasound. When we took the croft from Mr William Hamilton when he went to America, this meadow and grass land was in the occupation of Mrs Hughson: she has occupied it ever since, and we have never asked any rent for it.

46,281. You hold the whole of the land behind the croft?—We hold no land behind the croft.

46,282. Who does?—The crofters do.

46,283. Do you not graze on it?—No, we have nothing on it. Mr Hamilton was under a mis-apprehension; he thought the scattald of Coldback extended only to the road, but the best part of the scattald is on the west side of the burn on the side of Vallifield.

46,284. *Mr Gordon.*—But you have the land although you allow the widow to keep it?—Yes; it belongs to the croft, but we have never occupied it. We have always allowed her to continue to occupy it.

46,285. *The Chairman.*—And you are the landlord?—No, we are not the landlord because we never charge any rent.

46,286. But you could charge a rent?—I suppose we could.

46,287. And if she does not pay a rent it is simply because you choose to allow her to sit rent free?—Yes.

46,288. You could levy a rent upon her, and if she did not pay it you could put her out?—Yes, I suppose so.

46,289. *Mr Gordon.*—Who cuts the meadow grass?—The widow does.

46,290. And it is part of her let?—All the crofters have the draws of the meadow land running from the burn up to near their houses: this widow's house is on the Buness estate and has no land.

46,291. And you could if you liked resume possession of that house from the widow?—No; the house is not on our land.

[ADJOURNED.]

FIFTY-FIFTH SITTING.

KIRKWALL, ORKNEY, August 1, 1894.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
MICHAEL HUGH SHAW STEWART, Esq., M.P.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

WILLIAM GEORGE LENNOX, Solicitor, Kirkwall (29)—*examined.*

Kirkwall, Orkney, William George Lennox.

46,292. *The Chairman.*—Do you act as agent for the crofters here?—As agent for the crofters who are to appear and give evidence to-day.

46,293. And do you wish to submit a statement yourself?—Yes.

46,294. Is it in writing?—No, I will speak from notes.

46,295. Please proceed.—I have been for the past five years in conjunction with the late Mr Thomson, Solicitor, Kirkwall, and by myself, a crofter agent both in Orkney and Shetland, and, as such, I am pretty intimately acquainted with the needs and requirements of the crofters. Before bringing forward the witnesses, of whom your honours have a list before you, I thought it might be a little helpful if I made a statement myself which would so far pave the way for their own evidence.

First of all, I should like to say that as regards the object of your inquiry, the county of Orkney is not in quite the same position as the other crofting counties in Scotland, inasmuch as the main portion of the county is laid down to arable land: there are very few tracts of it which are in sheep grazing, or grouse moor, or deer forest just now. The character of the soil of Orkney is quite different from that of Shetland, or the other crofting counties: it is considerably flatter, and, therefore, more easily cultivated. Still, there are a few strips of land, with regard to which I propose to lead evidence to-day, and these, of course, will fall under the scope of your honour's inquiry. By far the larger number of the big farms in Orkney are mainly arable: but although that is the case I should like to show you that the crofters have suffered in the making of these farms. In most cases these farms have been made out of crofters' holdings, and more particularly in connection with the difficulty of procuring enlargement of existing holdings, I would like to bring these under your notice.

The size of the existing crofts in the county is such that the tenants are compelled to have recourse to certain outlets by way of making an income that will make ends meet upon their crofts. First of all, by enlargement of their existing holdings. Now, the conditions which at present hedge the getting of enlargements under the Crofters Act for those holdings, are such that in a great many cases it is almost impossible for the crofters in the various crofting townships to get the additional land they desire. In the first place, there must, under the existing law, be not less than five applicants for any enlargement. Now, in a great many cases it is very difficult to get five applicants together who will apply for enlargement. From another point of view also, the existing law seems to impose a certain restriction on individual enterprise in that respect. I fail to see why, when a crofter wishes for an enlargement of holding, he has to get the support of four of his fellow-crofters before he can make a valid application. If the land is there and suitable for the purpose of extension why should not a single crofter be at liberty to apply for enlargement? Under the present state of things, the whole district must feel some need before anything can be done in that direction, and a single crofter is hampered until he gets the consent of his whole district. Then, again, under the existing law the whole of the five crofters must be on the same estate, and the enlargement applied for must be on the same estate. That is felt to be another hardship. Take the case of a township of crofters living on the fringe of an estate, and seeing good land on a suitable farm on a neighbouring estate and practically closer to their doors than any other land on their own landlord's estate. Under the existing state of matters these men cannot apply for that land lying contiguous to them. I hold that there is no reason why some new law should not be made on the subject to enable them to get such land. They have a fair rent fixed for their old holdings, and if they got a fair rent fixed for the new portion taken from the other estate, the two rents could easily be allocated between the two proprietors.

Then, again, the crofters and the land applied for must be in the same parish, under the present state of things. Of course, my former remarks about the same estate would apply here equally: where the crofters are on the fringe, or borders of a parish, why should they not be entitled to apply for enlargement of their holdings from the land of a neighbouring parish close by, perhaps better suited for their purpose and more contiguous to their holdings than any land in their own parish?

Then, also under the present law, if there is any land to be taken off a farm for enlargement of crofters' holdings that land must not, when taken off, injure, in any way, the letting value of that farm.

46,296. Materially?—Materially injure it. But, My Lord, there are various degrees of material injury to those farms. There is the injury to the letting value caused by the tenant perhaps being thrown out of his shift through the giving of the land for the purpose of enlargement. Well, that is a trifling injury, comparatively speaking, and there might be some provision made in the way of compensation to the sitting tenant whereby that difficulty might be surmounted. The farm tenant could be compensated for any loss or injury he might sustain through having to alter his rotation for the purposes of his lessened farm.

46,297–98. Who is to make the compensation?—Well, you have a Court, the Crofters Commission, which is a skilled Court, for that very purpose.

46,299. I do not mean who is to fix the compensation, but who is to pay it?—I would propose that that should be done by perhaps adding a little for a few years to the fair rent to be paid by the crofters for the enlargement.

46,300. Then, the compensation would be paid by the crofters?—By the crofters, and perhaps a small proportion by the landlord also. There are a great many farms in Orkney that were under lease at the date of the passing of the Act, and are under the annual value of £100 sterling. In a good many cases the land is rather poor but of great extent, and the letting value does not come up to the limit prescribed by the Crofters Act. In the parish of Deerness for example, there is no farm but what is under the £100 limit, and the crofters in consequence—

46,301–03. May I interpose this question: Is it within your knowledge that in that district a few years ago, many of those farms which are now rented at or under £100 were above £100?—Yes: the farm of Braebister for instance was above £100 a few years ago, and it is now under £100. Well, such cases as that preclude the whole of the crofting class of Deerness from obtaining anything in the way of enlargement, and I would suggest that a further amendment should be added to the enlargement clause reducing the limit from £100 to say £70 or £80. The ground upon which I go is this. The existing limit of rent for a crofter is £30, and if you take say twice that rent, or a little more than twice that rent, making about £70, you get what I consider a fair limit for an average farm to stand at after the enlargement had been taken off it,—that is to say you would then in a measure equalise the holdings throughout the same parish.

There is one more case in connection with

Kirkwall, Orkney.

William George Lennox.

the question of enlargement of holdings, and that is the case where a crofter dies and his croft falls vacant. Under the present law the landlord has to take the first step towards getting this croft added to the existing holdings.

46,304–05. That is under Section 16?—Under Section 16. The crofters must wait in silence until the landlord chooses to take this step. When he does take that step they have a power of check upon him, but otherwise they have not, and I would suggest that the crofters have an equal power with the landlord of applying to have the holding divided among the neighbouring crofters. Then, I would like to pass on to the reasons for the congestion and distress among the crofting class of Orkney at the present time. Of course, the need for enlargement is one cause, but for a long period back the Orkney crofters have relied to a great extent on stock-raising to make their crofts pay. In such small portions of land as they hold, they cannot hope to make ends meet by mere crop-raising, so they must look principally to stock-raising. Now, during the previous generation or two, on account of the large number of evictions and clearing off of crofters to make room for the big farms a great many of the crofters of Orkney have been forced to emigrate, in common, of course, with small holders in other crofting counties in Scotland. These crofters and crofters' sons have gone to the Colonies, especially to Canada and America, and they, among others, are sending across stock from Canada and America to the home markets. Some of the crofters evicted from the crofts here are thus competing in the home market with their brothers and cousins at home, and that is one reason why the price of stock has fallen so much of late. It is only by getting enlargements of holdings that the crofters at home can hope to compete with the foreign stock in the condition in which it is sold. Again, the crofters are, in a great many instances, very hardly pressed for summer grazing, and, I propose to lead some evidence to-day about the desirability of obtaining various strips of land for the purpose of common grazing among the crofters. At one time the county was in the same position as Shetland is at the present time; it was full of common grazings, which were regulated by the same customs which obtain in Shetland just now. But nowadays these common grazings are either put into the large farms and cultivated or else they are laid down for sporting purposes.

Another outlet for the crofting industry was and and is the export of eggs. Now, it is a well known fact that this summer, on account of the excessive supply obtained from the continent, the egg industry does not pay the keep of the hens. Two months ago, Orkney eggs were selling in London at 3d. a dozen; that was the market price, and is due to the fact that there was then a tremendous influx of eggs from Holland. Even just now in the merchants' shops in Orkney the eggs are selling retail at 4½d. and 5d. a dozen. They used to bring twice as much, 8d. a dozen. One more outlet the crofting population of the county has, and that is in fishing, not so much in herring fishing as is the case in Shetland, but rather in the direction of white fishing, winter and spring fishing. Now, My Lord, the Orcadians are essentially a law-abiding community, and they are also a very religious community; they are great observers of the Sabbath day, while the trawlers that come from Aberdeen and the east coast take advantage of that trait in their character, and the Sunday is, in a great many cases, desecrated continually through the whole county within the three-mile limit by trawlers, who take advantage of the crofters' absence to trawl within the limit. The trawling question has been a very serious and vexed one here for several years. Most of the fishing banks from which the crofters were in the habit of making a good livelihood are practically ruined by these trawlers. We have no stationary gunboats here: the gunboat sent to protect the fishing is stationed at Lerwick, 120 miles away, and I am safe to say that there is three times as much trawling done in Orkney as in Shetland.

46,306–07. That is hardly a matter before this Commission; there is no remit to inquire into the matter of trawling at all?—No, but I mention it as throwing a side light upon the difficulties in the way of the crofter fishermen. Then, as regards the island of Rousay, I have one or two special observations to make. Up to about 50 or 60 years ago the whole of the hills in the centre of the island, extending to about 10,000 acres, were common pasture for the crofters. Since then the farm of Westness has absorbed something over 2000 acres of hill land; and the hill of Kierfa and the Knitchin Hill have been taken away, the former partly in 1860–61 and partly in 1865, and it is now part of the farm of Langskail. Knitchin Hill was taken away in 1880. The farm of Westness has been to a great extent formed out of crofts. On the west side of it 20 crofts have been swept away, and on the Quandale portion the same number; in all 40 crofts. The principal drawback to a crofting life in Rousay just now is that the proprietor has laid an embargo upon all use and wont quarries and all stones of all descriptions on the island. The crofters are finding that their houses naturally are falling into delapidation by the wear and tear of time, and they are anxious to escape the penalties of the Act by keeping their houses in a good state of repair. They cannot do that under the present system of estate management unless they go to other islands and import their stones at great expense and inconvenience to themselves. The whole island almost, with the exception of the glebe, is in the hands of one landlord, and he refuses to allow any quarrying whatever. The people cannot repair their houses; they cannot even drain their land, having no stones for drainage purposes. Two of them, four years ago, attempted to take stones from an old use and wont quarry, and were promptly served with an interdict and threatened with criminal proceedings for theft.

46,308–09. Where is that quarry?—In the district of Sourin, close by the holdings at Swartafiold. I may say that I am peculiarly conversant with this affair, because I myself was personally employed in investigating this case. One of the crofters there had the stones quarried before he was interdicted, and the landlord refused to allow him to remove the stones he had quarried, even although he offered to pay surface damage and a small royalty. Fortunately, the incumbent of the parish church there has allowed the crofters to quarry on his glebe to a small extent; but it is not a very good place for quarrying, and they find that if they go abroad they cannot get proper flags at an easy distance, and they have to buy slates, which are much more expensive, for roofing. Then, again, the nearest place where they can quarry, free of expense, is a small island near Egilshay, from which they have to bring stones by boat. Now, it is, I think, very hard for these crofters, who are compelled by the Crofters Act to keep up their houses and prevent them from falling into delapidation. To cultivate their land properly, they require proper drains and they are refused by the landlord to open quarries on their own crofts, or even to take stones from their own crofts.

46,310. All this has been a matter of proceeding before the Sheriff, and the Sheriff has given a judgment upon it?—Yes, that is the law on the subject, but I wish to point out that crofters in Rousay are in a peculiarly hard position, and one that calls for some amelioration.

46,311. But the question we have to deal with is a question of available land?—Exactly, and that is why I want to show to your lordship that on account of their hard conditions it is all the more necessary to try and give them some more land to improve their condition in life.

46,312. Well, if you can point us to any available land in the island of Rousay we will consider it?—I will do so.

46,313. *Mr Gordon.*—Could you tell us the name of the small island to which you referred some time ago, —is it the small island opposite Sourin, between it and Egilshay?—It is on the north-east end of Egilshay. I propose to lead evidence with regard to Rousay about the farm of Westness, also about the Knitchin Hill.

46,314. *The Chairman.*—You said that there was very little land in the Orkney islands, in comparison with what might be found on the Mainland, of the nature of grouse moors, and there were no deer forests; also that the main portions of the land were arable?—Yes.

46,315. But you said there were a few strips of land open for our consideration?—Yes.

46,316. Now, what are these strips of land?—They are mainly laid down to sheep grazing just now.

46,317. But where are they situated,—in what islands, and in what parts of these islands?—In the islands of Rousay and Sanday.

46,318. In Rousay, upon what farms?—The farms of Westness and Langskail.

46,319. Any other?—There is no other that I can think of, but perhaps the witnesses that I am going to bring forward about those various islands will be better qualified to give Your Lordship proper details on these points.

46,320. Then, you yourself do not profess to enter specifically into that matter?—No, I do not profess to enter on it particularly.

46,321. I understand you to indicate the view that the crofters of the Orkney Islands stand more in need of enlargement of holdings than of new holdings?—Yes, that is so.

46,322. Then, would you be in favour of extending the powers for enlargement of holdings by taking portions of arable land?—Certainly.

46,323. Is it your view, from your knowledge of these islands, that the main direction in which extension of ground for crofters may be obtained in these islands is by enlargement from arable land?—Yes, that is so.

46,324. Rather than by enlargement from grazings?—Yes, certainly.

46,325. You also suggest that a single crofter should be authorised or empowered to apply for enlargement?—Certainly.

46,326. Are the crofters in Orkney in townships, or are they scattered over the country?—They are scattered very much.

46,327. Not many townships?—No, not the same as in Shetland: they are not gathered together into townships.

46,328. I am not sure if I gather your exact meaning with regard to compensation. You say that that should be taken into account in fixing the Fair Rent?—Yes.

46,329. And that a portion of the compensation might also be borne by the landlord?—Yes.

46,330. Now, how exactly would you allocate that, or have you considered the matter?—Yes, to a certain extent. In the case where the land that they get for enlargement has not formerly been occupied by crofters, I would propose that the crofters should bear the whole compensation: but, where it has been formerly occupied by crofters, and where the landlord or his predecessor had been responsible for putting these crofters away, he should bear say half of the compensation.

46,331. In short, that compensation payable by crofters for land which had not been previously occupied by crofters should be a sort of purchase?—Well, not so much purchase.

46,332. Or a perpetual rent charge?—No, My Lord. Fix a Fair Rent for a period of seven years, add a sufficient figure to cover the compensation that the landlord would require to pay to the tenant for the depreciation.

46,333. You would have the whole thing paid up in seven years?—Yes.

46,334. Of course, the effect of that might be for the seven years greatly to increase the crofters' annual burden?—Yes, but at the end of the seven years they would get a new Fair Rent fixed.

46,335. Then, as I understand, you would relax the provision which makes it necessary that the land applied for should be on the same estate?—Yes.

46,336. You would allow applications for enlargement by crofters on one estate for land on another estate?—Yes.

46,337. You said something also with regard to parishes?—Yes.

46,338. What provision of the Act do you refer to there?—That they must be in the same parish as the land applied for.

46,339. Where is that in the Act?—I think you will find it in the Crofters Act.

46,340. Very well. Now, I asked you a question before with regard to the downfall of rents. I understand you to say that the rents have, during recent years, fallen very considerably, as from above £100 to below the £100 limit?—Oh, yes, they have fallen in even greater proportion than the Fair Rents fixed by the Crofters Commission.

46,341. So that farms which some years ago would have been available to the Crofters Commission for consideration are not now so by reason of the fall in the rent?—That is so.

46,342. Due to natural causes?—Due to natural causes, certainly.

46,343. Now, you mentioned congestion and distress as existing in the Orkney Islands. Where is the congestion?—All over.

46,344. There is congestion undoubtedly in one or two places, but is there general congestion?—Yes, general congestion. There are one or two parishes which are perhaps not so bad as others, *e.g.*, the parish of Harray, where most of the land is owned by the people themselves; but otherwise congestion is pretty general.

46,345. What are the most congested portions?—I should say the island of Rousay for one.

46,346. What is the population of Rousay?—I can hardly tell Your Lordship that.

46,347. What is the area of Rousay under crofters?—I could not tell you that either, but nine-tenths of the tenantry in Rousay are crofters.

46,348. If you wish to make clear that there is congestion, it would be better to give us some details of the area under crofters as compared with the population. What is the average size of holdings in Rousay?—From eight to ten acres I should say.

46,349. Arable?—Yes.

46,350. And have they common grazing?—There is a small portion of common grazing, but not much. The majority of the crofters have no common grazing.

46,351. They have just their individual holdings?—Yes. Then, the island of Eday, I should say, is also very much congested, and the holdings are very small. There are only two large farms on the island, and the rest is all occupied by crofters.

46,352. What is the population of Eday?—Seven or eight hundred I think, but I am not quite sure. The crofts in Eday are very small on the average.

46,353. But is there not a peat industry there, on one end of the island?—Yes, that is so.

46,354. Which greatly assists them in paying their rents?—The crofters of that particular part of the island.

46,355. The population of Rousay, Egilshay, and Veira in 1891, was, I see, 988?—Yes.

46,356. So that it will probably be about a thousand now?—Well, the tendency of the population in Orkney is not to increase. The total has perhaps increased slightly within the last decade, but not appreciably.

46,357. Is it a fact that in Orkney the younger men as they grow up, venture forth to the world to seek their fortunes in life, and do not settle down upon their father's holdings?—In a great many cases.

46,358. The majority?—Yes, I should say the majority.

46,359. Is there much sub-division of holdings in Orkney,—the son getting a patch of his father's ground?—There are a great many cases where two families live on the same croft,—the old people, and the family of the married son or daughter.

46,360. There are many cases of that sort?—Yes, there are a great many cases of that sort.

46,361. Where do you find these mostly?—All over the county; I could not particularly specify one spot where it is the case more than another.

Kirkwall, Orkney, — William George Lennox.

46,362. But, I suppose, it is the case that the Orkney crofters, speaking generally, have relations scattered all over the world?—All over the world.

46,363. That is to say they are not afraid or reluctant to venture from home in order to seek their fortunes?—No, not at all; they are a remarkably enterprising race.

46,364. *Mr Munro.*—So far as I can gather from your remarks here to-day, I think you rather point to some change in the existing state of the law?—Yes, that is so.

46,365. And, I suppose, more particularly the Crofters Act?—More particularly the Crofters Act.

46,366. I suppose you are quite well aware that that does not quite come within the scope of our inquiry here?—Yes, I was quite aware of that, but I thought that perhaps it could come in by a sort of side wind, by showing how it is that Orkney does not come within the scope of the inquiry so much as the other crofting counties, and the reasons why it does not.

46,367. I do not complain of your having taken this opportunity of ventilating your grievances; but did it never occur to you to address any remonstrance or appeal to the proper quarter?—It has been done often.

46,368. Without any result?—Without any result.

46,369. Now, you talked of the enlargement of crofters' holdings, and, I think, you pointed in the direction of getting these holdings enlarged from the existing arable farms?—Yes.

46,370. But you know that does not fall within the limits of our inquiry either; we have no power to deal with arable farms?—Yes, that is so.

46,371. You mentioned that a large portion of the existing arable land of Orkney has been reclaimed from moor and hill pasturage?—Yes.

46,372. Now, is it within your knowledge that a large portion of the land so reclaimed does not pay?—I understand there is a general complaint that no farming pays just now.

46,373. But you do not know whether, as a matter of fact, the land recently reclaimed has paid the farmer or not?—I can only state this much, that usually when hill ground has been reclaimed, the first year or two is the best of it.

46,374. Now, about these 15,000 acres of common pasture, which you say were taken from the crofters 50 or 60 years ago, how is that land used now? Is it converted into arable land, or is it still pasture?—In the case of the various bits of land that I am to talk about to-day, it has been used as pasture; in the other cases it is all arable. Perhaps there are a few bits that I have not been able to obtain evidence about, but otherwise it is all arable.

46,375. I suppose, as a matter of fact, we may take it that there is not a large area of land in the Orkney Islands available for crofter cultivation in terms of the remit made to this Commission?—No, there is very little, taking the whole area.

46,376. *Mr Maccallum.*—You mentioned that there are large farms which have been formed out of crofters' holdings?—Yes.

46,377. Where are these large farms? You have mentioned Westness as one case, but are there other large farms that you can point to?—It would be difficult to point out any large farm in Orkney that has not, to some extent, been made out of crofters' holdings: that has been the almost universal case at one time or another. Some farms are older in formation than others, but at one time or another it stands to reason that they have all been in small holdings. The condition of tenure in those islands at one time was such as to preclude large holdings being formed at all.

46,378. Can you tell us the character of the land in these large farms as compared with the land held by the small holders? Are the large farms inferior, or superior?—They are superior in some cases; but there are cases where crofters have been evicted and their holdings added to farms, and those crofters instead of emigrating have gone outside the old hill dykes, and have taken in crofts from the hill. Certainly, the large farms are superior to those crofts; but the crofts in the old arable land, I think, are just about as good as farms; it is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other.

Kirkwall, Orkney, — William George Lennox.

46,379. In Rousay when the crofters were removed, what sort of lands did they get?—They got foreign lands; they went abroad, in most cases.

46,379A. Are you aware whether some of them settled on parts of the island?—I believe that a few went outside the hill dyke and settled there.

46,380. How are the crofters in Rousay situated, with regard to fishing facilities; are they located on the coast?—Yes. The crofting settlements in Rousay, in fact, all the arable land in Rousay, is just round the coast. There is a range of hills in the centre of the island.

46,381. But are not the crofters situated pretty well inland, and on the higher grounds?—There are some higher, but a great many of them are down near the seashore. There are a good few crofts inland also; but in an island of such a small extent as Rousay, it is always easy to get to the shore from almost any part of it.

46,382. You say there is a desire for extension of holdings on the part of the crofters; are there many people, do you think, who desire new holdings?—There may be one here and there, but not very many.

46,383. In such a place as Kirkwall here, are you aware whether there are people who desire to get holdings in the country,—people who may have come from the country originally, and who wish to go back?—I am not aware of that.

46,384. But you have no doubt that there is a very strong desire to get an extension?—Yes, that is really the strong desire in the county.

46,385. In the meantime you think they cannot compete with the large farms in stock-raising on account of the limited extent of ground they hold?—Yes, that is the condition of things.

46,386. And that is their chief stay, the stock?—Yes, the stock. They are not nearly such great herring fishers for instance as the Shetlanders are. The difference between the two counties has been very well put by the late Mr Thomson, who said that an Orkney crofter was a crofter with a boat; a Shetland crofter was a fisherman with a croft. That emphasises the difference in the conditions of the two counties.

46,387. Now, have the proprietors themselves done anything in the way of satisfying this strong desire on the part of the crofters in Orkney? Have any of the proprietors given land to extend the present holdings?—Not that I am aware of. Unless they were actually to take land from their larger tenants, I don't know that they have much land available for that purpose.

46,388. But surely some of the farms may fall out of lease, which might be suitable for extension of holdings?—Yes, but in no case that I have heard of has that been done. [*The Chairman.*—Voluntarily?—Voluntarily].

46,389. You told us with regard to the crofters on the island of Rousay, that they were under the disadvantage that they could not get stones for repairing their houses or for drainage?—Yes.

46,390. And they are prevented—for what reason?—I cannot tell the reason; I could only guess at it. General Burroughs himself would be able to tell you the reason.

46,391. But it is not for any profit that he could expect to make out of these stones?—Certainly not.

46,392. Does it not seem to be purely a desire to defeat the Crofters Act?—That is what every person who has observed the matter at all takes out of it.

46,393. Do you think with regard to proprietors generally that such a spirit prevails, a spirit of opposition and enmity towards the smaller holdings?—No, I am glad to say that in Orkney, with the exception of General Burroughs, the proprietors, as a rule, are very reasonable and willing to meet the crofters half way. There are one or two exceptions here and there,—a very few,—but that is the rule.

46,394. Have they tried to give free scope to the

Kirkwall, Orkney. William George Lennox.

spirit of the Act, with regard, for instance, to enlargements, do you think? Have they done what might reasonably be expected of them in the matter?—Well, of course, one can hardly say, because in a case of that sort, no matter how desirous a landlord is to meet the spirit of the Act, where the taking away of the land from his farm affects his pocket he is bound to be influenced to some slight extent. I myself have had actual personal experience of only two enlargements, and in both cases they were opposed bitterly. These were from the island of Eday, but the opposition in that case was natural,—I don't blame the proprietor.

46,395. What is your opinion with regard to the rent paid by the small holders: are the small holdings as profitable to the proprietor, do you think, as large holdings?—I quite think so; especially under the present state of matters, where under the Crofters Act he is under no expense for estate management, as crofters have to keep up their own holdings. So far as my inquiries have gone, the crofters actually pay more per acre than the big farmers do, or as much.

46,396. Is there any difficulty in letting large farms in Orkney?—A great difficulty.

46,397. And have the rents been considerably reduced?—Yes, very considerably. I may mention one instance; there are some six or eight farms in the island of Rousay that have been advertised in the papers, for I am afraid to say how long, to let: Westness, Manor House, and Garden (that is the shooting of course); Helziegitha 92 acres; Quoys 59 acres; Broland 54 acres; Castlehall 95 acres; Bu of Vieray 94 acres; and there are other small farms.

46,398. But only one of these would be considered a large farm?—That is so.

46,399. Considering then that the great desire of the crofters is for enlargement, would you not expect that moderately sized holdings would let very readily?—Yes.

46,400. And can you give us any evidence as to the alacrity with which moderately sized farms are taken?—Yes, I can do so, fortunately. There are two holdings, close by Kirkwall, that are in the market just now, of from 70 to 90 acres: one is 70 and the other is 78 acres I think. Those are a very fair average size. I myself do not act for the landlord in either case, but I have had at least half a dozen applicants for each farm coming to me to try and make terms for them for the place. These were men of the crofter class who are anxious to get bigger holdings.

46,401. They applied to you, who are not acting for the proprietor at all?—To try and pave the way for them to get bigger holdings.

46,402. For each of these farms?—For each of these farms.

46,403. Have these two farms been let now?—I am in negotiations for one just now, for a crofter; the other is not let; the man is wanting rather too much rent.

46,404. Do you find that the rent, in cases of moderately sized farms, is reduced in some cases?—Yes. In one case the rent was £70, and the offers that I made did not exceed £55. In the other case the rent was £95, and the highest offer was £85. That is just this present year.

46,405. In granting extensions from large farms, you think that the damage to the farm ought to be borne to some extent by the crofter?—That is where the same land has not first of all been taken from the crofters. I think it is only right in that event.

46,406. No doubt there would be an interference in such a case as that with the rotation of crops; but might not the letting value of the remainder of the farm be increased by taking a portion of it?—Yes, it is quite possible it might; it might be made more compact.

46,407. And looking also to the fact that large farms do not let very readily, the rent might be more secure?—Yes.

46,408. *Mr Gordon.*—What you have said has been rather a criticism on the Crofters Act than any suggestion as to the work of this Commission?—Yes; I would leave the witnesses whom I intend to bring forward to speak for themselves.

46,409. You say that there is a considerable amount of congestion in the crofter holdings?—Yes.

46,410. And you propose that that congestion should be relieved by taking extensions from the large farms?—Yes.

46,411. You have not, however, touched upon a point which is of great importance, and that is, that in this extension of holdings there is no power at present to construct new holdings upon the land taken?—No, there is no power.

46,412. How would you propose to get over that difficulty?—So far as Orkney is concerned, I don't think it is a difficulty, because there is very little wish for new holdings throughout the county.

46,413. Then, in taking land from a large farm and adding it to a croft, you can only do so conveniently where the crofters abut upon the farm?—Yes.

46,414. Then, your improvement or benefit to the crofters would be confined solely to those crofts which are in immediate contact with the farm?—Or within easy reach of it.

46,415. Now, in that way you could only benefit a very small proportion of the crofting township?—Yes, I quite see that the necessity which your honour is pointing out would arise perhaps in the course of a few years when crofters having larger crofts would again require outlet for their surplus population.

46,416. But you think that that difficulty does not exist in the meantime?—Not so much just now; it may exist, but to a very small extent.

46,417. Well, I am bound to say that in some cases I saw it exist to a very great extent, and where the extensions granted were some two miles and more from the crofters who were occupying the land?—Perhaps I have not understood you very well. Did your honour mean to make these extensions that are two miles from the existing crofts into new crofts?

46,418. I think that would have been the proper thing to do, relieving the congestion by removing some of the existing crofts?—Then, how would you have done with the families on the existing ground?

46,419. Some would go to new crofts, and the crofts left would have been enlarged by the accession of the relieved crofters?—Well, I must say that has not had my attention at all, so I am not in a position to say anything about it.

46,419A. Then, I would respectfully suggest that you should direct your attention to it?—Yes, I will, thank you.

46,420. Now, with regard to the subject of this Commission, what have you to suggest for our consideration in respect of the lands which are at present occupied as grazings?—Part of the grazings I refer to used formerly to be arable land, and could be made into new crofts.

46,421. You mentioned, I think, one case of that character which is in the island of Rousay?—Yes.

46,422. Well, we have seen the island of Rousay. Now, can you tell us any other place on the mainland of Orkney?—Yes, in the parish of Holm.

46,423. Is that on the mainland?—Yes, the east portion.

46,424. And what particular place in the parish of Holm do you point to?—The farm of Greenwall. The grazings I refer to are called the Skews.

46,425. How is that land at present occupied?—By the tenant of the farm of Greenwall, as partly arable, and partly pasture; but mainly pasture, I think.

46,426. What is the rental of that farm?—I am sorry I cannot tell you.

46,427. Is it occupied as a sheep grazing?—As a sheep grazing, but the tenant has cultivated about 20 acres of it. There are 150 acres altogether, of which about 20 are arable and 130 pasture.

46,428. That is not a large extent of ground to be attached to a farm?—That is only a small portion of the farm; that is practically the only hill grazing that he has there, but it used to be in the occupation of the

Kirkwall, Orkney.

William George Lennox.

crofters, and it is the only piece of ground that is of any use.

46,429. Do you know the place yourself?—I have been there once; but I am speaking more from information received. As I mentioned to His Lordship, I think it would perhaps be better if you would allow the witnesses whom I am to bring forward to speak as to the nature of those pieces of land, because I do not profess to know much about them in detail.

46,430. Are you able to speak generally with regard to the conditions of occupancy of these islands?—Yes.

46,431. How is the pastoral land on the mainland at present occupied?—In which portion of it.

46,432. Away towards the north and north-west?—I don't know much about Harray, or Sandwick, or the parishes there.

46,433. Do you suggest that much benefit would be conferred on the crofters in this island by the addition of the hill ground in the centre block of the main island?—It would be a benefit; it would give them summer grazing.

46,434. Are you aware whether they at present occupy that, or rather have liberty to occupy it?—I have no evidence whatever from the centre of the island.

46,435. We went carefully over the ground yesterday and the only evidence we have is that any man surrounding that land could put on stock without limit, but that they did not consider it worth their pains to do so?—I have no evidence from the centre of the island at all, but only from the various districts mentioned in the list of witnesses that I furnished.

46,436. The information we received yesterday was of an undeviating character as to the usefulness of a large part of the central block of land here,—the hill ground or uncultivated ground. We saw for ourselves the nature of the ground; it is all black moorland, of a practically worthless character for grazing except in small spots. We had evidence in half-a-dozen cases that there was no restriction as to the pasture of these lands by the crofters or farmers, and, as a matter of fact, it appears that they do not, to any great extent, take advantage of the opportunity to send their stock to the hill?—Quite so, but perhaps your honour will recollect that, as I said already, I do not think the present powers of inquiry of this Commission could do much good to the county; it is mainly through enlargement.

46,437. Then, as I have already pointed out, your statements have reference more to an improvement in the Crofters Act than to any assistance that you can give to this Commission at present?—Quite so, except in scattered portions of the county.

46,438. *The Chairman.*—You were asked by Mr Gordon a question as to the matter of contiguity of holdings in giving enlargements?—Yes.

46,439. You are aware that the words of Section 13 (1) of the Crofters' Act are, that land is not to be deemed available 'unless it lies contiguous or near to land 'already in the occupancy of the crofters,' and that the Commission have construed these words according to the circumstances of each particular case?—Yes.

46,440. Now, I observe that Mr Johnston, in his Treatise on the Act, says that '"Near" is an elastic 'word, and it is impossible to lay down any hard and 'fast rule without regard to local conditions; but it is 'thought that three miles is a reasonable limit. In one 'case the Commissioners held that nine miles was be-'yond the limit, and apparently they deemed it a 'relevant consideration that there were intervening 'townships.' You are aware that in dealing with enlargements of holdings the Crofters Commission have had regard to the particular circumstances of each case?—That is so.

46,441. Now, is it the fact that in the case of Orkney holdings, the portions of land are discontiguous,—that is to say, a man has a holding consisting of mouldy land in one part and sandy land in another?—That is so: and not only that, but from the mere fact that most of the holdings are not in townships but lie scattered about, you cannot get a sufficient number of crofters together to take the land from a big farm contiguous to the whole of them.

46,442. And, therefore, the Act has to be construed with reference to the circumstances of the locality?—Certainly.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

William George Lennox.

46,443. *Mr Munro.*—You mentioned that as the leases of the larger farms fell out, there was considerable difficulty experienced in reletting them?—I believe there is generally a certain amount of difficulty.

46,444. Which I take it is owing to the fact that they did not pay?—That they did not pay.

46,445. You suggested, I think, that such farms should be cut up and given to crofters in smallish holdings?—Certainly.

46,446. What grounds have you for believing that the crofters would cultivate these small holdings to greater advantage than the larger class of holders do at present?—I don't know that they would cultivate them to greater advantage, but it would support the resident population far better.

46,447. But the question is, would it pay the crofters better than it pays the large farmer?—It would pay them better than it does just now. When one of these farms fell in, the difficulty of reletting, except at a greatly reduced rent, showed that the former tenant had been sitting practically at a rack-rent, and could not make much out of it. But if crofters get that farm, they get their rent fixed by a competent Commission at a fair agricultural value, and certainly that would enable them to make more out of it.

46,448. Don't you think the proprietors would be disposed to let these farms to the present class of farmers at a fair rent?—Well, in the case of the more moderately sized farms, such as those of 70 or 80 acres, it is a mere matter of competition among crofters who have got on so far, and want to enlarge the size of their holdings: and you can hardly judge these in the light of a Fair Rent.

46,449. Have you any practical acquaintance with the cultivation of land yourself?—None with regard to the cultivation of land.

46,450. So that what you stated is a mere matter of opinion?—A mere matter of opinion, and professional experience as to the prices got for these farms.

46,451. *Mr Gordon.*—Kindly tell me the names of the farms that are advertised?—Westness.

46,452. That has £540 of rent. What is the next?—Helziegitha, with 92 acres or thereby, of which 35 acres are arable. The remainder are of the medium size, Quoys, Broland, Castlehall in Vieray. The average may thus be tabulated:—

Name of Farm	Total Acreage	Arable Acreage
Westness,	2904	281
Helziegitha,	92	35
Quoys,	59	38
Broland,	54	32
Castlehall, Vieray,	95	53
Bu of Vieray,	94	51

46,453. I would like to point out to you that the present rent of Broland is only £33; of Quoys £40; Helziegitha £56; Bu of Viera £60. Now, these, to my mind, are all small places?—Yes, they are all small places.

46,454. And they do not come under the category of those which you mentioned as being large farms?—No.

46,455. Again, you said in reply to Mr Maccallum that large farms were difficult to let, but that they could be more easily let if they were smaller?—Yes.

46,456. But these farms are not above the category of what might be considered easily let subjects?—These are easily let subjects; most of them are in that category.

46,457. Therefore, it does not follow that they affect, in any way, the question as to the unlettable character of the big farms?—Only the farm of Westness.

46,458. If you had confined yourself to the farm of Westness you would have been more correct?—Yes, but the others in that particular district are more affected by the condition of things under a certain landlord.

46,459. There may be other conditions which prevent their letting, but it is not because they are big farms?—Not because they are big farms at all.

46,460. *Mr Macallum.*—Are you aware that there is any difficulty in letting these moderately big farms even in Rousay?—Well, as I have already stated, all those farms have been advertised to let in the papers for some considerable time.

46,461. And the small ones are still advertised?—I don't know whether the advertisement appears this week or not: the paper is just published to-day. [*Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Can you tell us roughly how long they have been advertised,—six months?—Oh, no].

46,462. *Mr Duncan J. Robertson, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for General Burroughs.*—Is there not a notice in the advertisement limiting the time during which offers can be received until 31st August?—Yes, until 31st August.

46,463. How then can you speak about there being a difficulty in letting them?—I am speaking, of course, from what I have heard from the island itself as to very few offers being made.

46,464. *Mr William P. Drever, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for Orkney estates.*—Do you know, as a matter of fact, if there is any real permanent difficulty in letting the farms in Orkney?—Not a permanent difficulty; but in some cases there is perhaps a good deal of delay.

46,465. You have never known of a non-crofting farm remaining unlet for a year?—Not personally.

46,466. Apart from the farms that you have mentioned, do you know of any difficulty in letting farms of that size in Orkney?—There has been this difficulty always, that from the previous let to the next let there has usually been considerable difficulty in getting anything like the old rent. There has been a drop in the rent in almost every case, and there may have been a little delay in trying to get as near the old rent as possible.

46,467. It is conceded that there has been a drop in the rents all over.—That is what I have referred to as delay in getting the farms let sometimes.

46,468. But apart from that, do you not know that non-crofting farms in Orkney are well let and easily let?—When I spoke of delay in letting, I did not, for a moment, mean that the farms stood vacant for any time, but that the first time they were known to be in the market was often months before it was known that a competent or proper rent would be got.

46,469. Yes, but you see in this case the time within which offers may be received has not yet expired: is that not why the advertisements still appear in the newspapers?—Quite so, but there is a long time allowed to give in offers.

46,470. You stated, and, I think, the remark was of universal application, that there was congestion and distress among the crofters and crofts in Orkney?—Yes; at least pretty general.

46,471. That is to say, there is a confluence of crofts and crofters pressing upon each other and causing distress, is that your meaning?—I mean that there is too much population for the land available for them to settle on.

46,472. Could you tell me any township or any place in Orkney where there is this pressing congestion and this distress?—It is almost general, with the exception of one or two cases.

46,473. If it is general you can easily make it special: I know of none.—With the exception of one or two parishes. Take Rousay; take Eday.

46,474. But could you condescend on particulars, because I suppose it is facts that the Court wants?—I base my statement upon the fact that during the five years that I have been in business in the interest of the crofters here and in Shetland, it has been a pretty general rule for me to have a great deal of my business time taken up by people of the crofting class coming in to try and get relief from their difficulties.

46,475. But, Mr Lennox, if the distress and congestion is so general as you say it is, it will be quite easy for you to name some of the districts you refer to, in order that the Commission may have data to go upon. As I say, I know none.—Well, Mr Drever, perhaps your time has not been taken up to the same extent as mine in trying to arrange for some of those poor crofters getting relief from their difficulties.

46,476. May I put it to you in this way, that you are unable to condescend on any particular cases of congestion and distress from your own knowledge?—From my own knowledge I can condescend upon practically the whole island, with the exception of one or two parishes.

46,477. I think you should lay your finger on the particular cases, for the benefit of the Commission; I thought you rather avoided answering the Chairman when he sought to get particulars from you?—Perhaps I might make matters plainer by saying that I have not gone into any definite statistics on the matter. I speak of my own impression and belief, derived from what I have seen in my own business.

46,478. But it is not a matter of belief or faith here; it is a matter of sight?—Well, sight also.

46,479. Can you tell us what district or what crofters are congested and in distress?—Yes, I should say that seven-tenths of the crofters of Rousay, *e.g.*, might be a great deal better in circumstances.

46,480. So might we all, but that is hardly the question.—I mean that if they had an outlet for their crofts such as I have been suggesting, they would be in better circumstances.

46,481. But let us see how you arrive at that opinion. You make a general statement about congestion and distress; are you making that general statement upon your own personal knowledge, or upon the conversations you have had with the crofters?—If I make such a statement, it must be from what the crofters have told me.

46,482. You don't know yourself?—I have not been in that position myself.

46,483. You don't know from your own personal knowledge whether there is congestion resulting in distress in Orkney?—It all depends upon what you mean by personal knowledge. If you mean by personal knowledge what the crofters have complained to me about, and have come to get relief from, then I can speak from personal knowledge.

46,484. In that case you can condescend upon particulars, and state them to the Court?—If you will allow me to bring up my business books, I will be most happy to mention cases.

46,485. That is not fair to us, and it is not fair to the Commission: but I will assume that you do not know,—that is to say, without your business books?—You are quite at liberty to assume anything you like.

46,486. There was also a statement you made,—I think it was put forward as an assumption by you, that all the large farms in Orkney have been carved out or made up of crofts. Is that within your knowledge?—It is a matter of history.

46,487. Would you give the Commission some instances where that is the case?—I gave the Commission the general case that I did not know a farm that had not at one time been made out of crofts.

46,488. It may be the case with some, but it is not the universal case. Is it not the case that a great many of the larger farms throughout Orkney have been large farms from time immemorial,—for hundreds of years, and retain their Norse names to this day?—I might point out to the Commission that that can hardly be the case, and is actually not the case, because the land here was at one time held by Udal tenure, which of itself was opposed to anything like large holdings.

46,489. Do you know of any case of any farm or any number of large farms which have been made from crofts?—Yes.

46,490. Where?—The farm of Westness in Rousay; the farm of Greentoft in Eday; the farm of Carrick in Eday; the farm of Greenwall in Holm; and a dozen others if I had time to think of them.

46,491. Take the farm of Greenwall, is that a farm that has been made entirely out of crofts? There may have been one or two merged in it, but is it not an old farm?—So far as I know there were at least seven or

Kirkwall, Orkney.

William George Lennox.

eight crofts merged in it; and these were the best part of the farm.

46,492. I don't know that it is quite pertinent to this inquiry, but there is a matter to which you referred, viz., the question of eggs. Do you know that there is at present a glut in the market as regards that commodity?—That is what I said.

46,493. Do you know what the annual product of eggs in the county of Orkney has been for a number of years, comparing it with the rental, for instance?—I cannot tell you.

46,494. Do you know that the rental and the product of eggs have been about the same for a number of years,—practically the same?—I quite believe it.

46,495. What class in the county produces the greater number of eggs,—crofters or large farmers?—The crofters.

Peter Yorston.

PETER YORSTON, Old Man, Sourin, Rousay (46) —*examined.*

46,496. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter in Rousay?—Yes.

46,497. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

46,497A. What part of the island are you in?—Sourin.

46,498. Your croft appears to extend to 20 acres arable, and 22 acres outrun, with some grazing right on the adjoining hills: the old rent was £10, 10s. and the Commissioners fixed the new rent at £7, 10s., and cancelled £4, 5s. of arrears out of £10, 5s.?—Yes.

46,499. What is it you wish to say to us?—About the privilege of hill grazing, and about the disadvantage of the want of stones. We cannot get one stone to build.

46,500. First of all, as to the privilege of hill grazing, what hill do you refer to?—Knitchin Hill; that is the one nearest to us.

46,501. Is Knitchin Hill now part of a farm?—Yes, part of the farm of Trumland.

46,502. Was it within your recollection occupied by crofters?—Oh, yes, by myself among others.

46,503. When did you cease to have it?—In 1880.

46,504. How many acres did the grazing which you had over Knitchin extend to?—I could not say, but I suppose some hundreds.

46,505. Was it common to you and the other crofters in the locality?—Yes.

46,506. And it was taken from you in 1880 and put into this farm?—Yes.

46,507. What rent were you paying when it was taken away?—About £8, if I remember rightly. After the hill was taken from me I got another part.

46,508. The croft of Easter Quoy was added to the croft of Old Man after you lost the hill?—Yes.

46,509. And the rent was adjusted at £10, 10s., and now stands at £7, 10s.?—Yes.

46,510. And am I to understand that you represent to us that you have been seriously incommoded by this deprivation of grazing?—Yes.

46,511. And that you would like to get an extension of grazing if it could be obtained?—Yes.

46,512. From this very farm?—Yes. At Kierfa Hill I had a right of grazing.

46,513. Did you use it?—No.

46,514. Was that because of its distance from you?—Just so.

46,515. Your grazing was mainly confined to this place called Knitchen?—Yes.

46,516. Were you appointed a delegate?—Yes, along with another.

46,517. At a meeting of Rousay crofters?—Yes.

46,518. Do you wish to make any statement applicable to the island as a whole?—Yes. It is the wish of the crofters to reclaim possession of the hills, especially Knitchin, Kierfa, and Lower Leyan,—the last is the best place of all.

46,519. What farm does it now go with?—The farm of Langskail. It was taken about the year 1860 or 1861, and Kierfa in 1866.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Peter Yorston.

46,520. And prior to these dates you have mentioned, all these three grazings were, I understand from you, in the occupation of crofters?—Yes.

46,521. And they all now form part of farms?—Yes.

46,522. Did the crofters from whom these grazings were taken get any other grazings in lieu, or did they simply lose them?—We simply lost them, and some lost them altogether.

46,523. Did others get something in return?—They just had the leave of the peat moss for cutting; otherwise it was all taken from them.

46,524. They had a right reserved of cutting peats from the land taken?—Not to take the peat moss inside the fence, on the Knitchinside. [*Mr Lennox.*—He means that on the Knitchinside there was a bit of the peat moss left outside the ring fence which was put round this farm].

46,525. I suppose you have plenty of peats?—Plenty of peats. But as to stones, we cannot use a single stone; we cannot repair our houses, we cannot keep them up. If we take one stone we are threatened with proceedings for theft.

46,526. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Supposing you had these hills, what use could you make of them?—We could keep our beasts on them in the summer season.

46,527. Simply summer grazing?—Yes.

46,528. There is no land worth any better use,—no arable land?—There are small bits, but not very much, on the southern side.

46,529. Would you pay a rent for these hills if you got the grazing of them?—We would not be very willing to do that; we want to have them free.

46,530. You want to have the grazing for nothing?—Possibly, as we used to have it.

46,531. *Mr Gordon.*—Are these grazings all attached to one farm?—No; Kintchin goes with Trumland.

46,532. Is there part of it attached to the Home Farm?—Trumland is the Home Farm: but last Martinmas the Home Farm was taken by a tacksman.

46,533. The arable lands of Trumland house, together with this hill ground to which you have made reference, have been taken by a farmer?—Yes.

46,534. How close does the hill ground taken from the crofts come to your arable land?—I suppose about twenty minutes' walk.

46,535. That would be a mile through the hill. Is the ring fence put round the crofts about a mile from the arable land?—From some of them, but from others not so far.

46,536. There is a ring fence put between your crofts and this hill ground?—Yes.

46,537. You would not propose to keep sheep on the hill?—Well, we would have a better chance of paying our rent if we got sheep. It used to keep sheep.

46,538. You could keep a few sheep?—Yes.

46,539. Is the low ground fenced off from the Home Farm of Trumland at present?—Yes.

46,540. There is a ring fence round the whole ground?—Yes.

46,541. So that it is at present enclosed off the arable land of the crofts, and from the arable land of Trumland house?—Yes.

46,542. It is mostly black ground, I think, on that hill?—There are some good parts too.

46,543. Where did you say the best hill was?—Lower Leyan, in connection with the farm of Langskail.

46,544. That is upon the north shore?—Yes. That is the best place in the island.

46,545. It is a steep bank hanging down by the north shore?—Yes.

46,546. Is it dry ground?—Yes.

46,547. What crofts would be benefited by that,—not your croft?—No, but on the other side again.

46,548. The crofts at Feelyhall and Brendale.—Yes, and farther north along that point.

46,549. Have the crofters at that point got the

pasture there, at Faraclett Head?—No, only the farm of Faraclett.

46,550. There are not many crofters out there?—There are a few between the point and the mill.

46,551. At Swandale?—Yes, that is the farm; but it is more between the point and the mill along the shore that the four or five crofts are.

46,552. You did not speak of that ground. I think you would suggest that this land on the north shore would be suitable for the crofts adjoining it, and this ground which is now part of the farm and of Trumland house, for the crofts at Sourin and to the south side?—Yes, to the south side again.

46,553. Along the Rousay Sound?—Yes.

46,554. What is the extent of the hill pasture you have at present?—I am sure I could not say exactly: we pasture all along, over peat moss and moor and moss banks, just where the people cut peats.

46,555. The pasture which has been left with you has been a good deal destroyed by peat cutting?—Yes, that is so.

46,556. Mr Lennox suggested something about a small island, on the north-west corner of Egilshay, as being a good island for stones?—Some have gone there for stones, for we could get none in the island; but it is far from good.

46,557. Where could you get quarries in the island?—About 20 yards from my door.

46,558. Are you the man who quarried the stones?—Yes.

46,559. And you were prevented?—Yes, I was.

46,560. What kind of stone is there 20 yards from you?—Just hard building stone.

46,561. Thick beds of flagstone?—Yes, about the best for building. The stone is so good that on the last house General Burroughs put up, he came to our place for all the particular stones.

46,562. What is the general thickness of the stones?—About 8 inches on an average. But the flags again are a great distance from us; it takes us five or six hours to get a load.

46,563. Are they on the north-west corner of the island?—Yes.

46,564. Is there any flagstone upon the pasture lands of Westness?—Yes, that is the principal place.

46,565. We saw some flags for quarrying near that march, but a little farther to the north?—Yes, near an old schoolhouse. That is the main place.

46,566. *Mr Maccallum.*—You say that you were appointed a delegate to bring under our notice land suitable for crofter occupation. Now, have you been considering whether any part of Westness is suitable for occupation by crofters?—Yes: if the ground available were laid down, there are plenty that would apply for new holdings where the arable patches were, and where the old houses are still to be seen. I have heard a great many say that if the land was available and if they could get it on reasonable terms, they would settle there.

46,567. I notice that in the advertisement of this farm, it is said that there are 281 acres arable. Do you know how many acres in that farm are under regular rotation of crop?—I think it is something about 280.

46,568. But I want to know how many acres are under regular rotation of crop?—I think it will be about what is advertised for letting.

46,569. That means the cultivated part?—Yes.

46,570. Then, besides these 281 acres, there is a very large extent that was formerly cultivated by crofters?—Yes. What they call the west side was put in with that farm: they were occupying some of that at Quandale.

46,571. In Quandale there is no part of it cultivated at all?—There is a dyke going up and down, which I think separates Quandale and the west side.

46,572. Are there people living on the island of Rousay itself who would be willing to take holdings on Quandale for instance?—I would think so, because they say if it was available they would take it and pay a rent for it.

46,573. Do you know how many crofters were there before?—About 40, if not more; there were none less as far as I can learn.

46,574. And do you know the reason of their removal?—To get it laid down in sheep pasture.

46,575. Do you consider that the land there is as good as the land that is occupied by crofters now?—There are pieces as good, and better, for they have been so long rested; and there is a good deal the same.

46,576. Were the people removed from that place because of the unsuitableness of the land, do you think?—Oh, no; it was for their own purposes.

46,577. Simply to lay it down for sheep farms?—Yes.

46,578. *The Chairman.*—Do a number of the crofters in Rousay depend to some extent upon the fishing for their livelihood?—Yes, the places are so small: and now the fishing is done, too.

46,579. Does the fishing industry prevail throughout the island?—Yes.

46,580. Where are the holdings of the men who live to a certain extent by fishing; are they on the seashore, or inland?—Some of them are very high, and far from the shore.

46,581. How far?—Some are almost an hour's walk from the shore.

46,582. Not convenient to the fishing?—No.

46,583. How is it that men who live to a great extent by fishing are put an hour's walk back from the shore?—Because they cannot get crofts nearer the sea: the bigger places are near the sea.

46,584. And do the bigger ones have the better land?—The better land and the better places are along the shore.

46,585. The fisherman is divorced from the sea by the intervention of the larger occupant on the good land?—Yes, in some cases, but not in all: there are others near enough the shore.

46,586. Are there a considerable number a great distance from the shore?—Yes, a great many.

46,587. Is it the fact that there are still to be seen, in the island of Rousay, the remains of crofters' houses?—Oh, yes, plenty on the west side, on the Quandale side.

46,588. Did these removals take place in the occupancy of the present proprietor, or previously?—Previously; in the time of his grand-uncle.

46,589. Has there been a general desire on the part of crofters since the passing of the Act to erect new and improved dwelling-houses?—No, not so far as I am aware; but we are bound to keep up the old ones, and I cannot get one stone either for repairs or for any drainage that may be necessary. We are bound to drain and keep the land in working order, and there are no stones to be got.

46,590. Have there been any new dwelling-houses erected since the Act was passed?—I think John Inkster's was the only one.

46,591. Take the farm of Langskail; are there any small holdings on that farm the occupants of which pay rent to the principal tenant?—Yes, I think so.

46,592. How many?—I am unable to say.

46,593. But do you know, as a matter of fact, there are some?—I think there are some five or six, but I am not sure of the exact number.

46,594. Is there any cottar population in Rousay?—I don't think so.

46,595. Are there many cases in Rousay of more then one fire,—more than one dwelling-house, on a holding?—There are chance cases.

46,596. That is uncommon?—Uncommon.

46,597. Then, there is not much pressure of one man upon another?—No.

46,598. And, I suppose, there is no great distress in Rousay, although there is a want of land?—Distress enough, the times are so bad.

46,599. But the times are not worse there than generally?—They are worse than they used to be.

46,600. But not worse than they have been in other islands?—They cannot be.

46,601. Can you give me any idea how many crans of herring have been got in Rousay this year?—No:

Kirkwall, Orkney. Peter Yorston.

there are only two boats going. There used to be twenty boats in Vieray and Rousay, and now there are only two.

46,602. *Mr Lennox, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for crofters.*—Are there no crofts in Rousay with more than one family living in the one house?—There are some.

46,603. And are those the families who would take advantage of any new crofts?—I think so, at once. They cannot have any stock.

46,604. Is it a fact that the main portion of the fishing that is got at Rousay is white fish and not herring?—All white fish; and it is all done away with; there are no fish to be got on account of the trawlers coming so near the shores.

46,605. The profits from the white fishing have fallen away very much?—Yes.

46,606. *Mr Duncan J. Robertson, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for General Burroughs.*—You say that you are here as a delegate. Do you represent the whole of the crofters of Rousay?—Yes.

46,607. Was there a meeting of the whole crofters held?—They were not all present, but there were a good many present.

46,608. Can you give me an idea how many you represent?—I suppose from a dozen to twenty, but we did not count them.

46,609. And how many are there in the island altogether?—I don't know exactly.

46,610. Would there be 80 or 90?—Oh, no.

46,611. You don't know how many there are?—No, I never counted them.

46,612. Are you aware if either Feelyhall or Brendale wish any extension of holdings?—I don't know if there is any chance of it; there is no land available there.

46,613. Do these people want any extension of grazing, or anything of that sort?—I think so; they used to have it.

46,614. Are you authorised to speak for these people?—Yes.

46,615. Both for Feelyhall and Brendale?—Any one that is present. We could not all meet there, but we knew that they used to have this privilege.

46,616. But I am speaking of these two that were mentioned. Do you know if either of these two is a crofter under the Act?—They are neither of them crofters.

46,617. Did they attend the meeting of crofters?—They are not crofters.

46,618. Then, you do not represent them?—None who are not crofters.

46,619. We have been told that there are congested districts in Rousay; Mr Lennox says that seven-tenths of Rousay is congested, and I would like to get some instances?—I think we are all more or less that.

46,620. Tell me a case in particular?—Perhaps we cannot make up our mind.

46,621. But congested means where you have not room enough?—In Broland there are two families.

46,622. Is Broland a croft?—No, it is not a croft.

46,623. Is it not the case that Broland finds his farm too big, and for that reason is leaving it?—I don't know; but there is Knarston.

46,624. Is it not the case that the two families at Broland consist of a very old man and his son?—Yes.

46,625. The case of Knarston, I think, is a case where the two crofters were joint-tenants, and when the Crofters Commission came here they had the croft divided, and a part given to each crofter?—Well, there is a married son there also.

46,626. Are you aware that prior to the passing of the Crofters Act there was a rule made on the estate that there was not to be more than one family in each house?—I was not aware.

46,627. Are you not aware that that is in the estate regulations, and was always enforced?—I don't think that I can consider that.

46,628. Did you not yourself apply for another croft some years ago when it fell vacant, and add it to your own?—Yes, and I would be the better of getting a farm, for the place I have is too little.

Kirkwall, Orkney, Peter Yorston.

46,629. You would like, I suppose, to accumulate a few more crofts, and increase the size of your place?—It would need to be of better quality.

46,630. You never think of offering for larger farms if they fall vacant?—It is not many crofters that can go in for large farms.

46,631. But farms of about £30 or so. Do you never offer for any of these when they are vacant?—No.

46,632. Are you aware that most of the people who have come to inquire after farms in Rousay of recent years, have come from other islands, and that there have been very few inquiries amongst the crofters?—I think they are few enough for this reason that they are of no use. They give them to strangers far cheaper than to those who belong to the island.

46,633. Do you know if the crofters have ever offered?—I don't know about any man but myself.

46,634. You are here as a delegate?—Yes.

46,635. But yet you don't know about any man but yourself?—They did not tell me that.

46,636. You told me there were many chance cases in which crofters would be glad to get new holdings if these were available?—Chiefly extension of grazing.

46,637. I refer to your statement about two or three families on one croft?—There are two delegates here who can speak to that; I think they would go if they got a better place.

46,638. I am speaking of places where there are two families, and where you say they would take another croft if they could get it?—I have heard plenty say that if ground was available they would take it; but it has never been available.

46,639. Last year there were three crofts all vacant: did any crofters, to your knowledge, come forward and try to get them?—I don't know: but it was people who had no crofts that got them.

46,640. Are you not aware that no crofters asked for them?—I don't know what applications may have been put in to you, I never heard of any.

46,641. You spoke of Quandale grazings. Do you remember the time when there were crofters in Quandale?—I don't remember, but we know the date; it was in 1848,—about forty-five years ago.

46,642. It was before your recollection?—Simply from information.

46,643. Merely from report?—Yes. There is a man in Kirkwall to-day who could tell about it.

46,644. Is the information you got from people who remember it?—Yes, it is information from old people who remember it themselves. We spoke to one man in Kirkwall to-day, who is a son of the man who was evicted, and he remembers it right well,—John Mackinlay is his name.

46,645–46. When these people first came to Quandale, how did they make a living principally? Do you know if they were kelp-burners?—I don't know.

46,647. Do you know that they are very much exposed to sea-gust?—In some years they must be.

46,648. Do you know what took place between the landlord and the tenants at the time of the removal?—Nothing, but what we have heard, but it was the intention to lay it down to sheep.

46,649. You don't know whether they were in arrear of rent?—I never heard of any arrears of rent. I thought it was done by the landlord for his own purpose.

46,650. Do you know if there were any evictions by process of law?—The first two.

46,651. Were they removed by sheriff-officers?—They came to the first two tenants in the biggish place, and offered them a year's rent back if they would leave; but the little ones were swept away at once.

46,652. Do you know if houses were built for them in other places?—They settled on the common, and some on the heather; they brought in a little land, which they got cheap at first, but then they were rented on the good land.

46,653. Is there a suitable place for fishing at Quan-

dale?—Not at Quandale, but on the west side,—that is the nearest port between Quandale and Westness.

46,654. How far would that be from Quandale?—Not very far.

46,655. An hour's walk?—I could not say; I have never gone to the fishing there at all.

46,656. Half-an-hour's walk?—Perhaps it might be.

46,657. You have also said that if Quandale was divided, you know a good many people who would take land there?—It is most likely they would.

46,658. Are these people in a position to put up buildings?—How can they do that without getting stones? There would be something done for that as well as for the matter of stones, I hope. The Government may aid us to get stones.

46,659. If they got the stones have they the means of building houses?—I don't know; but they will see how they get the chance of the stones.

46,660. *Mr Maccallum.*—It was suggested with egard to Quandale that the people who got it were imply kelp-burners. Is it a fact that you can easily see the marks of old cultivation on the land there?—Yes, they have cultivated it to a great extent.

46,661. They must have occupied themselves in cultivating the land?—Yes.

46,662. Did the people who were there reclaim a great deal of the land in Quendale?—I think they reclaimed most of it, but it was generally in small patches.

46,663. The value of the land has been greatly increased by the former cultivation?—Yes.

46,664. It was also suggested in your cross-examination that there were not applications for middle-sized holdings by the crofters of Rousay,—that is, for lands in that island. Could that be accounted for by the strained relations between the crofters and the proprietor, and their not having confidence in the regulations that might be drawn up between themselves and him?—Do you mean before the Act came into force?

46,665. No; in the meantime. It is suggested that there are middle-sized holdings to let, and that the crofters do not apply for them. But if they do not apply for these farms, may not that be due to the opposition which the proprietor always shows to the smaller tenants?—I think so.

46,666. Is it your opinion that if they were offered the land under the same conditions as those under which it was held by the crofters, they would apply for the land of Westness and Quandale?—I believe so.

46,667. *Mr Gordon.*—Were the crofts to which Mr Robertson referred, crofts under the Act, or crofts that had been formerly under a lease,—I speak of the three crofts that were offered last year?—There were two of them crofts under the Act, Redlums and Sandready.

46,668. How did they become vacant?—In the case of Redlums an old woman went south; and, I suppose, in the case of Sandready, I suppose, the tenant was in arrear.

46,669. These crofts were not sub-divided among the neighbouring crofters?—No.

46,670. How are they occupied now?—By new tenants.

46,671. Where did they come from?—From Rousay.

46,672. *The Chairman.*—Mr Robertson, could you favour us with a copy of the estate regulations? [*Mr Robertson*].—Certainly.

MALCOLM CORSIE, Faro, Rousay (44)—*examined.*

46,673. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

46,674. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The area, according to the Crofters Commission Report, is 3 acres arable and 7 acres outrun; present rent £4, fair rent £2, arrears £5, of which £3 were cancelled, and £2 ordered to be paid. There are also grazing rights on the adjoining hill].

46,675. Can you give us a notion of the extent of your grazing?—No, I cannot say.

46,676. How many share in it?—I can hardly tell you on the spur of the moment. Kirkwall, Orkney.

46,677. Do those who have the right put any stock they choose upon it?—Yes. Malcolm Corsie.

46,678. What stock have you?—I have only a cow and a stirk.

46,679. Have you any sheep?—No sheep.

46,680. And no horse?—No horse.

46,681. Are there many horses in Rousay?—Yes, a good many.

46,682. A good many of the crofters have horses?—Yes, some have a pair of horses and others have one.

46,683. Were you appointed as a delegate to appear here?—Yes.

46,684. Was it at the same meeting at which Yorston was appointed?—Yes.

46,685. And do you represent all the crofters in Rousay or only certain portions of the island?—All the crofters.

46,686. Do you agree with the evidence which Yorston gave with regard to the extension of grazings from Knitchin, Westness, and Langskail?—Yes.

46,687. Is the desire in Rousay rather for extension of grazings than for new holdings?—Mostly for extension of grazings.

46,688. Is there a substantial desire for new holdings?—I think there would be if they saw that they could live by them and make ends meet. There are lots of them who would take new holdings.

46,689. How many?—Several of them.

46,690. Half a dozen of them?—I think they would come to that; perhaps more, if they saw the thing was likely to do well.

46,691. Do you mean by new holdings, holdings by which they could live, or live in conjunction with fishing?—I suppose it could only be held in conjunction with fishing.

46,692. Do most of the crofters in Rousay supplement what they get from crofts by fishing?—Most of them.

46,693. Do many go to the herring fishing?—Not many: only two boats.

46,694. And there used to be 20?—About that number, 40 years ago.

46,695. But not for 40 years?—Yes, there were 10 or 12 about 20 years ago, but they are always going down and down.

46,696. How is that?—I think it is on account of the inability to supply the boats.

46,697. Do you agree with the evidence given by Yorston that a good many of the fishermen are rather distant from the shore?—Well, some of them are a good bit from the shore, but not too far to prosecute the fishing if it were profitable.

46,698. But they would be more conveniently situated if they had holdings upon the shore?—Oh, yes, much more convenient.

46,699. It is of the utmost consequence for a fisherman to be as near the shore as he can with his holding?—Yes.

46,700. Do you know of any tenants in Langskail who pay rent to the principal tenant?—Yes, I think there are five.

46,701. Can you give us their names?—Hugh Craigie, James Craigie, Mrs Robert Pearson, Sarah Marwick,—I don't remember the other.

46,702. What rents did they pay?—The rents are fixed by the Crofters Commission.

46,703. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Where are the best boat harbours for fishing boats in the island of Rousay?—On the east side, and all along the south side.

46,704. But, tell me the names of the principal places where boats are launched?—On the east side; the places where they keep the fishing boats now are Ham near Scockness.

46,705. Where else?—Nowhere else: there are only two, but the little boats are scattered throughout the island wherever the fishermen reside.

46,706. Are there any other good places besides the one you have named for herring boats?—Yes, two or three places.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Malcolm Corsie.

46,707. Why are they not so used now: is it because there are no houses near those places?—I don't think it is so much for that, but I think it is for want of ability to purchase them.

46,708. It is not from any difficulty in getting land where they could build houses for prosecuting the fishing?—No, I don't think that.

46,709. Did you hear Mr Lennox's evidence?—Yes.

46,710. Did you hear him use the words congestion and distress?—Yes.

46,711. And when asked where it was, he said it was in Rousay. Do you agree with that?—Yes.

46,712. Where is the greatest congestion or the greatest distress?—I suppose it is general over all the place.

46,713. Can they not pay their rents? Are they in arrear of rent?—No, they are not.

46,714. How do you see the distress; what signs of distress can you give me?—I see that they are pretty hard up, and cannot make ends meet in many cases.

46,715. But I should like a little more definite information. Could you not give me any definite signs of distress? Have they difficulty in getting food or clothing?—They have to get credit sometimes from the millers and tradesmen for their food.

46,716. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you mean by this congestion that the crofts are rather small?—Yes.

46,717. Could you suggest any part of Rousay where fishermen's crofts could be constructed in a situation more convenient for the sea than those which now exist?—I don't know; the north side and the east side, I think, are most convenient for the fishing: there are several there.

46,718. There is a harbour on the north shore there, in Saviskill Bay?—It is not a very good harbour; you could keep small fishing boats there but not large ones.

46,719. You are presently in the occupation of what appears to be the best harbour,—that is at the Ham near Scockness?—Yes.

46,720. There is no harbour of any consequence on the south shore, I think?—No.

46,721. The small bay near the old church there is about the best?—Yes, there is an anchorage there that is laid down in the chart.

46,722. But it would not be always very accessible if there was a good strong northerly gale?—No, not very accessible.

46,723. Therefore, it would not be very advisable to suggest the formation of fishermen's holdings at that point?—No.

46,724. The principal harbour in the island is already in the occupation of crofters and small farmers?—Yes.

46,725. Where is your croft; is it in Sourin?—Yes.

46,726. Do you consider it would be a benefit to get that pasture to which the last witness spoke?—Yes, I consider it would be a benefit.

46,727. How would you use it if you got it?—By pasturing cattle in the summer-time, and a few sheep.

46,728. How many sheep could be on the hill which was lately annexed for the Home Farm?—It could not keep very many; it is of no use except in summer.

46,729. It would be more use for you as an outrun for your young cattle?—Yes, in the summer-time.

46,730. What is the distance of the ring fence from your croft?—About a mile.

46,731. But giving up the fishing seems to be the greatest objection. Are the people in your township so poor that they cannot afford to join together and get a boat?—I think that is the main reason.

46,732. Did they take advantage of the grant which was formerly given to get boats?—Not in Rousay.

46,733. The fishing has been specially productive this year in the Shetland Islands?—Yes, the herring fishing.

46,734. And you are better situated here for the fishing than they are in Shetland: you have more regular communication for the disposal of your fish?—Yes.

46,735. And you are nearer the better fishing ground, the Pentland Firth: you have made no suggestion with regard to a grant for boats?—No, we made no application: there were very few in Orkney, only two or three cases.

46,736. *Mr Munro.*—You stated that the chief desire of yourself and the other crofters was to obtain an extension of the grazings?—Yes.

46,737. Did it never occur to you to make application to the proprietor to obtain such an extension?—No.

46,738. Do you know any crofters who ever did?—I don't know if any of them ever did.

46,739. Why not?—I don't know the reason: I suppose they thought it would be useless.

46,740. So that I may take it that your only hope lies in some change in the law under which the proprietor would be compelled to grant what you want. Is that so?—Yes.

46,741. *The Chairman.*—Do you know whether any crofters in Rousay have applied to the landlord for permission to quarry?—Yes, there have been some cases.

46,742. How many?—I think three or four.

46,743. I mean who have applied in writing?—Yes.

46,744. Do you not know of any case where such permission was granted?—Not to a crofter.

46,745. Has such permission been granted to a person who was not under the Act?—Yes, to every one of them.

46,746. I see the estate regulations, of which Mr Robertson has been kind enough to give us a copy applicable to the estates of Rousay and Vieray, bear this in Article 14 "No tenant shall be entitled to quarry 'stones or flags on the estate without written permission 'from the proprietor or his factor," and you say such permission has been asked but been refused to crofters?—Yes.

46,747. But granted to others?—Yes.

46,748. *Mr Lennox, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for the crofters.*—With regard to the question of congestion and distress in Rousay, you were asked whether the crofters were in arrear of rent and you said they were not in arrears?—There were none in arrear last year except one man.

46,749. What is the reason why they are not in arrear?—Because they are not allowed to get into arrear: they have to strain every point to get the rent.

46,750. Why is that?—Because the landlord exacts his rent. The man who could not pay his arrears last year is bankrupt.

46,751. And is the result of that that you are much in debt to your tradesmen and merchants?—Yes, several are a good deal in debt to millers, shoemakers, and tradesmen of all kinds.

46,752. And also to merchants for shop goods?—Yes, there is plenty of that.

46,753. You were asked by one of the Commissioners why you never made application to the proprietor for an extension of your grazings from those grazing lands?—Yes.

46,754. Why did you not make application; would it have been granted to you?—Because we thought it was of no use.

46,755. Is there a very bitter feeling between the proprietor and the crofters?—There is said to be so, and supposed to be so.

46,756. Do you crofters feel it at all?—Oh, yes, we feel it.

46,757. You were asked also why you did not take advantage of the Government boats provided for herring fishing. Was that done very much in Orkney?—Not very much.

46,758. Why was that?—I don't know the reason; it was done in three or four cases; I know one in Stronsay and one in Westray.

46,759. Were these cases a success?—I think they have all been a success.

46,760. Why did the Rousay men not take advantage of it?—I could not say the reason exactly: I suppose it was for want of thinking about it in time.

DONALD SUTHERLAND, Saltness, Longhope (48).

46,761. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

46,762. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—According to the Crofters Commission Report the area of the croft extends to three acres arable and one acre outrun, with grazing rights for cattle on the adjoining hill pasture; old rent £1, fair rent £1; arrears 18s., ordered to be paid].

46,763. Do you appear here as a delegate?—No.

46,764. Just as an individual crofter?—Yes.

46,765. What is it you wish to lay before us?—The want of more pasture.

46,766. Who is your proprietor?—Mr Heddle.

46,767. And had you a litigation with him or the tenant of the farm about the grazing?—Yes.

46,768. And you were interdicted?—Yes.

46,769. You wish more pasture: can you tell us what extent of pasture you have at present?—No, I am not sure how much there is.

46,770. What stock have you got?—I have one cow, a ewe, and two lambs at present.

46,771. Is that the whole?—That is the whole; I was deprived of all the rest.

46,772. When?—By an action of interdict.

46,773. Had you any legal right over what you were deprived of, or was it merely a privilege of grazing?—The tenant and I had agreed upon it.

46,774. But, I suppose, the tenant had exclusive right to the land from which you had been interdicted?—Yes, he held it under lease.

46,775. And you had no right of grazing on it; you had only a privilege or tolerance; is that the way of it?—Yes, I think so.

46,776. And what you now represent is that you desire to have an extension of grazing?—Yes.

46,777. Is this what you want to be at, that you would like to get as a legal right the power of grazing over the lands from which you have been interdicted?—Yes.

46,778. Was anyone else interdicted along with you, or were you the only person?—I was the only person, but there were five crofters also.

46,779. Were they interdicted?—No, but they were threatened with proceedings.

46,780. And they took their stock off, I suppose?—Yes, they drew off.

46,781. You held on, and then came the interdict?—I drew off at the same time, but went on again.

46,782. And were interdicted?—Yes.

46,783. *Mr Gordon.*—How long have you been in that croft?—I have been in it all my life.

46,784. There is a new fence between your crofts and this pasture?—Yes.

46,785. When was that fence put up?—In 1881.

46,786. Previous to that time your sheep and cattle used to go to the hill as they chose?—Yes.

46,787. This action for interdict was taken against you in consequence of your sheep or cattle getting through this fence?—Yes.

46,788. And you resisted the action?—Yes.

46,789. How far is the fence from your arable land?—About three chains.

46,790. It starts from the back of your croft, and extends in a north-easterly direction, winding out from the arable land to the crofts as it proceeds northwards?—It starts from the north-west end of my croft.

46,791. And proceeds in a north-westerly direction?—Yes, for about twenty-five or thirty-six chains, and then turns to the north-east.

46,792. But it is considerably nearer your croft than to the crofts further east?—Yes.

46,793. It starts from your croft and goes north or north-east and widens as it gets a little farther from the arable land of the crofts?—Yes.

46,794. And what you invite us to consider is the advisability of this land beyond the fence which you, at one time, had a right of pasturing over being restored to you?—Yes.

46,795. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Are there any other witnesses from Longhope with you to-day?—One.

46,796. Are we to hear him after you?—No.

46,797. But I understand you to say you were only speaking for yourself, or are you delegated from the crofters round you to speak to us on their behalf?—I was asked to mention the names of those that want more hill if they can get it.

46,798. Did you hold a meeting, or was it just in conversation?—Just in conversation.

46,799. *Mr Heddle of Melsetter.*—You have stated that before the fence was put up you had a certain privilege over an extent of hill beyond that fence; is that so?—I had the privilege from John Corrigall, the tenant of Melsetter Farm.

46,800. I am not aware whether that is so, but the tenant of Melsetter Farm, of course, had no right to sublet or give such a privilege. What I wish to ascertain is not in regard to Melsetter Farm, but as to whether you and the crofters alongside of you have had any right for many years past to pasture cattle upon ground outside of where the fence is at present?—The fence was broken down, and the cattle went in.

46,801. That is not a question of right. I have asked you a simple question, and please to answer it. Have you a right to the westward and beyond the fence that is now on the ground?—I had a late and ancient right.

46,802. You are aware that there is a ditch which runs from the Melsetter Farm and intersects or cuts the fence, passing for the most part inside of it on the eastward or crofter side. Do you know the ditch I refer to?—Yes, I know it.

46,803. Are you not aware that that ditch was the cattle boundary previous to the erection of the fence?—No, I am not aware of that; the cattle never kept that boundary.

46,804. But you are aware that it was the boundary?—I never heard anything about it till the present moment.

46,805. You have known of cattle being poinded for going beyond that boundary?—No, I don't know anything of that.

46,806. At the time when the fence was erected, were you not aware that it was stated that it was believed there was a sufficient extent of pasture on the crofter side for a good many years to come?—It would be very small, and not much worth.

46,807. And are you not aware that it was also stated that if more arable ground was broken up the fence would be moved farther west so as to give additional pasture?—No, I am not aware of that either.

46,808. I stated that myself. Now, as to your stock, you keep a cow and two ewes at present; what stock does your neighbour, Donald Thomson, farther west, keep?—All that can go on the land.

46,809. And William Ireland, what stock does he keep?—One cow.

46,810. James Stout, what stock has he?—One cow.

46,811. These are all who are pasturing to the westward of you upon that hill: there is no one else west of you, is there?—No.

46,812. Then, to the eastward of you; the first person to the east of you is James Stout, is it not?—Yes.

46,813. What stock does he keep?—A cow and a calf and a ewe and a lamb at the present time.

46,814. Next to him is Christina Stout; she keeps no stock, I think?—No.

46,815. Next to that is James Smith; what stock has he got?—One cow.

46,816. And he had an ox till recently, I think?—Yes.

46,817. Next to him is Widow Thomson?—Yes.

46,818. What stock does she keep?—A cow, a quey, and a calf.

46,819. She sometimes keeps an ox, I think, but when that is the case she is hardly able to keep the quey. Next comes Widow Sutherland; what stock has she?—One cow and one ewe.

46,820. And next is Andrew Sinclair; he also keeps some sheep, I think?—He has two ewes and two lambs.

46,821. Then comes Isaac Wilson?—He has one stirk.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Donald Sutherland.

46,822. And John Johnson: what does he have?—A cow and a year-old.

46,823. Then comes the minister's feu, the minister having liberty to graze a cow, and that is all in the district?—Yes.

46,824. *The Chairman.*—You have given us those who exercise grazing rights over the pasture that this man has? [*Mr Heddle*].—Yes, that is so.

46,825. What is the extent of that pasture? [*Mr Heddle*].—I have not measured it, not knowing there was to be an inquiry, but it is very easily ascertained from any plan, or on the ground. I may say at once that there was never any intention of stinting people here in the matter of pasture, and I have no doubt whatever that if it should be found that additional pasture is required, the fence will be moved back. I stated that when the fence was put up, several people in the district were aware of it, and I think what presses upon this man is rather that the fence happens to run in at an angle to his ground than anything else. But when the fence was broken down, some of them began to run their cattle through it; of course, it was natural enough that they should wish to continue to do so.

46,826. (*Examination resumed*).—This fence was put up in 1881? [*Witness*].—Yes.

46,827. Prior to the erection of that fence, did those persons who had stock in the neighbourhood graze generally over the neighbouring pasture?—Yes, before the fence went up.

46,828. And you have felt a good deal of restriction from the erection of that fence?—Yes.

46,829. What you wish us to consider therefore is the possibility and propriety of your grazing being extended across where the fence now stands?—Yes.

46,830. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You have given us the number of stock held by yourself and by your neighbours just now. Did they have more stock previous to the erection of the fence?—Yes, a great many more sheep.

46,831. And they put away their sheep when the fence was put up,—is that what you mean?—I cannot say exactly as to that. My mother had about twelve sheep.

46,832. What became of them?—They were away before the fence was put up.

46,833. Is there room on the ground over which you have grazing at present for more stock than the list you have just given us?—It is all cut up with peat banks and swamps.

46,834. There is no room then for any more stock than is on at present?—No, there is no room for any more.

46,835. *Mr Gordon.*—The crofters that you have mentioned are all rather poor, are they not?—Very poor.

46,836. Is it your opinion that the circumstances of these people would be improved if they had grazing beyond the fence, on which they could keep say ten or twelve sheep each?—Certainly. [*Mr Heddle*].—May I be allowed to make one remark as to this piece of ground? When the Crofters Commission was sitting in Walls, Your Lordship may remember that some of the southside people were very anxious to have peat ground in a certain locality. This peat ground is in the very pasture now alluded to, and the reason why I then opposed the granting of that particular peat ground was to prevent these people's pasture from being cut up. I wished then to go farther west, beyond the fence for peats. That was the whole question at the time, and yet some of them are getting in and are cutting up these people's pasture.

David Esson.

DAVID ESSON, Chalkhoull, Holm (48)—*examined.*

46,837. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

46,838. Was your croft dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The area of the croft is 15 acres arable and 2 roods outrun, with no common pasture; the old rent was £6, 12s. 9d., and the new rent £6; arrears £3, 6s. 4d., of which £1, 6s. 4d. were cancelled and £2 ordered to be paid].

Kirkwall, Orkney.

David Esson.

46,839. Are you here as a delegate or as an individual witness?—As an individual witness.

46,840. What is it you wish to put before us?—I wish to give evidence that the grazing ground that used to be occupied by the crofters in our locality was taken away in 1857.

46,841. What grazing was that?—The whole hill grazing of the Holm estate was withdrawn at that time from those who were pasturing upon it.

46,842. What is the name of the hill?—The portion that I allude to in our neighbourhood was called the Skews.

46,843. Is it now part of a farm, or what has been done with it?—It is in the occupancy of the farm of Greenwall.

46,844. Who is the tenant of Greenwall?—Mr James Heddle.

46,845. When did that take place?—It was not put into the farm of Greenwall at the time I allude to, in 1857.

46,846. When was it put into the farm of Greenwall?—I am not exactly sure.

46,847. And do you wish to represent to us that it would be a great benefit to you and other crofters in the neighbourhood to get back to that grazing?—Oh, yes, it would be a great benefit.

46,848. But is that what you wish to say?—Yes.

46,849. I see you have a croft of 15 acres arable?—Yes.

46,850. How many horses have you?—One.

46,851. Do you plough the land? Do you borrow a horse from a neighbour?—Yes, he and I work yoke about to suit ourselves.

46,852. Your land is not worked with the spade, but with the plough?—All ploughed.

46,853. Do you carry on a regular rotation?—A regular rotation.

46,854. Is it a six shift rotation?—No, five shift.

46,855. What stock have you?—Two cows, two year-olds, and two calves.

46,856. Any sheep?—No. That is not the stock that I have at the present time, but that is my regular stock.

46,857. What is your present stock?—I have three cows in the meantime, and one year-old, and two calves. One of the cows went wrong, so that I had to buy another in her place.

46,858. You live entirely by your croft, I suppose?—No.

46,859. What do you live by?—By the fishing, in the meantime; both in Shetland and at home now as well.

46,860. You depend on the fishing as well as on the croft?—I have a large family, and it takes all I can do to make it do.

46,861. You live partly by the croft and partly by the fishing?—Yes.

46,862. Have you any sons who go to the fishing?—I have one son who takes service in winter, and he comes home to work the croft; he is only sixteen or seventeen years of age. I have to take him home to work on the place when I am away at the fishing.

46,863. But, as I understand, you do not wish any addition to your croft, but only extension of grazing?—I filled up an application for enlargement.

46,864. Enlargement of holding by taking arable land?—Yes, off the farm of Greenwall.

46,865. How much arable land have you applied for?—Something about 40 acres, I think.

46,866. And how many applicants are there?—Five.

46,867. Has the application been disposed of yet?—It is under appeal. Part of what was applied for was granted by the Crofters Commission, but the landlord appealed against their decision.

46,868. Who is the landlord?—Mr Sutherland, Græme.

46,869. But, besides that, as I understand you, you are here to-day wishing to put before us a deficiency of grazing, and to say that you would like to have an

extension of grazing?—It would be a great benefit to our cattle a change of pasture, apart from the forced grass, if we had a little outside pasture to put them to occasionally. [*The Secretary.*—I see from the Report issued by the Crofters Commission, that 27 acres arable were assigned to five crofters by an order, dated 11th July 1893: that decision is under appeal, and I understand the appeal is to be heard to-morrow]. Part of the ground I am referring to, Mr Heddle has cultivated,—part of the ground in the Skews.

46,870. It is under crop, is it?—Yes. It is all under grass at present, but some of it was under crop last year: from 15 to 20 acres have been cultivated.

46,871. What is the extent of it altogether?—About 150 acres. It is the best grazing ground in the east end of the parish.

46,872. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Do I understand you aright that the land you point to as suitable for extension of grazing is now under rotation?—Under regular rotation of crops: I am speaking of the hill ground, not of the ground in our application to the Commissioners.

46,873. You point to the hill ground as suitable for additional grazing?—Yes.

46,874. And there is cultivated land between you and the hill ground, is there not?—Yes.

46,875. How would you have access to the hill ground?—There is no road to it.

46,876. *Mr Lennox, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for Crofters.*—About this matter of the Skews, you say there are 150 acres under the name of the Skews, and that it is the best grazing ground in the east of Holm?—Yes.

46,877. That used formerly to be in the occupation and possession of the crofters, and you say that about 20 acres have been cultivated by Mr Heddle?—Yes.

46,878. Up till last year?—A part of it.

46,879. Would any of the rest of this ground called the Skews, be suitable ground for making into new crofts?—Yes.

46,880. Is the ground of such a nature as would make good arable land?—Yes, a part of it is, but part of it would not be practicable to cultivate.

46,881. But you could make new crofts out of it with arable and outrun for each croft?—Yes.

46,882. Are there any crofts in Holm where there are two families in the one croft?—There may be; but, as a rule, it is where an old man is failing and not able to work the place, and has his son along with him. I don't say that there may not be a chance case that I am not aware of.

46,883. Are there any cottars in Holm, or people who hold houses, for instance, in the village of St Mary's, who would like to get new crofts?—Yes, there are plenty of them who would like the ground that was laid down there. There were two fairly good farms in the immediate vicinity of the village.

46,884. But I am speaking about the Skews?—Oh, they are far from it.

46,885. Are there any of those people who would take advantage of new crofts in the Skews?—I don't know.

46,886. *The Chairman.*—You are not here to represent their views?—No, but there are several who are very anxious to have part of the ground at the village, the two farms that were taken down. The grass is now rouped every year, and sometimes a turnip-dealer from the south country has it. The ground used to be two farms and is now two grass parks.

46,887. Where is that land?—Close by the village of St Mary's.

46,888. What is the extent of it?—One farm, I think, is something like £30 odds of rent, or between £20 and £30.

46,889. And the other one?—Between £20 and £30.

46,890. Is the land rouped to drovers?—It is rouped to the highest bidder.

46,891. Who has it just now?—One of them is a small landlord.

46,892. What is his name?—Mr Charles Muir. He has one part of it, but there are some small bits besides; a merchant has another part, and the ground-officer who used to have the farm of Cowl has a part along with a croft.

46,893. Are you here to give evidence about that?—No, My Lord.

46,894. You are just mentioning what you happen to know?—Some of them were speaking about it. Had they known they would have been very anxious to be here to-day. I said you got the chance, and it is a pity you did not take it.

46,895. But you are not interested in that case yourself?—No, not in that case.

PETER PRATT, Drury, Holm (55)—*examined.*

46,896. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

46,897. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The croft has 2 roods of arable but no outrun and no common pasture; old rent 10s. and fair rent 10s.]

46,898. Are you here for yourself individually or as a delegate?—I am along with other three from the same place.

46,899. Were you appointed at a meeting?—I got a call from head-quarters here, for you to appear.

46,900. You appear simply on your own behalf, I presume?—Yes.

46,901. What is it you wish to tell us: have you a desire to get more land?—Yes, I am wanting that, certainly.

46,902. Are you a fisherman?—No, I am a tradesman.

46,903. What trade do you carry on?—A blacksmith chiefly.

46,904. Do you live by your trade and not by your croft?—Chiefly by my trade; the croft would not keep me. To-morrow is the day when the thing is to be decided.

46,905. Who is your landlord?—Mr Sutherland Græme.

46,906. Have you any stock?—Just a small pony.

46,907. Is there anything you wish to say to us in the matter of getting more land?—Nothing particular on this occasion. There is an appeal against us by the landlord.

46,908. You have come here mainly on account of the appeal?—Yes.

46,909. But that is to be heard to-morrow, before the Crofters Commission. We have nothing to do with that to-day.—Of course, I am willing to tell you about the grazing of the district.

46,910. *Mr Lennox, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for Crofters.*—Do you know the Skews?—I know them fine.

46,911. Is that a piece of ground that is mostly all grazing?—Most of it is grazing except a small portion that is cultivated just now.

46,912. How many acres are cultivated?—I believe about 15 to 20.

46,913. Did you hear Mr Esson's evidence about the Skews?—Yes.

46,914. Do you agree with it?—Yes, I do agree with it.

46,915. Do you know the farm of Greenwall?—Yes, I have known it for the last 35 years.

46,916. Is any part of it made out of old crofts?—A good piece of it.

46,917. How many crofts were thrown into the farm?—I could not be perfectly sure of the number myself.

46,918. Give me a rough idea; would there be six?—There were several,—six or eight.

46,919. Are these crofts now about the best part of the farm?—I could not say the best part, but pretty good at any rate.

46,920. Is there a general desire throughout the parish of Holm that the holdings should be enlarged?—All who have small places want that.

46,921. Would you yourself be anxious for an en-

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Peter Pratt.

largement of your existing holding?—Yes, I have been trying to get it enlarged for the last six years.

46,922. Are you one of the applicants for enlargement of holding?—Yes.

46,923. From this same farm of Greenwall?—Yes.

46,924. And your case is to be heard to-morrow on appeal?—Yes.

James Gorn.

JAMES GORN, Towerhill, Holm (62).—*examined.*

46,925. *The Chairman.*—Your croft appears to extend to 15 acres arable, and 1 acre outrun; no common pasture; the old rent was £8 and the fair rent £6, 5s., and there were no arrears when the rent was fixed by the Commission?—That is so.

46,926. Are you here as a delegate?—No, just as an individual.

46,927. Do you carry on a trade apart from your croft?—No.

46,928. Have you a horse or two horses?—One horse.

46,929. And do you plough your 15 acres in spring with a neighbour's horse?—Yes.

46,930. No doubt you lend him your horse in return?—Yes.

46,931. Do you desire more land?—I am an applicant for more land.

46,932. And that application falls to be disposed of elsewhere?—Yes.

46,933. *Mr Lennox, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for Crofters.*—You have heard the evidence of Mr Esson about the Skews?—I am well acquainted with the Skews.

46,934. Did you hear what he said about the Skews?—Yes, it is correct, so far as I understand.

46,935. Would it be possible to make any new holdings out of the Skews?—Quite possible: there have been holdings made out of much worse land.

46,936. Are there any people in the parish who would take advantage of such new holdings?—I am not aware.

46,937. Do you know the farm of Greenwall?—Yes.

46,938. Is a good portion of it made out of old crofts?—Yes, a good portion of it.

46,939. How many crofts were destroyed to make part of this farm?—Seven or eight that I know of.

46,940. Can you give the names of them?—Yes, I think I can name the most of them. There were Lower Bu', Crook, Drury, Drawhill, Barriedale,—I think there was a croft there they called the lighthouse; the croft is certainly there, and I could show the site of it.

46,941. What about Netherbow?—It was a pretty large croft; it kept a pair of horses.

46,942. Is it in the farm of Greenwall?—Yes.

46,943. Would enlargement of holdings do much good to the district if it could be got easily?—Oh, yes.

46,944. Do the crofters in the district live in sufficient proximity to each other to make it easy for them to apply for enlargement five at a time?—There are three of us who march directly with Greenwall farm.

46,945. Would it be easier for a single crofter in Holm to apply for enlargement for himself than to band with four others and apply for enlargement?—I think so.

46,946. Do the crofts lie in such a way that it is difficult to get five together?—There is not another district in the parish where you would get five together but the one I am in.

46,947. So that the other districts are handicapped by want of sufficient numbers to come and get an enlargement of holdings under the present law; is that so?—Decidedly.

46,948. Can you remember when these crofts you named were merged with the farm of Greenwall?—I cannot give the dates, but I remember it all.

46,949. Can you remember when this grazing was taken away from the parish?—I remember, but I am not sure of the date.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

James Gorn.

46,950. Was it a common grazing?—Yes.

46,951. With a hill dyke round it?—Yes, it is all down now, but there was a hill dyke round.

46,952. And the whole grazing was for the benefit of the neighbourhood there?—Yes.

46,953. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Do you know any other parts of the islands besides this district where you live?—I am not acquainted with the islands; I never had any business with them, and I do not know them well.

JAMES CUMMING, Sutherland, Burray (37).—*examined.*

James Cumming.

46,954. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

46,955. Did you apply to the Crofters Commission to have a fair rent fixed?—Yes.

46,956. Who is your landlord?—The Earl of Zetland. [*The Secretary.*—The area of the croft is 24 acres arable, 1 acre 3 roods 20 poles outrun; no common pasture. The old rent was £15, and the fair rent £10, 10s. Arrears were £62, 10s., whereof £32, 10s. were cancelled, and £30 ordered to be paid in three instalments of £10 each.]

46,957. Are you here as a delegate?—No.

46,958. Just as an individual?—Yes.

46,959. What is it you wish to lay before us?—About a piece of pasture at the end of our land that we were deprived of 45 or 46 years ago.

46,960. Who was in your holding at that time?—My grandfather.

46,961. Do you know the extent of the pasture of which he was deprived?—It might be 6 or 8 acres.

46,962. And is that included in the farm now?—No; it is in with the farm of Westermill.

46,963. Who is the farmer?—Donald Rosie.

46,964. Do you know what rent he pays?—Something like £40, I think.

46,965. You wish to express the desire to get back that grazing?—Yes.

46,966. Were others deprived of grazing at the same time?—Not that I am aware of.

46,967. Was the grazing that you refer to occupied solely by your grandfather?—No, there were two crofters at that time—my grandfather and another crofter—occupied it between them.

46,968. What is his name?—Donald Duncan.

46,969. What you and he desire is to get back that grazing?—Yes.

46,970. Did you apply for enlargement of holdings to the Crofters Commission?—No, not for enlargement of holdings.

46,971. Have you two horses?—Yes.

46,972. And has Duncan a pair of horses also?—Yes.

46,973. Have you a sheep stock?—Yes.

46,974. How many sheep have you?—I have five ewes and ten lambs.

46,975. And has Duncan much the same number?—Something similar.

46,976. You have some cattle also, I suppose?—Yes, three cows and four year-olds and two calves, along with two horses and a foal.

46,977. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Is this grazing which you speak of at Blinkbonny?—I don't know that place.

46,978. Do you know Windhall to the north-west of it, or how does the grazing lie from your place?—It lies west.

46,979. Is it the hill ground?—No, it is a links or rabbit warren at the south of the island.

46,980. Is it between the U.P. Church and the sea?—It is between the U.P. Church and the end of our holdings.

46,981. Then it is in the immediate neighbourhood of the manse?—Yes, it lies between the manse and the end of our land.

46,982. Running along from the manse to your holdings?—Yes, or rather between the school and the end of our ground.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Donald Duncan.

DONALD DUNCAN, Sutherland, Burray (55)—*examined.*

46,983. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

46,984. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The area of the croft is 24 acres 2 roods arable, and 1 acre 2 roods outrun; no common pasture; old rent £15, fair rent £10, 10s., arrears £42, 10s., whereof cancelled £32, 10s., and ordered to be paid £10].

46,985. You heard the evidence given by Cumming, I suppose?—Yes, I remember when the land was taken away. I was a boy of about twelve years of age when the land was squared. At that time Mr Gold was factor.

46,986. And was your father the crofter at the time?—My father had half of the farm at that time, but now each one has his own ground. We had the use of that piece of links for grazing.

46,987. And you wish to put the same view before us as Mr Cumming did about it?—Yes.

46,988. *Mr Gordon.*—Why did you not apply to the Crofters Commission for this ground as an extension of holding?—We did not think there was any use at that time, for there was no provision made for that. [*Mr Lennox.*—Perhaps I might point out that the evidence has already shown that the rent of Westermill is only £40]. [*Witness.*—It is only £33 or £34].

James Cormack.

JAMES CORMACK, Stonecutter, Kirkwall, for Eday (39)—*examined.*

46,989. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No, I am not.

46,990. Are you a merchant? [*Mr Lennox.*—He is a stone cutter, a tradesman in Kirkwall, who has been asked by the Eday crofters to represent them because they cannot get in here. He is a residenter in the town, but a native of Eday].

46,991. You were born in Eday?—Yes.

46,992. To what part of the island do you belong?—South End.

46,993. Was your father a crofter there?—Yes.

46,994. And you now carry on business here?—Yes.

46,995. Were you appointed a delegate by the crofters of Eday?—Yes, I was asked by letter to represent them.

46,996. *Mr Lennox, Agent for Crofters.*—You know the South End of Eday very well?—Yes, I do.

46,997. Is there any land there at present laid down to sheep pasture that the crofters would like to have?—I would think so.

46,998. What land is that?—Part of the farm of Greentoft.

46,999. Would you describe to the Commissioners what part of that farm you refer to?—It is on the west side.

47,000. Is there a large stretch of country there in pasture?—Yes.

47,001. Has there been an application already made for enlargement off Greentoft?—Yes.

47,002. Which was refused by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

47,003. On the ground that it would materially injure the letting value of the farm?—Yes.

47,004. That is from the arable land?—Yes.

47,005. But is any of the pasture land suitable for making crofts out of?—Well, it has been crofts before.

47,006. Were there many crofts on that part?—There were four crofts with houses, and one occupied by a crofter on the other side of the island which there was never a house upon. That made five crofts on the west side, which are now under grazing.

47,007. Is it good enough ground to make into crofts again?—I believe it is just as good as the rest along that side of the island.

47,008. And, of course, it has been improved by lying out so long?—Oh, yes.

47,009. How long is it since those crofts were put into the farm?—I could not say definitely, but I would think about 30 years, or a little over.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

James Cormack.

47,010. Are there any crofts on the south end of Eday where two families live on the one croft,—perhaps the old folk and a married son?—I don't think there are many such.

47,011. Are there any cottars?—No cottars.

47,012. Are there any people there at all who would desire new holdings?—Yes, I believe there are.

47,013. What class of people are they?—For instance, crofters' sons.

47,014. Would they be able to build and stock and fence the new holdings themselves, or would they require assistance for it?—As regards the building, I think they would require help; but, I think, they would be quite able to stock and fence.

47,015. Is there any portion of these grazings that used to be crofters' grazings?—Yes.

47,016. Did the hills there used to be common?—Yes.

47,017. Are they common now?—No.

47,018. What farm do they form part of?—The farms of Greentoft, Skail, and Carrick.

47,019. These are the whole hills of the island?—Yes.

47,020. From the south end to the north end?—Yes, except small portions which are still granted to the crofters.

47,021. But the main part of the hills forms part of these three farms?—Yes.

47,022. And the crofters are not allowed access on them?—No.

47,023. Did they use to graze on them?—Yes.

47,024. All over?—Yes.

47,025. In your recollection?—I just recollect it when I was a boy.

47,026. *Mr Duncan J. Robertson, Agent for General Burroughs.*—I should like to know if there are many crofters at the back of the letter instructing you to appear?—It is just as a general witness that I was asked to appear.

47,027. Was the letter signed by a number?—By James Tulloch, the inspector of poor, who is a crofter himself.

47,028. Have you got the letter?—No.

47,029. Did the letter say there was a meeting held, or anything like that?—No, it did not. [*Mr Lennox.*—I may say that I was in correspondence with this same James Tulloch, and he advised me that this witness was to appear because the Eday people were too busy to come themselves].

47,030. He was one of the men who applied for an enlargement off Greentoft Farm?—Yes, he was one of the men.

John Hay.

JOHN HAY, Waterhall, Sanday (66)—*examined.*

47,031. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter in Sanday?—Yes.

47,032. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

47,033. What estate are you on?—The Earl of Zetland's. [*The Secretary.*—The area of the croft is 7 acres arable and 3 acres 2 roods 9 poles outrun, no common grazing; old rent £2; new rent £2; arrears of rent £3 ordered to be paid].

47,034. Were you appointed a delegate at a meeting of crofters?—Yes.

47,035. Was any other delegate appointed along with yourself?—Yes, Mr David Brown, but he has given it up. There was a meeting called lately, and a neighbour of mine, Mr William Peace, was appointed in his place.

47,036. What views do you wish to lay before us as a delegate?—About the evictions, and an estimate of the quantity of ground that is in what we might call sheep runs.

47,037. There is land that was formerly held by crofters, from which they have been removed and which has now been put into farms?—Yes.

47,038. What farms are these?—I have begun at the

Kirkwall, Orkney.

John Hay.

south end at Stove; there were 17 houses there and a sheep run of 600 acres on Spurness, little or none of which has ever been ploughed.

47,039. The 17 holdings are now incorporated in the farm?—Yes, and if you wish the names of the houses, here they are.

47,040. Just give us the names?—Hangy, Hillhead, Kirkabost, Pier, Gorn, New Gorn, Fastlang, Curse-be-there, Nettletier, Cott, Drush, Hanfinie, Holland's Brae, Grindlay, Garry, Yarrow, Trunesty.

47,041. These are now all in the farm of Stove?—Yes, or mostly all: maybe some of them are past what is now cultivated, but they are within the farm.

47,042. What is the next farm you wish to speak of?—Warsetter.

47,043. Does it include land that once formed part of crofts?—Yes.

47,044. How many?—Fifteen. I can give an estimate of the acreage on the sheep run.

47,045. What estimate do you make?—About 60 acres I think.

47,046. Formerly crofts and now part of the farm?—Well, there was not much of the 60 acres in the crofts, but the crofts were consolidated with the farm.

47,047. Are there any other farms in Sanday that you wish to menton?—Yes: I come now to Backaskaill, where there were eight holdings.

47,048. Can you give us their names?—Tangbrae, Grittle, Leland, Fea, Castlenoble, Hynegruny, Snooanfinie, Lochaber.

47,049. These were all crofters' holdings?—Yes.

47,050. Have you any other farms to tell us about?—Yes, there are some yet; there is West Brough, where six crofts were once situated.

47,051. Have you the names of them?—Yes,—London, Laygar, Parlygo, Leys, Gersty, Cockleha'.

47,052. Are you giving these names from your own knowledge, or from what other people told you?—The whole except Stove from my own knowledge.

47,053. And your own recollection?—Yes. I got the names of the crofts on Stove from an old man, Peter Tulloch, and another.

47,054. Can you give us the names of those in Warsetter?—Yes. Valdabrae, Quarryhouse, Bellrock, Redhouse, Sandytea, Hardha', Sandquoy, Erafea, Sandyhole, Windywa', Wellhouse, Nybster. The last was a considerable farm, paying, I think, £40 of rent.

47,055. Are you giving these names from your own recollection?—Yes, I remember every one of these holdings that I read off the list. I remember seeing the remains of Quoyhouse, because I worked on the same farm, but it has not been inhabited in my time. I knew people who were in it. Then, on Burness there were five crofts,—Parkhouse, Gosaley, Cuvan, Outwall, and East Thrave; and on Traill's estate nine crofts, viz., Basley, Hell, Distyha', Hammerbrake, Waterslap, Dogtuo, Portingale, Howar, Linkshouse, and Geramount.

47,056. Is the desire of the crofters, whom you represent, for new holdings, or for extension of grazings, or for extension of arable land?—I suppose arable land would be the best, because there are some fifty in the place who applied to the Commissioners lately and got none. If we cannot all get the best maybe we will take the worst, but there are some like Valdibrae, he was evicted here two years ago; this is the second crop in the earth since he was evicted. I have a few lines here, if Your Lordship would be pleased to listen to this, we might let you hear something.

47,057. Certainly?—From among these evicted crofters I remember 14 or 15 large fishing boats manned; now, there is only one large fishing boat belonging to the island. There are, however, a number of small fishing boats in the place whose crews are ill-off for want of houses, milk, and so on, and who have not a single foot of ground. A number of these crofters also are ill-off for pasture for their beasts, requiring the greater part of their holding for grain, especially those denied enlargement of holdings, of whom there were about 50. Those too who were lately evicted are greatly in need of some land, some of these families having to dwell in huts scarcely large enough for one person.

47,058. How many are dwelling in huts?—I know one at least; he is before my mind just now. He is the man I spoke of as having been evicted two years ago from Valdibrae.

47,059. He would be behind with his rent, perhaps?—I don't think so; I believe he paid the last copper, as far as I know, but I do not affirm that that is the case.

47,060. How did he come to be removed?—The case was before Your Lordship, and he was somehow declared to be a cottar, and not a crofter.

47,061. Are there many cottars in Sanday?—No.

47,062. Would you say that the island has too many people, considering the land in their occupation?—I think not, seeing it takes the farmers all their time to get enough hands to single their turnips this very season; and the Sanday folks are not so lazy that they would not earn a shilling when they can get the chance.

47,063. But, I understand you to say there is a strong desire among the crofters to get additional arable, or additional grazing as it can be obtained?—Yes, I myself applied before, and did not get it owing to a break among ourselves, and some technical difficulty.

47,064. Are the Sanday crofters well-doing men?—I think so.

47,065. And if they got more land, they would be ready to pay a fair rent for it?—Yes, I certainly think so.

47,066. Do they pay their rents regularly as a rule?—Yes, I believe they do; and I think their cattle fetch on an average nearly as much as the big farmer's cattle.

47,067. They are very good animals?—This year I sold two oxen myself, for which I got £26; and the year before that I sold one for £16.

47,068. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did I understand you to say that there is plenty of employment on the farms for those who wish to work?—I should think it took the farmers all their time this season to get their turnips singled.

47,069. Then, there is plenty of employment for the crofters on the island on these farms if they like to take it?—I think so.

47,070. You also said they were well-doing men throughout the island?—I think, as a rule, they are.

47,071. There is no distress among the crofters there?—I don't know; I would fancy it would take all their thrift to make ends meet.

47,072. But you said the men in the island were well-doing?—I meant that to apply to their laboriousness, they are not idlers; that is what I wished you to understand.

47,073. It generally means that a man is fairly comfortable if you say that he is well-doing?—Well, I think there are a good many who have enough to do to make ends meet.

47,074. Do they want more land in the island because they have a little money laid by and want to extend their farming operations, or is it because they are so ill-off for land, and wish to make a better living by getting more land to cultivate?—I have already stated that I think they work hard, but at the same time they want a bit of land.

47,075. They work hard, and there is plenty of employment on the farm?—Not all the year round, but in the turnip-singling time. They cannot live all the year round on the result of four or five weeks' work.

47,076. But there is more work on the farms besides singling, is there not?—Yes: maybe one or two might get employment at pulling up the turnips in the winter, but that, as a rule, is not for everybody. I told you about the number of men there used to be for the boats, but these men have gone, some to America, and some to Australia, and others have left the island. I could give the names if necessary.

47,077. Were those boats employed in the herring fishing, or in white fishing?—Chiefly herring fishing.

but some in the white fishing. I was about eight years old at the time when I remember seeing 14 or 15 boats at Kettlestoft prosecuting the herring fishing. Some of them went to the white fishing then, and others went later on, but now there is only one big boat. There are a number of small boats, but these fishermen have not a foot of ground. Some that have ground are crofters who have a boat and fish for themselves; but when I say fishermen, I mean men who make fishing their whole employment.

47,078. Is the white fishing as good as it was?—Sometimes, and sometimes not. About New Year time there were a good many haddocks caught, and some cod fish, but that period did not last very long, and then there was a talk about great prices to be had in the south.

47,079. *Mr Munro.*—When the big farmers employ the crofters, how do they pay them; is it in money, or in kind, or by giving them the use of land?—There is no such thing as the use of land, except it might be for a harvest hand getting perhaps a couple of drills of potatoes.

47,080. How do they generally pay them,—is it in money?—Yes, in money.

47,081. At so much per day?—Yes.

47,082. How much?—I think 1s. 3d. a day is the most that turnip-cleaners get.

47,083. For a man?—No, for a woman.

47,084. But how much does a man make?—I should say perhaps 2s.,—I don't know if it be so much as that.

47,085. You would prefer having an extension of land, so that you might occupy your time in cultivating your own croft?—Yes: if I had a big farm it would pay me so much.

47,086. You would prefer to be independent of any employment on a big farm?—Yes.

47,087. *Mr Gordon.*—What part of the farm of Stove were the crofters upon?—Chiefly on the north end.

47,088. Is that the land for which the adjoining crofters applied for an extension of their holdings?—I think so.

47,089. And they did not get it?—No, they did not get it.

47,090. You mentioned the farm of Warsetter; was it there that the crofters got an extension of holdings?—Some of them; some when they were denied it where they asked it, did not take it.

47,091. There is a pretty large portion of that farm, extending apparently to over 200 acres, given off as an extension of holding to certain crofters?—Yes.

47,092. Did any of the Braeswick crofters take that land?—Some did, others would not take it.

47,093. What is the distance between Braeswick and the portion of Warsetter that was given to them?—Only a dyke.

47,094. I think you are talking of Stove: what is the distance from Warsetter?—I could not say; it is more than a mile, but perhaps not two.

47,095. Would it have been a more convenient arrangement had they got the land to which you refer as having been formerly crofting land on the north end of Stove?—Any one would naturally think so; there was only the dyke there separating them.

47,096. You say there was other land on the farm of Warsetter, where there had been crofts, and which you think would still be available for new holdings?—Yes.

47,097. Does that land lie near a place called Nebister?—Yes: Nebister is one of those I named.

47,098. It is one of the old crofts now forming part of the farm of Warsetter?—Yes.

47,099. And does the land you refer to extend down to South Howar?—South Howar is to the west of that.

47,100. There are some crofts at present between Nebister and the farm of Stove, between the public road and the sea?—Yes.

47,101. Now, do these crofts extend down to the sea-side, or are they cut off by the pasture of Stove, or the pasture of Warsetter?—They do not come to the sea-side.

47,102. Do the farms of Stove and Warsetter meet at the sea-side?—Down at the east I think they do. There is a bent links there.

47,103. Now, going on to the farm of Backaskaill; you said there had been some crofts there at one time?—Yes.

47,104. Was that to the north end of the farm, and upon the west side of the public road?—Some at the south and some at the north.

47,105. Were any of them in the neighbourhood of the Bea Loch?—Not just at the Bea Loch.

47,106. Is not the land very poor on both sides of the public road, but especially on the west side next to the north march?—It is only poor, I think, because of the sea-gust. There is a small bit that is very poor.

47,107. There cannot be much sea-gust there: but I saw the land, and examined it carefully, and I consider it is very poor, and in rather bad order?—It was brought in from the heather.

47,108. Do you suggest that a crofter could make a living off land like that?—I would be doubtful.

47,109. I am afraid it is a poor subject. Do you know the south end of Stove,—what might be called the west peninsula?—That is Spurness.

47,110. What sort of land is that?—Middling bad land; some of it fairly good if properly cultivated.

47,111. Do you suppose that a crofter would be inclined to take a holding on such land as that?—There might be some who would be willing to be isolated there.

47,112. Is the Bay of Stove a moderately safe harbour, to which a boat could run in an ordinary gale?—I think so; its entrance is to the south.

47,113. Then, I am afraid it is not a very safe harbour?—From the east would not be so bad.

47,114. Are there any good harbours in the neighbourhood of Stove?—No, there is no good harbour that you could ride in every day.

47,115. Is the harbour of Braeswick a safe harbour?—Not except in easterly or southerly winds.

47,116. I am afraid there are not very good harbours on any part of that island?—The small boats are hauled up.

47,117. Where in the island of Sanday is there a good harbour for herring boats?—Kettletoft used to be a general place; that is where the pier is.

47,118. It would be a little sheltered by the islet of Elsness?—Yes.

47,119. Would you suggest to this Commission the advisability of constructing fishermen's holdings of two or three acres?—I think so; I think there are some who want these holdings; there are some who have not even so much as would keep a cow.

47,120. How many fishermen in Sanday have no holdings, but just a house?—I could not say how many, but I could name some.

47,121. There are a good number?—There are, and some have no other occupation.

47,122. Are there many men in the island of Sanday who would naturally take to the sea as their sole means of livelihood if they had convenient houses near a harbour?—I believe so: they are doing it at present though under difficulties.

47,123. And if these difficulties were removed, you think more would take to it?—Yes.

47,124. Your impression seems to be that upon the farm of Warsetter and the farm of Stove the most suitable ground exists for new holdings?—Yes, I think so. There is land, what you might call sheep-runs, upon most of the farms I have spoken about: West Brough has a good piece of land, about 60 or 70 acres in extent. There is no part of it ploughed, and it is quite isolated from the steading.

47,125. With reference to the land which was given off the farm of Warsetter as an extension of holdings to the Braeswick crofters, would it, in your opinion, have been a greater improvement had they removed some of the Braeswick crofters altogether and planted them on the extension, leaving the crofts for

Kirkwall, Orkney.

John Hay.

the remainder of the Braeswick people?—I suppose it might.

47,126. I would like to get a more definite reply, whether or not you think it would have been better to create some new holdings altogether on the extension from Warsetter, and leave more room for the crofters remaining at Braeswick?—It would be more convenient certainly to have the house on the land, and enough land to support the family.

47,127. *The Chairman.*—I think it right to point out to you that the grounds on which the application for enlargement from Stove farm were objected to were:—(1) that the land applied for was not contiguous or near to the holdings of at least three of the applicants; (2) that the land applied for consisted of the most valuable portion of the farm for growing grain crops, and if granted would cut off the greater portion of the rich loam and clay soil actually necessary for the occupation of the farm; and (lastly) that there was a large and extensive steading, a considerable portion of which would be rendered useless if the land were assigned as applied for, and the letting value of the remainder would thereby be materially damaged. Now, the Crofters Commission, in dealing with these objections, sustained the objection that the ground applied for could not be given off without material damage to the letting value of the remainder of the farm. Was an appeal taken against that judgment?—I do not think so; not to my knowledge.

47,128. There was no appeal taken either by the crofters or by the landlord?—No.

47,129. So that the judgment was acquiesced in?—Most of the crofters fell in with that decision, except three or four.

47,130. *Mr Gordon.*—Is the farm of Stove all under cultivation at present, or is a good part of it laid down to grass?—Six hundred acres is the amount I spoke of, which is just a plain like a links.

47,131. Is there a full stock of cattle on the farm?—I think so; the man is able to keep them.

47,132. But, is the steading fully occupied?—I don't know, but I would think so.

47,133. *Mr Lennox, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for Crofters.*—Is it not the case that this last year farmers could not get at their turnips quickly enough, and were glad of an excuse for hands?—Yes.

47,134. But that does not happen every year at the singling?—Perhaps not so much as this year.

47,135. There was more demand in Sanday this year for labour for singling than usual?—Yes, the weather was such that the turnips came on quicker than they could manage. I also desire to mention the farm of Howe from which there were several removals. The names of the places cleared are:—Inglay, Knockhall, Springwell, Banks, Quire, Duncansbrig, Cockleha', Stumpo, Stainskift, Parkhouse, Tribysquoy, Hillside, Quarryholes, and Mounthooly.

William Peace.

WILLIAM PEACE, Barrowfield, Sanday (62)—*examined*

47,136. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes, I am a crofter, but the Crofters Commission would not take my case up because I was never rented.

47,137. Do you concur in the evidence given by Mr Hay?—Yes. I believe some of the people did not get enlargement of holdings, but there are any amount of applications for new holdings in Sanday, in the parish of Cross.

47,138. How many persons are desirous of obtaining new holdings in that quarter?—You all recollect the Bill that came out lately for small holdings and allotments. Well, there were 34 applications for small holdings sent to the County Council, and they threw the matter over.

47,139. There were 34 persons who wanted to get land in the form of small holdings?—Yes.

47,140. What size of holdings had they in view?—I suppose some thought of 40 or 50 acres, others 10 to 15; I would take 40 or 50 acres myself.

47,141. Can you give us a copy of the application that was made to the County Council?—No. Kirkwall, Orkney.

47,142. Was it in writing?—It was. William Peace.

47,143. And signed by the 34 crofters?—Signed by the 34 crofters.

47,144. I should like to see it. Have these applicants got land at present?—No, I was one of them.

47,145. For the most part those who made application to the County Council were individuals who were without land?—Wholly without land.

47,146. You state yourself as an exception?—I was one of them.

47,147. Are these men who applied to the County Council, fishermen?—No, they are generally farm servants. The applicants also include tradesmen, fishermen, and labourers.

47,148. Where do they live?—They all live in the parish.

47,149. But have they houses of their own, or do they lodge with others?—Some live with other people, and others live on the farms they work on.

47,150. Would they have been prepared to take such holdings and pay a fair rent for them?—I think they were very anxious to do so, but I don't know whether they just wholly understand it or not.

47,151. In the application to the County Council, did they mention where the land was that they desired to get holdings upon?—Yes, I think so, but I am not sure.

47,152. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Is there any considerable area of land in the island suitable for new holdings, which is not now under cultivation?—Yes, any amount. There is the 600 acres in Stove, which is now under sheep; there has only been 100 acres of that cultivated during the last 30 years.

47,153. Where else is there such land?—At Warsetter there are 60 or 70 acres.

47,154. And where else?—About 130 acres in Backaskaill that has not been cultivated, and about 70 acres in the Ness of Brough.

47,155. But, do you consider all that land could be profitably occupied by crofters?—I do; I am willing to take a bit of any that I can get.

47,156. Would you go to Spurness?—Fast, in a minute.

47,157. How would you cultivate it?—I would put it in oats and bere and potatoes and turnips.

47,158. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you know whether the applications to the County Council were for allotments of land connected with the houses presently occupied by the people, or for small holdings, on which the applicants would be prepared to build new houses?—A few of the people down about the pier were for allotments, but a great number were for crofts. The people near the pier wished to get allotments from the farm of Howe, from which fourteen crofters were evicted a few years ago.

47,159. Would they be prepared to build houses on these crofts?—I don't know; I cannot say as to that because it was never mentioned among us.

47,160. But they wanted the land, and most of them are people who have no land at present. Now, did they look for crofts being formed out of large farms, on which they were prepared to build houses?—Yes; they wish the crofts formed out of the large farms, and they are prepared to build the houses.

47,161. You would be prepared to build a house on a new croft that might be formed out of these large farms?—Of course, there was provision in that bill for help to erect houses and get stock, for such as could not do it without assistance.

47,162. Did you think there was provision in the Small Holdings Act for stocking and building?—Yes.

47,163. Is there not just simply help for purchasing the land?—No, I don't believe any of them were for purchasing: they were for renting it.

47,164. They would prefer to rent it, would they?—I think they would all prefer to rent it at a fair rent.

47,165. Do you know what answer was sent to the applicants from the County Council?—I could not say,

but there is a County Councillor from the parish present.

47,166. What answer did you get personally?—We got none.

47,167. When was the application sent in?—About a twelvemonth ago, I suppose.

47,168. And no reply has come from the County Council?—No, they just threw it out because there was no ground available; that was all the notice we got.

47,169. But did you get that notice?—No, there was no reply from the County Council to the application.

47,170. *The Chairman.*—Mr Robertson has been kind enough to hand up the application to the County Council, which is as follows:—

'To the Honourable the County Council of Orkney.

'Gentlemen,—We, the undersigned, residing in the 'parish of Cross, in the island of Sanday, having know-'ledge of the many beneficial Acts of Parliament now in 'force, but more especially one that has recently come 'into operation, and entitled The Small Holdings Bill, 'and, furthermore, that your honourable body has been 'largely entrusted with the administration of the same, 'we do hereby make known to you that there is a 'demand in the foregoing mentioned district for land, 'and that you may not let this communication lie *on 'the table*, but put into operation the powers conferred 'on you by Act of Parliament, and acquaint yourselves 'that this is a reasonable demand, and that you will 'duly do this is our expectation and hope.'

47,171. The application is dated Sanday, 16th January, 1893, and is signed by 33 persons. I suppose your name is among the rest?—Yes, it is.

47,172. You said, I think, that there was no answer given to this, verbally, or in writing?—None that I know of.

47,173. Have you ever heard what was the outcome of it,—whether it was ever submitted to the County Council and considered by them?—It was submitted to the County Council.

47,174. Do you know what they did?—They said they had no land available, and they did nothing with it.

47,175. But the applicants got no answer?—No. I believe not.

47,176. Was there any inquiry held in the island by the County Council as to the demand?—None whatever.

47,177. Did any Committee of the County Council have an interview with a Committee of the applicants concerning this application?—Not that I know of. There is one thing that I would be very glad to say, if Your Lordship would allow me, and that is that I am being kept out from the Crofters Act, and every privilege connected with it, even from voting. I have been at Mr Gould often to rent me but he will not, just in order to keep me from getting the benefits of the Act.

REV. MATTHEW ARMOUR, F.C. Manse, Sanday (74) —*examined.*

47,178. *The Chairman.*—You are Free Church Minister of the island of Sanday?—Yes.

47,179. May I ask how long you have been there?—For forty-six years.

47,180. Are you a native of Sanday?—No, I am a native of Paisley.

47,181. But from your long residence in the island you know a great deal about the crofting population of Sanday?—I have been observing everything going on during that time, and, of course, must have accumulated a good deal of information.

47,182. I understand you wish to make a statement to us?—I was asked by the Lady Parish people last night to represent them, so that you may not think they are indifferent to your visit, and to give you any information in my power on the subject of your inquiry.

47,183. How many crofters are in Lady?—I cannot say. With the exception of about a dozen of big farms all the tenants of lands are crofters.

47,184. What are the views that you desire specially to lay before us with regard to the parish of Lady?—They are very much on the line of Mr Hay's evidence.

47,185. That is to say, there is a desire for additional land?—Oh, decidedly.

47,186. Is that for new holdings, or for extension of grazing, or extension of arable?—Especially where people are cultivating only sand, they are desirous of getting arable land, because, as you have heard or found when you were in the island, they have to sell their animals annually so as not to lose them all. These people are, of course, very anxious to get arable land.

47,187. The land that they have is mainly sand?—Yes.

47,188. And they desire to have what is called in Orkney mouldy land?—Quite so.

47,189. And would be prepared, I suppose, to pay a fair rent for it?—Oh, certainly.

47,190. Where could that land most conveniently be obtained?—I suppose from the neighbouring farms, where they have arable land.

47,191. There are farms from which such land could be got?—I should think so. I got a paper last night stating the number of evictions on the several large farms within the last 70 years, and these evictions are testified to by the oldest and perhaps most venerable man in Orkney: I refer to George Muir of Hillhead. There are, I suppose, about 40 evictions mentioned by him, 25 of which took place on two farms, Newark and Clett. There are other evictions in connection with Hamarabreck testified to by Mr Hay, and also evictions in addition to the 40 on the farm of Howe in my own recollection. I remember when that farm was studded with houses; those that have calculated say that some 17 were sent adrift so as to bring the farm to its present size.

47,192. The land of which these crofts were made up was turned into a grazing farm?—No, turned into arable. My recollection of these large farms in Sanday is this, that once they were very contracted, and they came to be of their present size just by eviction. Around my house in a circle when I came there, there was no cultivation at all: it was supposed, I believe, even by the big farmers that it was incapable of yielding crops. It was a sheep run here and there and everywhere for the little farms.

47,193. And what is the state of it now?—It is all cultivated with the exception of a very little which is under the original heather; and it produces good crops. I think that is the universal fact,—that the farms in Sanday from the one end to the other were originally very small.

47,194. And gradually increased by the crofts being incorporated?—By taking in the crofts.

47,195. What was the state of the common land when you remember first; was it overrun by the crofters' stock as they chose?—There was nothing done with it then.

47,196. When were those commons appropriated or enclosed?—I cannot give you the date, but I know exactly the history of the whole affair, and it was not very creditable or clean; that is the impression that I have.

47,197. Is it your opinion that this enclosure or appropriation of commons had a depressing effect upon the crofters, and narrowed them very much?—At that time there was very little life in the crofters; there was very little life in the big farmers. There was a gradual revival of interest in cultivation, until it came to this late stage. I believe the reason why the land was neglected was that kelp-making was absorbing all their attention.

47,198. And was very profitable at that time?—Very profitable: I believe if they could now get the £20 a ton that it is said they got at one time, they would be

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Rev. Matthew Armour.

very glad to increase the number of people and bring them back to their old houses.

47,199. At that time the occupation of houses was with a view to the kelp industry and not to the cultivation of land, I suppose?—The large farmers had no interest in the cultivation of land. It is not an old story at all, the introduction of the turnip crop. I am told by one who had a hand in introducing the turnip crop that it was very difficult to get them to believe that laying them flat and relieving them was at all the proper way. They thought that they should be hoed up like potatoes, and it was very difficult to make them alter their opinion.

47,200. They understand it now, I daresay, much better?—Oh, yes, as well as any people in Scotland.

47,201. They know a good deal about rotation?—Certainly.

47,202. And they manage their crofts upon the whole very well, I daresay?—Admirably. It used to be the idea that big farmers were required in order to teach the little ones how to cultivate their land; but they don't need any such training as that: they are now as well up in cultivating the land as the big farmers themselves. If you go into a small patch, say a garden, you will find that it is better cultivated than a large district of land, and that, of course, is in favour of increasing the land that they have got,—instituting new small farms.

47,203. Would you be in favour of forming farms of a self-sustaining kind, or fishermen's holdings?—Family farms, keeping the family at home, and not enforcing emigration.

47,204. You would have a farm large enough to enable a man to live in decency with his wife and family without outside labour?—Yes, exactly. There is nothing in the shape of fishing now at all.

47,205. There is no fishing industry?—No, only one or two that are obliged to go, and these are the persons who want to get clear of the sea and settle on the land in moderate-sized farms. I am interested in family farms, as it would prevent some of the emigration, and also for the sake of the lairds, who would get increased rents for the land.

47,206. *Mr Maccallum.*—We have had abundant evidence of the desire on the part of the crofters to get an enlargement. Now can you tell us whether the proprietors have done anything at all to accommodate the crofters in that way? Have they been giving extensions to them?—I think they have been greatly opposed to touching the big farms,—a very mistaken notion, and one which has had the result of impoverishing themselves.

47,207. And that in face of the fact that the crofters cultivate their holdings quite as well as the big farms?—Better, because they take more pains.

47,208. You think that they take more out of the land than the large farmers besides the family that is kept on the holding itself? They keep more people on the holding and they are able to produce more out of the land?—Considering the quality, which is always inferior because they made the soil in most cases when they were driven from where they had soil.

47,209. So you think that what is required is some Act to be passed that would entitle these people to get holdings out of the large farms?—Exactly.

47,210. You think that the proprietors will not meet the needs of the people?—I think that they are wrong,—that they are standing in their own light.

47,211. We have also had evidence to-day that there is a desire for the formation of new holdings; we have had before us the application that was sent to the County Council?—Yes.

47,212. Can you tell us anything about the consideration which was given to that application by the County Council?—I, of course, was present, and overheard the discussion of it, and, I think, I am right in saying that it was this: the decision they arrived at when the Committee gave in their report was that that Act was not applicable to Orkney. I think that was the brief way of deciding the whole matter, but, of course, Mr Robertson's Minute of Council will be able to say exactly whether I am correct or not. That is my impression.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Rev. Matthew Armour.

47,213. You are a member of the County Council?—Yes.

47,214. And you think they came to the decision that the Act did not apply to Orkney?—The Act, of course, as you all know, has nothing compulsory in it, and consequently to enter upon negotiations to get it applied would be just something endless; it is no use until you get the Act corrected.

47,215. But did the Committee that was appointed by the County Council hold any inquiry in the island itself as to the desire of the people?—I apprehend not: it was just laid aside.

47,216. The Act was thought to be unworkable and unsuited?—I should suppose our friends did not wish an Act of that sort; they had no sympathy with anything of that sort.

47,217. *Mr Munro.*—Speaking on the question of evictions, have any evictions taken place in Sanday during your 46 years' ministry there?—Oh, many; the whole of Howe was cleared out. I used to visit the people, and they were sent adrift everywhere.

47,218. Can you tell us what the circumstances and condition of the people were before the evictions took place?—They were excellent people, venerated by all.

47,219. And in fairly comfortable circumstances?—Contented, only wishing to work hard, early and late, so as to provide for their families.

47,220. Can you tell us anything of the circumstances under which they were evicted?—This craze for big farms, nothing else; clear them out. I may mention that the tenant at the time was evicted because he would not take part in evicting the people he so highly respected. A tenant was got who was willing to do the work.

47,221. And no consideration was paid to the claims of the crofters themselves when they were evicted?—I don't think they ever got a farthing,

47,222. Do you happen to know whether they ever got any compensation for the buildings which they had on their holdings when they were evicted?—I think not.

47,223. Where were they sent to?—They landed in several places, some about Firth that were evicted from Howe; and in other places, wherever they could get an opening.

47,224. And some of them, I suppose, were sent to the sandy soil of which you have spoken?—None of these were sent to any soil of that sort, or any soil whatever.

47,225. They were evicted, and left to provide for themselves?—Just to march; they had to go out of the island, generally. Old people perhaps remained, one or two, but they never got any holdings.

47,226. During your 46 years' residence on the island you must be very familiar with the wants and wishes of the people as regards obtaining more land?—Certainly.

47,227. Is there a very strong desire amongst them that they should get an extension of their holdings?—Yes, a very strong desire. The extension given us lately by the Crofters Commission has worked beautifully.

47,228. Which farm was that?—In connection with Elsness: it put a different spirit and a different heart into the people, and I see them improving in every shape.

47,229. Have you any hope whatever that the landlords, if they were approached and asked for more land, would grant the wishes of the people?—They have an idea, as was brought out in the case of Stove farm, that extensions would injure the letting value of the remainder, which, to my mind, is a simple piece of nonsense.

47,230. The landlords have that idea?—Yes, and that has been too much given in to as something substantial. I believe it is nothing of the sort.

47,231. But my question is, do you think that the landlords would or would not give more land to the crofters if they were approached for that purpose?—

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Rev. Matthew Armour.

My impression, speaking honestly, because I always try to do so, is that they have no heart to do anything of the sort: they have no heart to negotiate in any quiet calm reasonable way. At least that has been the case hitherto: they may be more ready now, after the visit of this Commission.

47,231A. The landlords have no heart to consider the claims of the crofters for more land?—I do not think they would ever think of such a thing.

47,232. So that your only hope lies in the direction of amending the laws?—Exactly so.

47,233. And compelling them to give more land to the crofters?—Yes. As the Bishop of Ripon said the other day,—and he is a very competent judge and a very able man—from all he sees and from all he knows as the key to the prosperity of rural parts and parishes, the people must have the land restored to them that was taken from them. Instead of inundating towns with paupers, as has been the custom, send the people back to their former places where they lived contentedly and comfortably.

47,234. Is there any sort of bitter feeling amongst the crofters that at present they are being unjustly treated by the landlords?—I don't believe there is any bitter feeling in a single crofter, if he is properly handled; but, of course, he is a man, and if you injure him he is exasperated, as you would be.

47,235. You know something of the operation of the Crofters Act in this island?—Yes, I do.

47,236. Have they derived some benefit from it?—A great benefit.

47,237. They have improved their houses, I suppose, under it?—Give them time, and they will make these little houses of theirs beautiful places.

47,237A. If they got an extension of holdings, would they be able to pursue a better system of cropping than the present?—The system is as perfect as the best requirements.

47,238. Even under the present disadvantageous conditions of occupancy?—Quite. If they did not crop properly they would be liable to be put out; it would be a contravention of the Act, you know.

47,239. *Mr Gordon.*—You are aware that this Commission is only authorised to report on what are practically lands under grazing. Now, a good part of the land to which you have referred is, I think, under cultivation?—Well, there is a good deal of available grazing on the farm of Brough and other places.

47,240. For instance, that farm of Howe,—there is not much grazing land upon it; and there is not very much, I think, upon the other portions of Clett and Newark; they are mostly arable, are they not?—But it is only lately that they were arable; the Plain of Fidge was just a square never ploughed at all.

47,241. Is that upon the farm of Newark?—Between Newark and Cleat.

47,242. It was formerly pasture land?—Why, it was just an open unoccupied level plain, with a few sheep in summer-time.

47,243. It is sandy ground, is it not?—Yes.

47,244. Is there any land upon the farm of Howe that you think could be profitably cultivated, which is not under cultivation at this moment?—There is part of it not under cultivation, meantime.

47,245. Is it not rather wet?—Not particularly wet: it could be drained a bit.

47,246. It would require drainage?—In some parts.

47,247. Have you anything to suggest with regard to that piece of pasture land lying to the south of Nebister, partly in Warseter Farm and partly in Stove?—You refer to the links?

47,248. Yes: they are not suitable for cultivation, are they?—It is wonderful what you could do if you were allowed. I don't think it is being used to advantage; it is only a temptation to any that would like to have a rabbit there.

47,249. But it is rather a poor subject for arable land?—It is wonderful how it would improve if you levelled it.

47,250. The difficulty in Sanday, I think, is to find land that comes under our cognisance, of any consequence?—Possibly; your Commission may be more applicable to the Highland glens where the clearances were carried out.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Rev. Matthew Armour.

47,251. Was there any proposal or application made to the Crofters Commission for extension of holdings in connection with the farms of Cleat and Newark?—I can scarcely remember; yes, I believe there was an application from the North Hill people for land from Cleat.

47,252. Does the farm of Cleat bound with the land of the North Hill crofters?—Yes.

47,253. On the west side?—Yes. You would notice no doubt in leaving Calf Sound with your steamer and coming round to Kettletoft, that it is just desert; you saw no population round there, and why? Just because it has not been put to the use that your Commission is wishing to put such neglected land to.

47,254. I suppose the largest extent of land, which was at one time arable and is now under grass, is upon the farm of Stove?—Mr Francis Mackenzie did a great deal in paving the way for cultivating all round that neglected land.

47,255. As a matter of fact, he did cultivate it, I think?—Yes, he ploughed it and drained it and left it in a far better condition; indeed, it was a perfect wilderness before Mr Mackenzie put out his wealth on it.

47,256. And, do you consider that any portion of the south end of the farm would be suitable for new holdings?—I think so; it would be nice to see houses there.

47,257. It would be nice enough for outsiders, but, do you think it would be suitable for crofters?—They, as judges, say it would.

47,258. The great drawback in that end of the island altogether is the want of harbours. You cannot combine fishing and farming at all?—I don't approve of combining these two at all.

47,259. You prefer a tillage population?—Certainly.

47,260. *The Chairman.*—You are quite correct in stating that there was an application to the Crofters Commission for enlargement from the farm of Cleat, and also an application for enlargement from the farm of Newark; but in each of these cases the application was refused because the land was held under lease entered into prior to the commencement of the Crofters Act and then still current?—That was a great hindrance in other cases.

47,261. And on that account and from the provisions of the Act, the application was refused?—Yes: you could not do otherwise; they understood that.

47,262. There was one other application, which was granted, the park of Hobbister, do you remember it?—Yes.

47,263. In your opinion, has that been of advantage to the people who got the land?—Of great advantage. Every such thing is an advantage

JAMES LESLIE, Crofter, Westray (44)—*examined.* Ja

47,264. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

47,265. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes, I am here as a delegate for some grazing on the hill.

47,266. What estate are you on?—The Earl of Zetland's.

47,267. What part of the island is your holding upon?—The south side of the island. [*The Secretary.*—The croft extends to 38 acres 2 roods arable, and 11 acres 2 roods outrun, no common pasture; old rent £20, new rent £13, 10s.; arrears £50, of which £18 were cancelled and £32 ordered to be paid].

47,268. Were you appointed a delegate at a meeting in Westray?—Yes.

47,269. Do you represent the whole of the Westray crofters?—No, only the west side district and a portion of the south end of Fittyhill.

47,270. You were going to speak about grazing?—Yes, there are fourteen crofters desiring to have liberty to graze on the south end of Fittyhill.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

James Leslie.

47,271. What is the name of the farm?—Mr Brims, Solicitor, Thurso, is the trustee on the estate of Kirbost.

47,272. Is it occupied by a farmer?—It is let to William Scott, Tuquoy, at present.

47,273. Scott has this as an outlying grazing?—Yes.

47,274. And the crofters whom you represent desire to have a right of grazing over that land called Fittyhill?—Yes.

47,275. They have no such right at present?—No.

47,276. It is exclusively occupied, I suppose, by stock belonging to Scott?—Yes.

47,277. Was that land formerly in possession of crofters?—Yes.

47,278. Do you remember that yourself?—Yes.

47,279. When did he lease it?—Thirty-one or thirty-two years ago: I kept stock upon it myself.

47,280. Does it lie convenient to those crofters whom you represent?—Yes, it lies along their march.

47,281. What is the name of their land?—Skaehill and Fittyhill; the whole of it is occupied by Scott.

47,282. Have these crofters that you appear for any grazing at present?—No, they keep inside the hill dyke.

47,283. Have they sheep stock?—Yes.

47,284. Do they want to have more?—They want to have more, and liberty of cattle.

47,285. What stock have you yourself?—I have three ewes and five lambs.

47,286. Any cattle?—I have eight cattle, and two horses and a foal.

47,287. How many cows have you?—Three.

47,288. And the rest of your cattle are young animals?—Yes.

47,289. *Mr Gordon.*—That is not a very good hill, is it?—The south end is not so bad for grazing.

47,290. The east side appeared to me to be the best. Were any of your neighbours offered that hill before it was let to Mr Scott?—The people to the south of the hill were offered it before Mr Scott got it.

47,291. Are these the people who sent you here as a delegate?—Not altogether; there are three besides.

47,292. Why did they not take it?—I don't know.

47,293. Were you one of those who were offered it?—No.

47,294. Did you ever apply for it?—No.

47,295. Why did you not apply for it?—Because I had not a chance at that time; it was only the Kirbist Estate who had the chance.

47,296. You are not on that estate?—No.

47,297. Is Tuquoy on that estate?—No, it is an estate by itself.

47,298. And the crofters who are now anxious to get this hill are situated between the hill and the farm of Tuquoy?—They are just down at the Fittyhill, at the south end of it.

47,299. What is the present rent of the hill?—I don't know. [*Mr Drever.*—I think this hill was offered the first time the Crofters Commission was here by the factor to the crofters, but they would not take it].

47,300. *Mr Gordon.*—Did they offer the whole of the hill, or only a part of it? [*Mr Drever*].—I don't know; I was not interested.

47,301. I am afraid it was only the rocky side that was offered to them? [*Mr Drever*].—I think not.

47,302. That is the information I got on the ground. However, I believe the crofters were offered the whole ground, not through the Crofters Commission but in another way, and they did not take it? [*Witness*].—They got the offer of the Kirbist part, but not the whole. The other part belongs to the Earl of Zetland.

47,303. Whereabouts does the march between Kirbist and the Earl of Zetland come in?—Right at the top of the hill.

47,304. There is a farm called Gossiby, is that on the Zetland Estate?—No, it is on Kirbist.

47,305. What is the nearest farm on the Zetland Estate to the ground of Fittyhill?—The farm of Powdykes.

47,306. On what estate is the small farm of Madbea?—It is further down.

47,307. It is to the north of Powdykes?—No, to the east.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

James Leslie.

47,308. What estate is it upon?—Upon the Earl of Zetland's.

47,309. And Tirlot?—On Tuquoy's Estate.

47,310. Then, the march between the two estates must be between Tirlot and Madbea?—Yes.

47,311. And the march runs straight up to the summit of the hill from that point?—Yes, right up to the summit.

47,312. But the ground which you and the other parties whom you represent apply for is on both sides of that march?—Both sides.

47,313. How would you propose to use it?—It is used at present.

47,314. For cattle by Mr Scott?—No, it is used for sheep, he has about 200 ewes and lambs, and there are a few cattle, I suppose, sometimes.

47,315. Would the crofters or the small tenants round the south end propose to use it as a sheep grazing?—For sheep and cattle and horses.

47,316. You would use it just in proportion to your holdings, or would you use it as a club?—As a club, I suppose.

47,317. Have you any experience of club-farming there at all?—No. They used to have the hill together and use it in the same way.

47,318. Each man would put on his own stock?—Yes.

William Pratt.

WILLIAM PRATT, Brachead, St. Andrews (64)—*examined*

47,319. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

47,320. Was your croft dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

47,321. Whereabouts is your holding?—In the parish of St. Andrews, on the mainland, to the north-east of Holm.

47,322. I see you have 34 acres arable and 2 roods of outrun, but no common grazing; the old rent was £9 and the new rent £6, 10s.; of arrears amounting to £22, £15, 10s. were cancelled and £6, 10s. ordered to be paid. Are you here as a delegate, or to represent your own individual views?—My own views.

47,323. What is it you wish to say?—It is about the hill grazing at the Moss of the Skews, or the Greenclay, or the Stirlingbraes, these are different names for the same place.

47,324. Was that land formerly in occupation of crofters?—Yes.

47,325. Do you remember that?—I do; it is just down there where the Holm people were explaining.

47,326. *Mr Lennox, Solicitor, Kirkwall, Agent for the Crofters.*—Did you hear what David Esson and the other Holm man said about the Skews?—I did.

47,327. Do you agree with them?—Altogether.

47,328. Is it about the Skews that you were wanting to speak?—Yes.

47,329. And for the same purpose?—Yes, for pasture. I paid Mr Heddle for a number of years, and now since the Crofters Act was passed I never paid him anything and he did not ask anything.

47,330. *The Chairman.*—What you desire to represent, I think, you agree, has been fully set before us by the previous witness, Esson?—It is just the same; I think we have a claim.

47,331. For more grazing?—For grazing, if it would be agreeable.

Duncan John Robertson.

DUNCAN JOHN ROBERTSON, Solicitor, Kirkwall (34)—*examined.*

47,332. *The Chairman.*—You are agent for some estates, I think?—I am factor and agent for General Burroughs, and it is with regard to the Rousay Estate that I wish to make a short statement: I have no instructions to appear for any other estate before this Commission.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Duncan John Robertson.

47,333. Is your statement in writing?—No, I merely wish to answer something which has been said here to-day about the crofts in Quandale. These form the only piece of ground now in the farm of Westness which was formerly in crofts. Originally, the crofters were brought there in the days of kelp-making as kelp-workers; and so long as kelp paid they worked there and were a very contented people. After the kelp ceased to pay and kelp-making was given up in Rousay, in the time of the present proprietor's predecessor, (his granduncle, to whom he succeeded), these men fell into arrear of rent. They could not pay up, and when asked the reason they said that now the kelp had failed, their land was so much damaged by sea-gust that it was impossible for them to make their rents out of it. The proprietor then offered them other holdings; he built cottages in Frotoft. A number of them were removed there, and others to Sourin. In fact, all of them who so desired got holdings in other parts of the island. I would also like to say that I have acted as agent for General Burroughs for six years and as his factor for over four, and have seen a good deal of the people on the island, and I have never seen any sign or symptom of that congestion, or great distress, or poverty to which allusion has been made. The tenants pay their rents with more punctuality and with less arrears than in any other estate that I have to do with. There have been no evictions since I have had anything to do with the estate. One man was last year made bankrupt because he could not pay his rent, but we gave him a smaller croft on the island. The proprietor was selling off some of the stock on his Home Farm, and this man sent some of his own stock over there to be sold to meet the rent that was due; and we put the man on another croft. He is one of the few men on the island who go to the herring-fishing.

There is another matter to which I can speak as County Clerk, and that is with regard to the application from Sanday. When the County Council first dealt with the Small Holdings Act,—I forget the exact wording of the Act, but, I think, it is that every County Council should appoint a Committee to inquire whether the Act is suitable to the circumstances of their special county. [*Mr Maccallum.*—Is it not to inquire whether there is a sufficient demand for land]. To warrant it being applied to the county, I think. There was a remit made by the County Council to a Committee to report as to whether the Act should be made applicable to this county. The remit was made at a full meeting of the Council,—I cannot give you the names of the members who composed it, but it was a considerable Committee and a representative Committee; and the only application that came in was this one from Sanday. They waited for, I think, six months so as to give full time to let other people apply. There were gentlemen on the Committee who were well acquainted with the circumstances of the island, and seeing that there were no other applications they thought it was unnecessary to make any inquiry, and they reported accordingly. At the meeting of the Council to which Mr Armour referred the report of the Committee was almost unanimously adopted, I think Mr Armour alone dissenting.

47,334-35. Is it your view that it rests with the County Council to say whether that Act should apply to the County of Orkney or not?—I read the Act so.

47,336. Which section?—I have not the Act before me; I have not had occasion to look into the matter for some time.

47,337. In coming to that result, the Committee of the County Council proceeded upon a particular section of the Act, did they not?—So far as I remember, they did, but it was more than a year ago, so that I cannot tell you very particularly the grounds of their decision.

47,338. Did they not think it necessary before coming to that conclusion to have some interview with the applicants, and see exactly what they were wishing?—No, they thought it was not necessary, from what they knew of the applicants, and of the land in Sanday.

47,339. Did they send any reply to the application?—Yes, there was a reply sent,—I forget to whom, but it was acknowledged.

47,340. A reply in writing?—Yes, in writing.

47,341. That is not the impression which prevails?—Well, I may say that the petition came in without any letter, and it was uncertain to whom to address it; it was sent to one of the signatories.

47,342. The natural course would be to send it to the first signatory to the application?—I think that is what was done.

47,343. *Mr Maccallum.*—Was the decision of the County Council communicated to the first signatory to the application?—They were written to, at all events, I cannot recollect the details.

47,344. But, do you know, as a fact, whether the decision of the County Council was communicated to them?—I cannot say; I know it was sent to the local newspapers to be published.

47,345. If such a communication was sent, by whom did it fall to be sent?—I sent it.

47,346. Then, do you remember sending it?—I remember sending an answer, but whether it was before or after the decision of the Committee I could not say.

47,347. You could not communicate the decision before it was come to?—It may have been acknowledging receipt of the petition.

47,348. But you do not remember sending any final reply to the application?—I could not say whether I did or not; I think it is most likely that I did, but I am not positive.

47,349. *The Chairman.*—Can you show us the section of the Act if I hand you the Act of Parliament?—I think I probably could. (*Peruses print*). This is the Allotments Act; it was the Small Holdings Act that was dealt with. (*Reads*):—'If the Council of any county 'are of opinion that there is such a demand for small 'holdings in their county as justifies them in putting 'into operation this part of this Act, the Council may, 'subject to the provisions of this Act, acquire any suitable 'land for the purpose of providing small holdings for 'persons who desire to buy, and will themselves culti-'vate the holdings' or they have power to lease.

47,350. What section is that?—Section I.

47,351. And, is it on these words that you have read that the County Council came to the conclusion that the Act did not apply to Orkney, or that it should not apply to Orkney?—Yes,—that it was left to them to decide whether it was or not.

47,352. Don't you think there was a demand from Sanday such as would justify putting the Act into operation?—That is a matter for the Council to decide. I may say that I had a correspondence with Sir George Trevelyan on this very subject lately. About a month ago, he wrote me asking whether there was any inquiry, and I wrote answering him, telling him what had been done.

47,353. *Mr Maccallum.*—So they decided the matter without any inquiry?—Without any inquiry. There is a provision, I think, at the end of the Act as to inquiries. Then, there is another section in the Act on which they went in coming to their decision:—'Any County 'Council may, and every County Council not being a 'Council of a County borough, shall appoint a Com-'mittee to consider whether the circumstances of the 'County justify the Council in putting into operation 'this Part of this Act.' That is Section V., and that taken in conjunction with Section I. is what they proceeded on.

47,354. Did they come to the conclusion they did, without any communication with the applicants themselves?—Yes, they came to the conclusion that there was not a sufficient demand.

47,355. Without making any inquiry, or hearing any evidence?—They made no inquiry, because they were already pretty well acquainted with the circumstances.

47,356. But was it not the duty of that Committee to make inquiry?—That is what I cannot say.

47,357. *The Chairman.*—But Mr Armour, as I understand, is the representative of Sanday in the County Council?—Yes.

47,358. And his view was in favour of the application receiving some consideration and attention?—That was after the Committee had reported. His view was that the report should not be adopted.

47,359. But so far as he may be taken to represent the views of those in Sanday, his opinion was that the Act should be put in force?—I cannot say positively, but so far as my recollection goes I think there was minuted a protest by him against the otherwise unanimous decision of the Council.

47,360. So far as his views went he was in favour of the Act being adopted?—I think so, as far as I remember.

47,361. But the County Council was of opinion that there was no demand?—Yes, no sufficient demand. Then, there is the other provision 'Any one or more 'County electors may present a petition to the Council 'of their county alleging that there is a demand for 'small holdings in the county, and praying that this 'Part of this Act may be put in operation, and there-'upon the petition shall be referred to the Committee 'appointed under this section, who, on being satisfied 'that the petition is presented in good faith and on 'reasonable grounds, shall forthwith cause an inquiry 'into the circumstances to be made, and shall report 'the result to the Council.'

47,362. *Mr Maccallum.*—Was that taken into consideration by the Committee?—Yes, the Committee had the whole Act under consideration.

47,363. But they did not make the inquiry that is required?—They did not; they thought they had sufficient information already.

47,364. But that Act states that they are to make inquiry?—Well, of course, I am not here to defend them; I am merely telling you the steps they took.

47,365. But the Committee failed to make the inquiry contemplated in the Act?—I know that they made no inquiry beyond inquiring of their own members who knew the circumstances.

47,366. *The Chairman.*—There was a good deal said about the difficulty of getting stones in Rousay?—Yes.

47,367. I suppose we may take it that a strong feeling exists on that matter?—I believe there is a considerable feeling.

47,368. It is the fact, I suppose, that there are stones there suitable for building purposes in the island easily accessible to crofters if they got leave to take them?—I presume there are; in fact, I know there are.

47,369. How many crofters are interdicted at present?—I think there has been only one interdict. There were two actions taken at the same time, as a sort of test case.

47,370. *Mr Munro.*—Coming to the practical portion of our inquiry to-day, are you here to say that there is no land in the island of Rousay at present under grazing which crofters could profitably cultivate?—Well, I believe not. The Quandale land is the best in the island, and what was formerly under cultivation the crofters could not pay rent for, owing to its being so much exposed to sea-gust.

47,371. We have seen a considerable portion of the island ourselves. Do you think that none of it could be profitably occupied?—I can hardly judge; I am not a practical agriculturist.

47,372. Supposing you failed to find one tenant say for the farm of Westness or Quandale, would you not let that to crofters?—I cannot speak about what the proprietor might do. I have no doubt the proprietor might be willing to do that, but the difficulty would be to find the buildings, and also there would be the question what to do with the large buildings already erected.

47,373. But, supposing the crofters themselves could erect the necessary buildings and equip their little farms, would you then be prepared to allow them to have it?—Even then, the difficulty is that the proprietor may be called upon at any time to give compensation to the crofters for such buildings, and he may find himself swamped with that and other burdens. I have known several cases of that under the Crofters Act even. Two or three cases of compensation coming at once might swamp the proprietor altogether.

47,374. If the crofters applied to the proprietor, would he give them any land voluntarily?—No, I don't think he would; and for the reason I have stated, principally.

47,375. The reason that he might be called upon to give compensation for any buildings erected?—That it would cost a great deal of money, and that he would lose a great deal of money already laid down in making one large farm.

47,376. So that the only hope for the crofters on General Burroughs's estate is to acquire compulsory powers of getting access to the land?—I should say it is the same with almost every proprietor, unless he happened to be rich enough to lay out the money required. If he is sufficiently rich to erect buildings all over his property, it might possibly pay him in that case.

47,377. But we have heard it stated over and over again by crofters that they were perfectly prepared to erect their own buildings?—The Rousay crofters, I think, told you that they could not do so.

47,378. So that is the chief objection to dividing the land amongst the crofters?—I never proposed such a thing,—I have not spoken of it or suggested it to General Burroughs, but I know that would be a strong objection, an objection which would at once occur to himself.

47,379. *Mr Gordon.*—With reference to this Quandale district, you say that it was owing to the failure of the kelp industry that these people were unable to pay their rents?—Yes.

47,380. Is that shore a proper one for kelp?—It does not look a very good kelp shore, but I believe there was a very great deal of kelp manufactured there at one time.

47,381. Where would they get the ware?—I cannot tell you, but I know they did.

47,382. It appeared to me that there was not a single yard of that shore where a man could gather seaware with safety?—It does not look like it, but I know they did make kelp there.

47,383. I am bound to say that I do not see where they made kelp at Quandale?—But I can show you the kilns where they used to manufacture the kelp.

47,384. They could not take it up the face of the rocks?—In many cases they do.

47,385. Where?—In parts of Westray, on the west side.

47,386. But they require more than that, they require a sort of flat shore for drying it?—They dry it on the grass, not on the shore.

47,387. Do you know that part of the country well?—Fairly well; I have been there two or three times every year.

47,388. Do you know Orkney pretty well?—Yes.

47,389. Do you know in any other part of Orkney lands that are so suitable for crofters as Quandale?—I don't know that I should say it is suitable for crofters' holdings. I know no other large grazing farm which might be cut up so easily, but whether it would be suitable for holdings or not I cannot say.

47,390. But, as regards appearance, would you think it suitable?—I see the land lies there, and could be easily cut up.

47,391. It could be easily reclaimed?—I don't know as to that, at all.

47,392. There are a good many old buildings there too, which might possibly either be repaired or used as materials for reconstructing dwelling-houses?—There might be some stones, but they are mostly rotten or crumbling, I think; and they are nothing but stones.

47,393. You cannot say anything about the land, whether it is suitable?—No, I don't pretend to be a farmer or a judge of land.

47,394. *The Chairman.*—How many farms are on Rousay that are above the crofter limit of £30?—There are six in Veira, and nineteen in Rousay.

47,395. All these are under your management as factor?—Yes.

47,396. How many of these are in the proprietor's hands at present?—None. There was one in Veira, but it was let the other day.

47,397. Is the farm of Westness let?—There are some which fell vacant at Martinmas which are not let, but there are inquirers and offerers for them all.

47,398. There are none which have been on his hands for some time?—No, he has not had any in his hands except the Home Farm, which was only let last year for the first time.

47,399. And are all these let on written lease?—All these, I think, are let on written lease.

47,400. For terms of years?—For terms of years. There are three or four which fall out at Martinmas and which are advertised just now. With regard to that, I may say that there have been farms that would have suited crofters who desired extension of holdings in Rousay, vacant during the last two or three years, but in no case have crofters offered for them so far as I remember, and in these cases the tenants have come from other islands.

47,401. Were they offered to crofters?—They were advertised: they were not offered to anyone in particular, but offers were invited, and I have given every one equal advantage to inquire about them.

47,402. Has General Burroughs considered at all this question of the breaking up of moderately-sized farms and dividing them into holdings?—Not so far as I am aware.

47,403. Would he be prepared to consider favourably any proposal of that sort from responsible crofters?—I have never suggested it to him, or heard him talk of such a thing.

47,404. That has not been under consideration?—No. There is another thing that I might add: several crofts have fallen vacant, and in no case have any crofters asked to have them distributed among the neighbouring crofts. Last year none of the families who were living two in a house applied for any of the crofts that were vacant. There was one case where a crofter took a large farm. He had had his rent reduced by the Crofters Commission, and in about a month afterwards he applied for a farm of £90 of rent, and his old croft was let a few days after for a little more than the original rent, so that the reduction given by the Crofters Commission only lasted for a month, and then we had a higher rent from the next tenant.

47,405. That was by private bargain?—By private bargain.

47,406. Does your knowledge of Rousay only extend back for six years?—Well, I have been on the island before, but I have been intimately acquainted with it for only six years or so.

47,407. Is the usual term of lease 19 years?—Yes, but in the case of the smaller farms a good many of them have been let for seven years, the same period as the crofters' holding under the Act.

47,408. How long has the island been in the possession of General Burroughs and his predecessor?—I am afraid I cannot tell you that; his grand-uncle did not buy it in one property; he bought one part from the Earl of Zetland and another from Mr Baikie and another from Mr Traill.

47,409. And now he is proprietor of the whole?—Of almost the whole; there is a small property on the south side of the island.

47,410. *Mr Maccallum.*—You have had a good deal of experience in letting farms: do you find that there is any difficulty in letting those of moderate size?—No, there are plenty of people wanting them. During the last year or two there has been a little difference between the ideas of the proprietor and those of the tenants as to what the rents should be, but I have never failed to let a farm here.

47,411. Is there more inquiry for a moderately-sized farm than for a very large farm?—Yes, I think a farm with a rent of £70 to £100 lets best,—better even than the smaller holdings.

47,412. Then, with regard to this land at Quandale, you wish to put right, I think, the evidence we got in regard to that, and I think you say that your information is that the people who were settled there were sent in order to make kelp?—I don't know whether they were sent or whether they came there, but they were there as kelp-makers.

47,413. Is there anything peculiar in that? Did not crofters generally make kelp?—I believe so: I merely say that when the kelp failed, they said they could no longer pay their rents, because their lands were destroyed by sea-gust.

47,414. That applies to other places as well?—Yes, but it was on account of their complaining of the sea-gust that the land was thrown into pasture.

47,415. Did they throw their land into pasture?—No, but they were leaving for other parts of the island, and this was thrown into pasture because they complained that it could not pay as crofts.

47,416. Was a kelp rent put upon them,—a rent which they could not take out of the land, but which they were expected to take out of their labour?—I have not seen the land, I don't know what it was at the time.

47,417. But, was it not a usual thing to find people who worked at kelp-making being higher rented than others, on account of their having access to sea-ware?—I cannot speak as to that from my experience.

47,418. Did not the same distress occur everywhere when the kelp failed?—I suppose it must have.

47,419. Would it not be reasonable then to reduce their rents when the kelp failed?—The proprietor thought as they objected to the ground it was better to give them better ground.

47,420. Where do you get your information as to their complaining of the land?—Through the proprietor, General Burroughs, and his books; he gave me the information which he obtained from his former factor, who had been factor for his grand-uncle. As I say, this is, of course, merely from information, because I cannot speak of my own knowledge.

47,421. Have you definite information as to their asking to be removed?—Oh, no, I cannot say that at all; I merely say that they complained that they could not pay their rents.

47,422. But, was not that a general complaint all over when the kelp industry failed?—That is quite possible: but I know General Burrough's own belief is that this land would not be worth working, on account of the damage done by sea-gust.

47,423. That was his opinion?—And that it is better as pasture than in any other way.

47,424. Have you any definite information as to the number of crofters who were there?—No, I have not.

47,425. You are not in a position to contradict the evidence we have had in regard to the numbers?—No. I always understood there had been about a dozen, but there may have been more.

47,426. How did you always understand that?—Just by talking to the people there; but I have no accurate information; I never inquired.

47,427. So that, of course, you could not contradict the evidence on such very slight knowledge of the facts?—No, but, I think, my information is probably much the same as that of those witnesses.

47,428. They lived upon the island, and they know the old traditions, don't they, which you do not know?—I have made myself pretty well acquainted with the traditions of the island, and I know a great deal about it: I probably know more of the history of that island than of any other, for it so happened that I was brought up by a nurse from the island of Rousay, who, from my earliest infancy, told me stories about it.

47,429. Can you say that the people who were situated in Quandale were worse off than the people on the other parts of the island?—So I am informed.

47,430. What is the source of your information?—Mr Scarth, the late factor, who gave the information to General Burroughs.

47,431. But don't you find this that the land was specially suited for a sheep farm?—Yes, it is.

47,432. Might not that account for the putting away of the people?—I have no doubt that it did, partly.

Kirkwall, Orkney.

Duncan John Robertson.

47,433. The grazing is excellent, and there is a first-rate stock upon it just now?—Yes.

47,434. We were also told that there was congestion on the island, and you want to put us right as to that. Is it your opinion that there is no congestion?—That is certainly my opinion.

47,435. Does that mean that the holdings are large enough?—I should think they are: they find them large enough, for they do not try to get larger holdings when they are vacant.

47,436. But they have never been offered larger holdings?—There have been larger holdings vacant every year for which they made no application.

47,437. Do you think they could reasonably expect that they would get them?—I know they would be certain to get them on paying a fair rent. In the only case where one did offer, his offer was at once accepted.

47,438. If they were refused stones, do you think they would get land?—Yes, they would get other farms. General Burroughs does not conceal his wish to get them from under the Crofters Act, and in doing that he would have them under lease.

47,439. Do you think the size of a croft in Rousay is large enough for a crofter to live comfortably?—I know that the Rousay crofters not only were comfortable, but, at one time, in better years, they made a a great deal of money. They were said to be the wealthiest people in Orkney.

47,440. But are they as wealthy as that now?—I believe not; no farmers are.

47,441. So that you affirm now what you came to contradict?—In what way?

47,442. You say they are not now so wealthy?—No farmers are, but, though I may not be so wealthy as I was last year, it does not follow that I am congested or in distress.

47,443. But don't you think really that three, or four, or five acres is not sufficient to maintain a family comfortably?—There are only fifteen crofts in Rousay with an area of less than eight acres each; and only three with an area of less than six acres each. There are very few so small as that.

47,444. Several of those before us to-day had not much more. Are not several of them in the poorest parts of Rousay just now,—on very high ground, and on ground unsuitable for cultivation?—I am not sure that I know of any such.

47,445. We had evidence from several of them that they were placed very far from the coast, and that they had between half an hour and an hour's walk to go to the coast. Must not these be pretty high?—Yes, they are fairly high, some of them.

47,446. And the land is poor?—I believe so, yes.

47,447. And on this farm of Westness, which includes Quandale, there is a great extent of land which in any case is most excellent pasture?—Yes, there is capital pasture land, but they would be far further from the sea there, or at least from any place where they could launch a boat for the fishing.

47,448. That may be, but would it not be suitable for self-sustaining holdings, considering the quality of the ground, and the fact that there were people there before who you say had access to the shore when they were kelp-makers?—It might; I do not know. I am no judge of land, but I can only tell you what happened before.

47,449. As to the applications that were made for moderately-sized farms on Rousay, from what class of people did those come who came from other islands; were they men that are now taking smaller farms, or men who had small farms and wished to take larger ones?—Most of them, I think, are men taking larger farms, but I am not very well acquainted with the farms they left.

47,450. Then, with regard to the refusal of stones to the crofters, can you give us any reason why that was done?—No, I cannot speak as to General Burroughs's reasons: I merely carried out his instructions.

47,451. You are not able to give any reason?—I may have my own ideas, but I am not authorised to state any reasons, and I might mis-state them.

Kirkwall, Orkney. Duncan John Robertson.

47,452. But must it not be to the injury of the land and of the crofters to be refused stones for the drainage for instance of the land?—That is a matter for every one to form his own opinion on.

47,453. You could not expect people who are so treated to apply for land?—I really do not know: I think they know very well that they would get it. I have told every one I have spoken to.

47,454. But, do you expect people who are so treated to look to General Burroughs to get land? Would it be a reasonable expectation?—Considering what I have said to them, and that I have asked most of them to offer for larger farms and said they would have a good chance of getting them if they gave a fair rent, I think it would. I have frequently spoken to them in that way. If you take that one circumstance alone, perhaps it might be regarded as a reason for their not applying for land, but you must take all the circumstances into account.

[Adjourned.]

FIFTY-SIXTH SITTING.

KINGUSSIE, August 14, 1894. Kingussie.

Present:—

David Brand, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
Michael Hugh Shaw Stewart, Esq., M.P.
Angus Sutherland, Esq., M.P.
George Gordon, Esq.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
John Macleod, Esq.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

Donald Campbell, Merchant, Kingussie (57)—*examined.* Donald Campbell.

47,455. *The Chairman.*—You are a merchant in Kingussie?—Yes, My Lord. Before proceeding I would like to inform you that I never sent in my name as a party to come here and give evidence; it has been done by some one else without my sanction, so that I would like to know who it was that has given my name as a witness.

47,456. I cannot tell you that; your name is here among a number of others sent us, and if you desire to give evidence we shall be glad to hear it?—Well, I did not intend to appear, and I have nothing in particular prepared for it, but if there are any questions Your Lordship or any of the Commissioners would like to ask, I shall be pleased to answer them.

47,457. With what part of this district are you best acquainted?—I am best acquainted with the upper part of the district; that is to say above this. I know the country pretty well up and down, but I have spent more of my time in the upper portion of the district.

47,458. What is the name of the part you specially refer to?—From the village here, the farms of Ballachroan, Banchor, Biallid, Cluny, and the farms of Sir John Ramsden further up.

47,459. What are the names of these farms?—Strathmashie, Dalchully, Shirrabeg, Shirramore; the last mentioned has also the grazing of Aberarder just now, which belongs to Cluny Macpherson.

47,460. Are these all?—Well, I know the farm of

Breackachy in Glentruim estate; also Crubanbeg and Crubanmore on the same estate.

47,461. Any other?—Etteridge I know pretty well; also the farm of Nuide, that is coming nearer here again,—going up the one side of the Spey, and coming down the other.

47,462. Any more?—The farm of Ruthven, just opposite us here; Ballindalloch on Sir George Macpherson-Grant's estate; the farm of Gordonhall next the river; also Invertromie and Killiehuntly.

47,463. Is that all?—I am not so well acquainted with the farms lower down,—I know them by name, but I do not know the hill pasture of them as well.

47,464. On what estate are the first four farms you named situated?—The first of them, Ballachroän, is on the estate of Mr Baillie of Dochfour. The next one, Banchor, is on the estate of Mr Macpherson of Belleville; Biallid is on the Cluny Macpherson estate, and so is Cluny itself.

47,465. Are these all the farms you are acquainted with on the Dochfour, Belleville, and Cluny estates?—I am also acquainted with the farm of Kerrow which adjoins Ballachroän.

47,466. On what estate is it situated?—On the Dochfour estate.

47,467. Any other farm on the Dochfour estate?—No.

47,468. Any other on the Belleville estate?—The farm of Chapelpark, and the small farm of Croft-Carnoch; it is more a croft than a farm.

47,469. Any other on the estate?—No, of course I know other farms lower down by name, but I do not know their hill pasture so well. I have been over them, but do not know them particularly.

47,470. Now, the next set of farms you mentioned, Strathmashie and the others, on what estate are they situated?—On the estate of Sir John Ramsden, all except Aberarder, which is on the estate of Cluny Macpherson.

47,471. Then you mentioned farms on the Glentruim estate?—Yes; there are Breackachy, Crubinbeg, and Crubinmore. Breackachy is tenanted at present by Mr Samuel M'Call Smith.

47,472-73. Is it to let at present?—I believe it is; I saw it advertised in the *Inverness Courier* the other day.

47,474. You also mentioned Etteridge; what estate is it upon?—It is on the Belleville estate.

47,475. You mentioned some others,—I am not sure if I caught the names accurately, but can you tell us what estates they are on?—Ruthven is on Invereshie estate, belonging to Sir George Macpherson-Grant of Ballindalloch.

47,476. And is Gordonhall on the same estate?—Yes.

47,477. And Killiehuntly?—That is also on the Invereshie estate.

47,478. Do you know any other farms that might be usefully mentioned on the Ballindalloch estate?—I know the farms by name, but I don't know so much about them.

47,479. You have mentioned a great number of farms: are they all grazing farms?—They are all grazing farms.

47,480. There are none of them that you would describe as arable farms?—There is a good deal of arable land that is not cultivated, but the farms are tenanted by tenants at the present time.

47,481. Would you describe them as grazing farms rather than as arable farms?—They are grazed more than cultivated in the meantime.

47,482. They are sheep farms?—That is so: the tenants of these farms depend more upon sheep farming than upon cultivation.

47,483. What has your special experience been in the past with regard to land?—I spent the best part of my days as a shepherd on these hills, and was some time a gamekeeper.

47,484. Where were you employed as a shepherd?—I was employed on the farm of Ballachroän and Kerrow, and parts of the farms of Sir John Ramsden.

47,485. And you are familiar with all these lands you have mentioned?—Yes, quite familiar.

47,486. For how long were you employed as a shepherd?—For about twenty years, more or less.

47,487. In different parts?—In different parts.

47,488. I think you also said you had been a gamekeeper?—Yes, for a short time; only on the moors up here.

47,489. For how long were you engaged as a gamekeeper?—For two years.

47,490. Are there tracts of land on those farms,—on some or all of them,—for our consideration as land capable of being profitably cultivated by crofters or other small tenants, or otherwise advantageously occupied by them?—I think so; it was the case in former times.

47,491. Do you refer to lands that were previously in the occupation of crofters?—Yes.

47,492. And is there evidence of that upon the ground to this day?—Yes, on the whole of the ground you will see the ruins or remains of houses.

47,493. Do you also see traces of former cultivation?—Yes, quite distinctly.

47,494. Are most of these lands at a comparatively low altitude, or are some of them very high?—Some of them are pretty high, but the old tenants were making a living on the highest of them.

47,495. Was your father one of these men?—No, but my grandfather had land in this neighbourhood here.

47,496. Are you able to remember the time when some of these houses that now stand tenantless or in ruins were occupied by crofters?—There are very few of them that I remember.

47,497. But do you remember some?—Yes, I remember some.

47,498. Where were they?—There were a few of them on the Belleville estate, in Glenbanchor.

47,499. What sort of living did these people make, in your recollection?—They seemed to live fairly well.

47,500. Had they crops of corn and potatoes every year?—They had crops of corn and potatoes and turnips.

47,501. What size of holdings had they?—I cannot say the number of acres; they were not very large holdings.

47,502. Were these people mainly the servants of neighbouring farmers or proprietors, or did they live by their holdings?—They lived by the holdings, and did some work where they could get it to do.

47,503. They made the croft their home, and lived partly by working it, and partly by outside work?—Just so: the members of the family who were grown up would go out to work and help the others.

47,504. Very much the same as crofters do in other quarters at the present day?—Just so; but I cannot say anything as to how they lived or anything of that sort.

47,505. You don't know anything of that?—No, I don't know anything of that. I may mention that the present proprietor of Belleville is considered to be one of the best proprietors in the district.

47,506. Have any of the farms that you mentioned been extended within your recollection?—Yes.

47,507. Where was the land got for extension?—By adding one farm to another, by adding one croft to another, and so forth.

47,508. By consolidation of crofts with farms, and of farms with farms?—Yes.

47,509. Has that taken place to any considerable extent?—To a great extent, especially in the upper part of the country.

47,510. Are there any cases of farms of which you are able to speak particularly, where more than one are in the tenancy of one farmer?—Yes, there are two pretty large farms just in the neighbourhood here that have been put into one. They are occupied by Mr Macgillivray of Ballachroän at the present time. He has the farm of Pitmain along with it, but it is now called the farm of Ballachroän. There are also the farm of Banchor, Milton of Banchor, Dail-'Chaoirinn, and the crofts of Glen-Banchor in the occupancy Mr Allan Macgillivray as one farm.

47,511. Perhaps you do not know whether they are held under one lease?—I think under one lease.

47,512. Are there any other instances of that kind?—Not in the immediate neighbourhood, I think. The

Kingussie.

Donald Campbell.

farm of Kerrow has now got added to it a farm which used to be called Laggan; they were two distinct farms in my recollection but are now in one.

47,513. They are now held as one large grazing?—Yes.

47,514. What is the size of the largest farm you know?—I cannot say how many acres. Sir John Ramsden keeps the largest part of land in his own hands in this district.

47,515. I was about to ask you whether all the farms you named are let, or whether some of them are in the proprietor's hands?—All those I mentioned are in the proprietor's hands: there are some others which I did not mention, that are not.

47,516. But do you say that all the farms you mentioned are in the hands of the proprietors?—Yes, all Sir John Ramsden's farms.

47,517. But do you know any farms on any other estate which are in the hands of the proprietor?—There is the farm of Chapelpark itself, in the hands of Mr Macpherson of Belleville; and at Invereshie there are some fields belonging to Sir George Macpherson-Grant which he cultivates himself.

47,518. Have you mentioned any farms in the Strathdearn district?—No.

47,519. Do you know that district?—Yes, I know it pretty well.

47,520. Can you mention any farms that are there?—There is land there which has been recently converted into a deer forest which used to be a grazing for the crofters belonging to Strathnairn, Strathdearn, and Stratherrick.

47,521. Can you give me the names of the crofter townships?—No, I am not able to do that.

47,522. Can you give me any idea of the number of crofters?—There was a stock of about 10,000 sheep upon the ground which has been recently converted into a deer forest.

47,523. Did that stock belong to crofters?—The best part of it did.

47,524. The principal part of it?—Yes.

47,525. And the remainder to farmers and proprietors?—Yes.

47,526. Can you tell us roughly the extent of that land?—I cannot say the extent, but I should say it would be a fair day's journey for a man to go round it.

47,527. A good many thousand acres?—Yes, it will be that.

47,528. What is the name of the forest into which the land has been turned?—Coignafearn forest.

47,529. And who is the proprietor?—The Mackintosh is the proprietor.

47,530. Is that land you are now speaking of land suitable for occupation or only suitable for hill grazing?—Suitable for hill grazing; there is no arable land. There is a little arable land in Coignafearn, but it is in the lowest part of the forest, and above that there is nothing but grazing land.

47,531. Are any of the crofters who had that land at one time still in the neighbourhood?—Yes, they are in their crofts.

47,532. Can you give me the name of any one township?—Yes; the township of Tordarroch in Strathnairn.

47,533. Any other?—There is another place they call the Bechan.

47,534. Any others?—I forget them, it is so long since.

47,535. If we are able to get one or two of the names on the map we shall be able to localise the thing a little more satisfactorily. Are there any others that occur to your recollection?—There was Bochrubin, I think.

47,536. Are the crofters still there?—Yes, they are there; the townships are there, but not the parties who occupied them in my younger days.

47,537. But some of their successors are there, I suppose?—Yes.

47,538. How long is it since that land was afforested?—I don't think it would be more than ten years, but I cannot say exactly: it might be a year or two more.

47,539. What is the name of the forest?—Coignafearn forest.

47,540. Now, can you mention any other land besides this particular tract you have specified, that has been added to the forest?—No.

47,541. Are you able to call our attention to any other lands in the Strathdearn district, either sheep farms, or lands that have been afforested?—No: it is so long since I have been there that I forget the exact position of matters.

47,542. Were you employed there as a shepherd?—Yes, for a short time.

47,543. Are there any other districts besides those mentioned that you are able to speak of?—No, no others.

47,544. There are a number of forests round this quarter?—Yes.

47,545. Do you know anything about them beyond what you have told us?—No, not much more. All the forests that are hereabouts, with perhaps a little addition, have been in existence since before my time.

47,546. Most of the forests in this district are old forests?—Yes.

47,547. Some of them are very old forests?—I believe they are: Glenfeshie and Gaick are old forests.

47,548. And mentioned in old Acts of Parliament?—I would think so.

47,549. Are you cognisant of the desires of crofters in this neighbourhood with regard to acquiring more land?—The only answer I could give to that question is, that for any little farm or croft that is in the market there is a great number of applicants.

47,550. But otherwise you are not able to speak?—No, I am not here in the interests of any party; I have no grievance of my own, nor do I appear on behalf of any others, but simply to answer any questions I may be asked.

47,551. *Mr Sutherland.*—How do the crops in this neighbourhood ripen?—In a good year there is a good crop, and in bad years of course they are late. Last year we had a very good crop; but this year unless we get a change of weather very soon we shall have a very late crop. It depends on the weather very much; the soil is very good, but the climate is rather high.

47,552. What is the height of it do you know?—I think we are about 800 feet above sea level here.

47,553. And is there any cultivated land in this neighbourhood higher than you are here in Kingussie?—Yes.

47,554. How many feet higher?—I think Dalwhinnie is about 1000 feet above the sea.

47,555. Do crops grow at Dalwhinnie?—Yes.

47,556. Do the people there crop the land every year?—Every year.

47,557. And at the height of 1000 feet above sea level they find it profitable to crop the land?—Well, they always do it, at any rate.

47,558. Do you know how many miles Kingussie is from the sea?—I think about 40 miles.

47,559. How many miles will Dalwhinnie be?—About 50 miles; it is the farthest off point from the sea in Scotland: you have to go about 50 miles before you reach salt water, whichever way you go.

47,560. It is 1000 feet high, and 50 miles from the sea, and yet the people find it profitable to grow corn crops?—Well, I should think they would not trouble about cultivating it unless it was profitable to do so.

47,561. But some years, you say, the crops are not so good as in other years?—No.

47,562. That is the case everywhere, is it not?—I suppose so.

47,563. What can you tell us about the land we see in the neighbourhood here: has it all been cultivated since you can remember?—No, not all since I remember.

47,564. Some of it has been brought into cultivation within your memory?—There was more land out of cultivation in my memory than has been brought into cultivation in the immediate neighbourhood. There was a very energetic farmer here named Mr Cameron, who took in a lot of land about the village here; and it is now divided among the village.

47,565. But was part of that cultivated within your memory?—Yes, what is above the village. What is below the village has been in cultivation long before my time.

47,566. And is Kingussie an old place?—Oh, no, it is not much older than this century. There were a few houses before then, but I knew persons who saw corn growing on what is now the streets of Kingussie.

47,567. Was it a place of great importance before the railway was made, or do you remember it before then?—I do; I had a 'hurl' in the first train that passed here.

47,568. Was it a place of any considerable size before the railway was made?—There were almost as many inhabitants then as there are now, but the houses were quite different.

47,569. Where did the population come from that was here about the beginning of the century?—From the neighbouring district. About 30 years ago the population of the parish of Kingussie and Insh was about 700 more than it is now. They came from different parts of the country.

47,570. I think his Lordship asked you a question about the desire on the part of the people to get land, and you stated that all the evidence that you should give was that whenever there was a place vacant there were many competitors for it?—That is so.

47,571. Has there been any desire or any intention on the part of the proprietors to meet that demand in any way, I mean in making smaller farms?—I cannot say there has been much. Cluny Macpherson last year offered some land up in Laggan, but I don't suppose that they took any advantage of it.

47,572. Is that far from Kingussie?—About ten miles.

47,573. What do you think were the reasons that prevented the people from taking these holdings?—I really could not say: I did not take much interest in the matter, and I never made any inquiry as to what was the cause. What the terms were I cannot say.

47,574. Apart from that offer of Cluny Macpherson, did you ever hear of any large farm in this neighbourhood being broken down and offered in small holdings?—Mr Macpherson of Belleville has given a good part of the Banchor farm to the tenementers at Newtonmore, and when Mrs Cameron, the widow of the Mr Cameron to whom I referred a little ago, gave up the farm, Mr Baillie of Dochfour broke it up and gave it to the villagers as allotments.

47,575. But not for small farms?—No, it was only allotments to villagers.

47,576. You stated that you did not know how these people left the places where they were formerly settled, but do you think they left of their own free will?—I cannot go into that at all; I do not know anything about it.

47,577. What is your opinion regarding the prospect of success of small farms if they were made; do you think they would be readily taken up?—I would think so. I think it would be more profitable to the industry of the place for all concerned, such as joiners and blacksmiths and merchants and so forth, if there were more people on the land than there are at present.

47,578. That is from the point of view of those who would not themselves live on the land?—Yes, it would benefit the trade of the place.

47,579. *Mr Gordon.*—Where do you specially point to as land suitable for crofting?—Any land that is cultivated in the district just now would be suitable enough.

47,580. But land under cultivation does not come under the scope of our inquiry?—Well, the lands I mean which are sheep-runs at present, in large farms.

47,581. Which large farms do you specially refer to?—I do not refer to any one more than another; I think they are alike as far as that is concerned.

47,582. Have you any idea from which farm the last clearances were made?—It was in this Glenbanchor that I referred to; that was the last in this district.

47,583. But you say they have been given back to the people of Newtonmore?—Not the same land. The farm of Banchor was the farm of Banchor before the crofters left the land where they were, and their land was added to that farm. But what Mr Macpherson has been giving them lately was part of the original farm.

47,584. Where did you say the ruins were?—You will see them all up and down the country: you cannot go half a mile from the village without seeing them and you may go 20 miles from the village and see the ruins of croft and crofters' houses.

47,585. Do you refer to Speyside or to Lochaber?—To Speyside: I am not going so far as Lochaber.

47,586. What would be your idea of a model size of holding?—A holding would require to be a good medium size before it would pay or keep the occupier.

47,587. What do you call a medium size?—A pair horse holding, with perhaps half a dozen cows and two or three hundred sheep.

47,588. How many holdings of that size could you put into one of these farms?—It depends on the size of the farm.

47,589. How many could be put into Ballachroän?—I think there would be room for at least four or five in Ballachroän: I might say six or seven.

47,590. How many pair of horses does Ballachroän keep?—Three or four pair; but I have seen six or seven pair upon the two farms.

47,591. How many sheep are on it?—I cannot say exactly; when he had part of the grazing of Coignafearn, he had grazing that would summer about 2000 sheep, but I think between 1200 and 1500 will be about the number that his farm as at present would hold.

47,592. How much land does Ballachroän cultivate?—I cannot say.

47,593. I suppose he will cultivate all he can profitably cultivate?—There is a good deal more that could be profitably cultivated, I believe, if it was in the hands of parties who would cultivate it.

47,594. Is the low land in Ballachroän farm not subject to flooding?—Yes, the low land is, but not to the same extent as the lands about Kingussie.

47,595. How much would be cultivated below the road?—I cannot say; perhaps thirty or forty acres. It may be more, but I cannot say.

47,596. Thirty or forty acres would only make one croft?—But he has a lot of land above the road.

47,597. Yes, I know he has, but how much will be cultivated above the road?—I cannot say.

47,598. Have you ever been engaged in cultivation yourself, as a farmer?—No.

47,599. Then you are unable to speak with any practical knowledge?—No.

47,600. Is it a fact that most of the country you have spoken to is subject to frost, in every late year?—Yes, it is.

47,601. Now, except for gamekeeping is there really any work that a crofter could get to make up for his loss in a frosty year?—Not the crofter himself, unless he was a tradesman. There are some tradesmen, such as masons and joiners, who have crofts.

47,602. Do you think it would be advisable to fill all that country with small holders who would be entirely dependent on the produce of their crofts, in a country which is admittedly liable to losses from that cause?—All that I can say about that is, that it was the case in former times when cultivation was not so well attended to as it is now.

47,603. That is true enough, possibly, but there are much larger demands made upon the purse now than in the time when they were occupying the land?—Oh, possibly.

47,604. You could not point to any business or any occupation outside their crofts?—No, unless it would be on a large farm here and there where they might get work as they did in former times.

47,605. There is not so much cultivation now as there was formerly?—No, there is not.

47,606. To what do you ascribe that?—I suppose farmers found that pasturing paid better than cultivating the land.

Kingussie, Donald Campbell.

47,607. And do you think they are correct in that?—I don't know I am sure.

47,608. They find it so?—Possibly, or else they would cultivate more.

47,609. *Mr Maccallum.*—The kind of holding that you would approve of would be a self-supporting holding, I take it?—Well, so far, I think so.

47,610. You do not think these large farms should be divided into small crofts?—Not very small.

47,611. So that the people who occupy these holdings would have their time taken up with the cultivation and the shepherding required on the holdings?—Yes, mostly that. Of course, if there were large families, which is the case very often, some of the members could seek other employment and have the holding as a home during the winter.

47,612. And you are decidedly of opinion that it would be better for the country generally that these large holdings should be divided into moderately-sized farms?—Well, it is the general opinion of the people in the district that that is so.

47,613. When the land was held in comparatively small holdings there were more people in the district?—A great many more people in the district.

47,614. And even from the point of view of the proprietor, do you think it would benefit him to have the holdings smaller than they are at present?—I believe he would get as much rent for the land; but he would perhaps have a little more difficulty in collecting the rents sometimes.

47,615. You told us that a great number of the farms on the Ramsden estate are in the proprietor's hands?—Yes.

47,615A. How has that come about?—I cannot go into particulars about that: he has taken one after another off the tenants' hands and kept them himself. I know that he has been advertising them, and that they were not let.

47,616. Do you think it is because large farms cannot be easily let that they are kept in the proprietor's own hands?—I believe so; and there are such conditions in connection with some of these farms that it is not easy to get them let.

47,617. What conditions do you refer to?—One is that the stock has to be taken over at valuation, which I consider is ruinous for any man to go into.

47,618. That makes it difficult to get large farms let?—Yes, I think it has that tendency.

47,619. But, as a fact, you are aware that there is very small demand for sheep farms on a large scale?—There would be demand enough for them, but the rents that are asked for them are, I believe, more than people are inclined to give. Prices have been going back very much during the last few years.

47,620. The proprietors have to take a great number of the large farms into their own hands, and those which are let are let at a reduced rent, I suppose?—I believe that is the case.

47,621. At a greatly reduced rent?—I cannot say what percentage the reduction might be; as I said already, I do not take very much interest in that sort of thing now.

47,622. Do you find that there is any difficulty in letting middle-sized holdings?—I never found that there was.

47,623. Or that there is any necessity for reducing the rents of such farms?—Not so much, of course the proprietors have been reducing the rents of their own free will hereabouts, some of them.

47,624. That is in years when the crops were damaged, I suppose?—Yes, and when the prices went down so very much; they saw that they could not pay at the old rents.

47,625. Are you aware whether the proprietors have any difficulty in collecting the rents of these moderately-sized holdings?—So far as I am aware, they have not.

47,626. And are the people who occupy such holdings prosperous, or comparatively prosperous?—They seem to be: they look like it at all events. They always pay their debt when it is due, as far as I am concerned.

47,627. Such a way of holding the land is more profitable for other men outside, for merchants, such as yourself, and for tradesmen generally?—Certainly. Kingussie. Donald Campbell.

47,627A. And the proprietor does not lose by such occupation of the land?—Of course, the proprietors know that best themselves, but so far as I can see they do not.

47,628. Now, with regard to the land held as deer forest now, how were these lands used formerly?—They were used as shielings; the people used to go there with their sheep and cattle and put them on to the hills for summer grazing; they had bothies there.

47,629. The tenants on the low-lying ground were entitled to put their sheep there?—Yes, they held it in common, as it were.

47,630. Do you think it was a great disadvantage to the tenants when they lost the right of putting their sheep on these grazings?—I would certainly think so.

47,631. Do they themselves give expression to their feelings about that?—Yes; of course it is only the children or grandchildren of those who used to go to the hills that are now living, and they do not know so very much about it: they don't know the loss so much as those who actually used the hills.

47,632. But large flocks of sheep were undoubtedly summered on those hills that are now occupied as deer forests?—There were, certainly, sheep on Coignafearn forest.

47,633. That has been recently taken away?—Well, the crofters lost it long ago; it had been taken from them, and turned into large sheep-runs held by two or three parties; and when it was taken from them in turn, it was converted into a deer forest. Then, they found it was not paying them as a forest, so it was put under sheep again, and let to large sheep farmers.

47,634. Can you tell us how the tenants wintered the sheep which were summered on these high hills?—They wintered most of them on their own crofts.

47,635. They had no particular difficulty about that, had they?—No. Of course, if the croft was not large enough to winter them all, they would send off the the younger stock, the hoggs, to lower ground.

47,636. *Mr Macleod.*—The only question I would like to put to you is with regard to the practical question with which you are thoroughly acquainted, that is, as to whether sheep thrive well on those higher grounds that are presently devoted to deer. You know that there is a considerable difference of opinion as to whether these higher grounds are fitted for sheep grazing?—My opinion is that the higher lands, in this district at all events, are more capable of grazing sheep than of grazing deer.

47,637. What has caused you to form that opinion?—A sheep is a much hardier animal than a deer; a sheep would live where a deer would starve. That is my experience, and I have also consulted others who are keepers and shepherds, such as I was myself in my younger days, and it is always the same opinion that I found. I have known a sheep to live under a piece of snow for six weeks.

47,638. That is not an ordinary experience?—Oh, no, it is not an ordinary experience, but it shows you the hardiness of the animals.

47,639. I think you said there was a very considerable extent of land taken off the farm of Ballachroän and added to a deer forest?—No, I said there were two farms added together at Ballachroän, but there is no deer forest in connection with that at all.

47,640. Nor near there?—No; but the Glasha on The Mackintosh estate, was taken from the Ballachroän farm and added to the Monadh-liath deer forest.

47,641. Then, with regard to the farms that are held in Sir John Ramsden's own hands, are they held solely for sheep, or is it mixed sheep and deer farms?—The part that is a sheep grazing is entirely held as that, and there is a deer forest besides that.

47,642. Were there ever sheep on the deer forest portion, within your knowledge?—Yes, on the Strathmashie farm. That was a sheep farm in my knowledge, and now most of it is under deer.

47,643. What stock did it carry?—I cannnot say

with certainty, but I should think it would be over 2000 sheep.

47,644. Is that the only land within your knowledge presently under deer, which was at one time under sheep?—Yes, on Sir John's estate. There is part of Loch-Erricht side that was a sheep-grazing once, which is now also under deer.

47,645. What stock do you think it would carry?—I would say about 1000.

47,646. Can you tell us what stock is carried on the farms that are presently in Sir John's hands?—No.

47,647. Have you no idea as to that?—No, I could not say, they were so extensive.

47,648. If you took them in detail, is it not possible you could give us the figures?—Roughly guessing it I would say there would not be much short of 20,000 sheep that he would have to take over when he took the farms off the hands of the tenants; I do not know what stock he may have on them now.

47,649. You cannot say whether it has been reduced or increased?—I was told it was reduced.

47,650. *Mr Munro.*—You made some reference to the former and the present condition of matters in the Strathnairn and Strathdearn districts?—Yes.

47,651. How far back does your memory carry you in reference to these districts?—Close upon 40 years.

47,652. Do you remember a time when they had a much larger population of small tenants than they have at present?—I was not so well acquainted with the lower part of the district as with the hill grazings of it; I knew the men when they came there about their sheep, and came to gather them and clip them and so forth, but I never have been much amongst the crofters of Strathdearn and Strathnairn.

47,653. But there are a considerable number of small tenants there still?—Yes.

47,653A. Within your memory, were there any evictions which were forcibly carried out?—I cannot say anything about that, because I do not know much of the district itself, although I knew the men who had the sheep grazing there.

47,654. A question was put here to-day which seemed to convey the suggestion that small tenants would have very great difficulties to contend with in the way of frost in cultivating small farms in this district here. Now, would not a similar condition of things apply to large tenants as well as to small ones?—Exactly the same, I would think it would be more so, because the small tenants, as a rule, pay more attention to the cultivation of their land than the larger ones.

47,655. The large farmers have just the same difficulties to contend with as the small tenants?—Yes, just the same.

47,656. *The Chairman.*—Do you consider this a good district for rearing stock, both of cattle and sheep?—Yes.

47,657. What class of sheep are mostly reared here?—Blackfaced sheep; it is more adapted for them.

47,658. Suppose that holdings intended to be self-sustaining were formed in this district and in some of the quarters you mentioned, with corresponding facilities for rearing stock, are you of opinion that such holders would be able to get along profitably enough?—I think so, if the times would keep anything better.

47,659. But allowing for the times, are you of opinion that they would be just as likely to do well as the large farmers?—That is my opinion.

47,660. You say that a great number of farms have fallen into the hands of proprietors: does it consist with your knowledge that that has been accompanied with a serious decline of rent in the case of those which are let,—that when they try to relet them, they have to offer them at a much reduced rent?—I think that is largely the reason why they have them in hand.

47,661. Have these farms been to your knowledge repeatedly offered in the market without finding tenants?—I know they were advertised but whether they could get tenants at a reasonable rent I cannot say. I know parties that offered for them and did not get them.

47,662. *Mr Allan Macdonald, Commissioner for The Mackintosh.*—I understood you to say that when Coignafearn was afforested twelve years ago, a number of crofters were removed?—I did not say that; I only said they lost the grazing.

47,663. You did not say that there were any removed?—No; I said I did not know anything about that.

47,664. How much grazing did they lose?—I cannot say; I told his Lordship it would take about a day's journey for a man to go round it.

47,665. Would you be surprised to learn that they only lost 1000 acres out of 10,000 acres of grazing that they had?—Taking it from Coignafearn house to the top of Cro-Clach as the river runs, it is about 20 miles.

47,666. Do you know that there are about 40,000 acres, speaking roughly, on what we call the Monadh-liath, of which the crofters had 10,000 acres, and that in order to make a forest it was necessary to strike off something under 1000 acres from that?—I am afraid you are speaking of what was done recently; I was referring to what was done 40 or 45 years ago.

47,667. Do you mean to say that the crofters who are now on the ground, or their predecessors, had the whole grazing of the Monadh-liath 40 or 50 years ago?—Yes, they had the whole of it, with the exception of what they call the Glasha; that is part of the present forest which the tenant of Ballachroän held at that time as a summer grazing for his sheep, where he kept about 2000 sheep. Then there was the farm of Coignafearn and Coignasgallan which were both together and which carried about 2000 sheep; and the rest was all under crofters.

47,668. You spoke of old crofting townships at Tordarroch and Bechan: can you tell me what was the size of the township of Tordarroch?—I only knew the township by name. I told my friends there already that I did not know the district where these crofters lived, although I knew the hill pastures that they had for summer grazings, and I knew the men who were there and who used to come to the clippings. They had a large fank built upon the Coignafearn estate which was available for all the crofters, and they would be clipping there for perhaps a month.

47,669. You cannot say whether there was more than one tenant at Tordarroch?—I cannot say, but I think there were more.

47,670. And in Beachan?—The crofters of Strathnairn and Stratherrick and Strathdearn had the grazing of these hills at the time I refer to.

47,671. Which hills do you refer to?—The whole Monadh-liath or Coignafearn.

47,672. I thought you told us a short time ago that it was the present crofters who had the whole of the Monadh-liath?—I said the predecessors.

47,673. Of course, the predecessors: but the predecessors of the people who are at present crofters on that ground. Do you know what is the present size of the farm of Tordarroch?—I do not know anything at all about the farms; I only knew the men who came for their summer grazing. There were about fifteen or sixteen shepherds attending the sheep that I referred to upon these hills, at the time I spoke of, so that you can understand there was a large number of sheep.

47,674. *The Chairman.*—Each of these shepherds would have one hirsel or perhaps two or more under his management?—Yes, and there was also a great number of what we call black or Highland cattle grazed upon the pasture at that time as well as the sheep; and horses too.

47,675. Did these cattle all belong to crofters?—Yes.

47,676. *Mr Sutherland.*—Was the deer forest of Coignafearn in existence before this land was added to it,—was it a deer forest before?—As I told you already, it was turned into a deer forest and let for a year or two, but the tenant who had it gave it up, and it was turned into a sheep grazing again. When it was again made into deer forest latterly, there was part of this hill pasture that Mr Macdonald refers to taken from the tenants of Coignashee and Coignafionntarnach.

Kingussie.
Donald Campbell.

47,677. In the Return of deer forests issued by order of Parliament it is stated about Coignafearn that it is about 30,000 acres in extent and that it was in course of formation in the year 1883?—That is the first time that I alluded to.

47,678. It was first of all a deer forest, then a sheep farm, and then made a deer forest a second time?—Yes.

47,679. And when it was made a deer forest the second time, the land was taken from the crofters and added to it; is that so?—They put up a wire fence between the sheep and the deer a few years ago,—four or five years ago perhaps, and when they were making the fence they took this part to which Mr Macdonald referred off this grazing. The fence went on the north side of the glen instead of the south side.

47,680. Do you know any person who would point out the ground to us?—Which ground?

47,681. The ground we are talking about, which was taken from the crofters?—Any of the crofters in Strathdearn would, I think, show you the ground.

47,682. *Mr Maccallum.*—Do you know what extent of hill pasture these crofters now have from whom that grazing was taken?—I cannot say; I have no knowledge of that at all.

47,683. Was it 1000 acres or so that was taken from them?—I cannot say.

47,684. Mr Allan Macdonald says it is about that?—I would believe it would be that, from the appearance of it.

47,685. And do you know the character of the ground?—It is very good for sheep grazing: it has all sorts of pasture, heather and grass and so on.

Donald Cattanach.

DONALD CATTANACH, Merchant, Newtonmore (55)—*examined.*

47,686. *The Chairman.*—What is your occupation?—I am a merchant in Newtonmore.

47,687. Are you here to speak as an individual, or have you been appointed as a delegate?—I speak as an individual.

47,688. What lands are you more particularly acquainted with?—I have a short sketch of all the land of Badenoch.

47,689. Just tell us what you desire to say about Badenoch?—It is 40 miles long, and about 30 or 35 broad; I think it contains about 1200 square miles, or over 1000 at any rate. This vast area of land is swallowed up by only about 100 farms, excluding those in the villages of Kingussie, Newtonmore, and Insh. There are four parishes in Badenoch, viz., Alvie, Insh, Kingussie, and Laggan. Alvie and Insh are swallowed up by seven or eight large farms.

47,690. Can you give us the names of these farms?—Yes, I think I can. In Alvie, there are Chapelpark, Dunachton, Kincraig, Dalraddy. I am not taking in the Home Farm of Invereshie. Kinrara has, I think, two or three farms.

47,691. Can you mention their names?—I think Kinrara and Dalnavert go together; they were together and may be so still. Now we come to Dell, that is the next large farm, and Killiehuntly. I think these are all the large farms in Insh and Alvie.

47,692. Take the parish of Kingussie; do you know the farms there?—I should state first that there are about 16 or 17 crofters in Insh and Alvie parishes, and as many that are coming under the Crofters Act, and about as many that are not, being above that.

47,693. Small farmers?—Yes, small farmers. Next, in the parish of Kingussie there are eight large farms, viz., Gordonhall, Ruthven, Nuide, Etteridge, Biallid, Banchor, Ballachroän, Kerrow.

47,694. What do you wish to say about these?—There are 16 crofters coming under the Act, and 5 or 6 small farmers, in the parish of Kingussie. Next taking the parish of Laggan, we find 7 large farms taking Sir John Ramsden as a tenant and proprietor.

47,695. Just give us the names of the seven farms?—Crubinbeg, Breackachy, Gaskbeg, Cromra, and Sir John Ramsden's: how many is that?

Kingussie.
Donald Cattanach.

47,696. That is only five.—Well, there are small farms coming in close to it, as Blargie and Coul, but these are not large farms.

47,697. Are there any more?—That is all: and there are the same number of crofters under the Act, about 16, and so many above the limits of the Act who are small farmers.

47,698. Now, you have mentioned the farms in these four parishes so far as you know: are these all grazing farms?—All grazing farms. There are no sheep on Gordonhall.

47,699. How is it occupied?—By cattle, and by wintering sheep.

47,700. Can you mention the names of any of these farms that are in the hands of the proprietor?—Now, I will let you know, my lord, another, by my grandfather and from my father; west from Laggan.

47,701. Where did your grandfather live?—He was born in Chapelpark, at a place called Rait. West from the Bridge of Laggan, there would be about the half of Laggan parish, or a little more. In his time I heard him say that he would gather half of a regiment, as brave as ever stood upon the plains of Waterloo. Now consider, my lord, there are only a few cottars, a few gamekeepers, a few shepherds, now inhabiting that vast plain.

47,702. Are there evidences to this day of lands which were occupied by these same tenants,—ruins of houses, and marks of cultivation on the ground?—Yes.

47,703. Quite perceptible?—In every place. Some of the farmers took away some ruins and put the places in cultivation.

47,704. But a good many ruins are still visible?—A good many ruins are to be seen yet.

47,705. And are the lands that were formerly held by small tenants now consolidated with the large farms you have mentioned?—Yes.

47,706. Are you of opinion that these crofts might be re-occupied profitably or advantageously?—By all means, when they were inhabited then. Consider their ignorance of cultivation in those days, then contrast it with the implements we have now and the knowledge we have now. At that time a plough was made by the carpenter, the stock of it being curved in the blacksmith's shop: but now we have everything ready to our hand just like steam-engines.

47,707. You think that with the increase of knowledge in agricultural matters, and the scientific implements now in use, it would be a much easier matter for a small holder to carry on a holding to profit or advantage than in these old days when they occupied these lands?—Yes.

47,708. Can you tell us whether any of the farms you named are in the hands of the proprietor, I think you mentioned Sir John Ramsden, and I understand he has a number of farms in his own hand?—There are four or five farms in Sir John Ramsden's hands that I know myself, in my own day: Gallovie, Strathmashie, Dalchully, Shirrabeg, and Shirramore: that is, when I was a shepherd myself.

47,709. For how many years were you occupied as a shepherd?—About five.

47,710. Where were you employed principally?—Up at Loch Erricht side, on Sir John Ramsden's property; and I was a shepherd in Etteridge also.

47,711. How long were you there?—I was there one year about thirty-five years ago.

47,712. Do you know anything about deer forests in this quarter?—I do.

47,713. Which of these forests do you know best?—Sir John Ramsden's and Glenfeshie.

47,714. What is the name of Sir John Ramsden's forest?—Ben-Alder; I think it is divided into two now: however, we count it as one forest, the forest of Ben-Alder.

47,715. Do you know that forest well?—I do.

47,716. Are there any lands there capable of profitable or advantageous occupation?—Yes.

47,717. In what part of the forest?—In Strath-

Kingussie — Donald Cattanach.

mashie it is a splendid hill pasture and arable. There is a place called Druimuidhe in the Gaelic language where there were a good few crofters in the time of my father and my grandfather, and another place called Mainistear higher up in the same forest.

47,718. Were there small townships there, or just individual crofters?—I cannot ascertain.

47,719. But you say that in the time of your father or grandfather these particular places were occupied by small tenants?—By small tenants; even at Loch Earba which is above Aidverikie house, a valley, there was a crofter with whom my grandfather once lodged. I mention this to show that there was then a crofter in mostly every corner.

47,720. But although these men lived there, are you of opinion that it is a suitable place for human beings to live now with a view to profitable occupation?—Yes, by having black cattle, Highland cattle, the same as they had then.

47,721. These people depended more upon their stock than upon any arable land?—They must, because there was very little arable land. They also took in Highland horses.

47,722. They kept horses in these days, did they?—Yes.

47,723. Is there any other part of that forest that you can bring under our notice as having been previously occupied by small tenants?—No

47,724. Passing now to another forest; what is the name of the other forest you mentioned which you know about?—Glenfeshie.

47,725. Do you know it well?—I do.

47,726. I see it is in two parts; one part belongs to Sir George Macpherson-Grant and another to Alfred D. Mackintosh of Mackintosh. Are there lands on either side of these parts which were formerly occupied by small tenants?—There were two or three, but there is not much arable there.

47,727. Is it in your judgment not a very promising place?—It is good natural grazing.

47,728. But not much arable?—Not much arable.

47,729. Is it a place where a man with his wife and family could pull through winter easily, or is it cold?—Well, the gamekeepers are there all the winter time, and why should not a crofter stand the gales of winter as well as a gamekeeper? In the time of my father, the Duchess of Bedford was there till about the New Year, in that place.

47,730. Are these the only forests you are able to speak about particularly, or are there any others?—At Gaick there is another forest.

47,731. That is one of Sir George Macpherson-Grant's forests?—Yes.

47,732. Are there lands there that we ought to consider?—Not arable.

47,733. Do you mean by not arable, not old arable?—No old arable that I am aware of. It is under deer.

47,734. And you do not know of any one ever having lived there, except a gamekeeper perhaps?—Well, no, except a gamekeeper or shepherd. I remember my father speaking about it before it was afforested; a grazier was going there in summer always, for four or five months.

47,735. That forest was a grazing within the recollection of your father?—Yes, as far as I remember.

47,736. Entirely used for sheep stock?—Not for sheep stock but for Highland cattle and ponies.

47,737. Were there no deer then?—Going back and fore but it was not preserved for deer then.

47,738. Can you tell us when it began to be preserved for deer,—how long ago?—It is a long time,—it must be close on eighty years: it is the oldest deer forest.

47,739. Is it an older forest than Glenfeshie?—Oh, yes, as far as I remember, it is.

47,740. Do you know of a desire among crofters in this quarter to get new holdings or extension of grazing?—Yes, and there is a desire among the proprietors to give them holdings. One proprietor said to myself that he would break up his farms at once if he had plenty money to put up small holdings.

47,741. I do not ask you for his name unless you choose to give it?—I don't care about mentioning it. Kingussie. Donald Cattanach.

47,742. Very well, I don't press you. But you say there is a willingness among some of the proprietors at least to encourage the formation of small holdings consisting partly of arable land and partly of hill grazing?—Yes.

47,743. If the thing could be carried out with a reasonable prospect of success both to landlord and tenant?—Yes. If we were to get a million or two of money, the same as five millions have been given to Ireland, the proprietor and tenant would be able again to go in with one another, and not fight against each other as they are just now.

47,744. But, do you think that the crofters who are desirous of getting new holdings could take such holdings and carry them on without extraneous assistance?—Oh, yes, there are some who could; I know that perfectly well.

47,745. Could they put up the buildings and stock the land and carry on the holding?—Yes, there are some who could.

47,746. A good number?—Well, perhaps there are more than I recollect just now, but I myself know a few.

47,747. Would you say that this willingness on the part of the landlord is common to a considerable number, or is confined to a few?—I cannot give you an answer there, whether to few or many.

47,748. *Mr Munro.*—From what you have told us, I take it that you are pretty familiar with the crofters of this district?—Yes.

47,749. Is there a strong desire on their part that some of these farms should be broken up and divided amongst them, and given to suitable applicants?—Yes.

47,750. Did it ever occur to the crofters to combine and make application to any of the landlords voluntarily to break up any of these farms?—No, I am not aware of that just now: they were asking a piece of land from the proprietor, whether to put under crofts or not I don't know. The cottars and feuars in Newtonmore and Kingussie also were asking more land to attach to our feus.

47,751. Did they make any specific application to any landlords to break up a farm and divide it amongst the crofters?—Not the crofters but the cottars.

47,752. Now, supposing that any of these farms were broken up, would they be readily taken by the crofters in the neighbourhood?—That is their view just now, and that is their tone; that is what is going through the country.

47,753. You mentioned some of the advantages under which a crofter would take a small farm to-day as compared with previous years. Now, are there any disadvantages under which he would labour in taking a croft to-day as compared with former times?—The climate is better, I think, in my day than it was in the time of my forefathers; I will give you an instance. There was a widow down in Strone, near the place where I am stopping, and the market that is now held in Kingussie used to be over there west from Ruthven. Well, at Martinmas the widow passed over the ice, and in the beginning of spring she passed over the same ice again,—that was three months continued frost. Now, I never saw that in my time nor anything like it. In average years this valley is as good as a valley in the south of Scotland,—in the Lothians or anywhere else, but, of course, you have to take the altitude above sea level. But taking it on an average, the arable soil for cultivating oats, barley, and hay is as good as you will find in any glen, valley, or hill in the Highlands.

47,754. That is not precisely the point I wish to be at?—Perhaps you were speaking about frost.

47,755. No, I am not speaking about frost: the altitude is to-day precisely as it was in former years; but you mentioned that a crofter would take a new holding to-day under advantages that did not exist in former times. Now, it is as well to look at both sides; and my question is, Are there no disadvantages under which he would labour as compared with former years?—I don't think so.

Kingussie. Donald Cattanach.

47,756. Is there nothing in the condition of living amongst crofters to-day as compared with say fifty years ago?—Oh, just the same.

47,757. Is it not the case that fifty years ago the crofters practically existed on what they produced themselves?—Yes, and it is the same to-day here: the crops are the same to-day as then, but then the oats were not so good as now; they were black oats that they were raising on the ground then. Now it is all kinds of oats that are coming in, and it would be far easier for them to-day than then, because they are up to cultivating the land better.

47,758. Then your opinion is that if the crofters got these farms divided among them, they could cultivate them to profit and advantage?—That is my opinion.

47,759. *Mr Macleod.*—Do you know Sir John Ramsden's estate at all?—I have a little knowledge about it.

47,760. Are there any small tenancies upon his estate?—Yes, crofters.

47,761. Are there many?—About eight or nine; I am not very sure of the net figure.

47,762. Where are they located?—At a place called Crathie, west from Blargie, west from Laggan-Bridge, this side of Shirramore.

47,763. Are these tenants in a fairly comfortable condition, judging from their outward appearance?—Yes, in one aspect; but some of them would like to have more land.

47,764. More arable land, or more pasture land?—More arable land.

47,765. Is there any available land lying contiguous to their present holdings?—Yes, not far from them.

47,766. How is it occupied at the present time?—There is a burn between them: there was a township there once, where my maternal grandfather lived.

47,767. How is that land occupied at present? Is it in the hands of the proprietor?—In the hands of Sir John Ramsden.

47,768. It is under sheep?—Under sheep.

47,769. Then, is there a tendency on that particular estate to extend the number of small holdings?—I cannot tell you; I don't know the mind of the proprietor.

47,770. That is not the proprietor to whom you referred as being anxious to encourage the formation of small holdings?—No, that is not the proprietor who spoke to me.

47,771. Then with regard to the applications that have been made upon the part of the feuars and others for allotments or small holdings, has there been any endeavour made to take advantage of the present law with regard to the acquisition of allotments and small holdings? Has there been any application made on the subject to the County Council or to the District Committee?—Yes.

47,772. What became of that application?—Oh, the Allotments Act was no use, it was not workable.

47,773. Was there any meeting held with regard to it? Was there a formal application made to the County Council?—Yes, there was; there was a meeting in this Court-House about it.

47,774. Have you any idea as to the number of people who made application?—I think it was twenty-four; it was over twenty.

47,775. What reply did the County Council give to the representation that was made to them; or is there any other one who could inform us?—The reply from the County Council was that that clause in the Act would never work; and that suppose they would get the acres, the acres would never pay; they would be too dear, owing to the expenses.

47,776. Connected with the acquisition of the land?—Yes, the expense was put on the district instead of the county: I believe the Act did not mention on whom the expense should fall. This was put to Sir George Trevelyan, the Secretary for Scotland. There was a majority of proprietors on the County Council; those on the side of the people were in the minority, and Sir George Trevelyan decided that the people were not wanting the land, because of the majority against it.

47,777. But what, as a matter of fact, was the result of that application?—The County Council said it would not pay.

47,778. That if they did acquire land for the purpose the expense would be too much?—Yes.

47,779. But you told us earlier in the day that the proprietors were willing to meet the people?—Yes.

47,780. Was any application made to them for small holdings or allotments, seeing that the County Council failed to do anything in the matter?—Yes, for allotments to the proprietor.

47,781. And what was the result?—The proprietor will take it into consideration; I believe the proprietor will give the allotments from the farm. The party was wanting one farm that is attached to the village of Newtonmore. Now, I believe the proprietor would give the farm at once if it was in his own hands. The party petitioned the proprietor, who said he would take the matter into consideration when the farm should fall into his hands.

47,782. So that so far as those feuars are concerned, there is a possibility of their being provided for if this farm be given?—Yes, to all appearance.

47,783. But apart from that, you say there is a demand by a number of crofters on Sir John Ramsden's and other estates in the locality, for an enlargement of the present holdings in the way of more arable and pasture lands?—Yes.

47,784. Then with regard to the buildings upon the small holdings in the district, have they, as a rule, been built by the proprietor, or by the tenant?—Our proprietor, Mr Macpherson of Belleville, gives the crofters fully half of the material for building: he gives fully half in the shape of wood and slates and lime and such like.

47,785. Have there been any judicial rents fixed in this district? Has the Crofters Commission fixed any rents?—No, none.

47,786. Has there been any reduction in the rents?—Yes, the proprietor reduced his crofters' rents.

47,787. Have you any notion what the reduction amounted to?—I am not very sure.

47,788. Was it a considerable reduction?—Yes.

47,789. Has there been any reduction in the rents of the large farms?—Yes.

47,790. Was the reduction in the case of the large farms larger than in the case of the small ones?—About the same; there is not much difference so far as I am aware.

47,791. *Mr Maccallum.*—You have given us very full and very clear evidence with regard to the character of the land in this district, and its former and present occupation, and I need not enter into the matter. But you told us that there was a strong desire on the part of the crofters to have the large farms broken up into moderately-sized holdings, and you told us also that the proprietors were willing to meet that desire. You say it is a very desirable thing that these holdings should be formed; now, what is it that prevents the formation of such holdings, when both sides are willing that they should be formed?—The proprietor was not rich enough to put up the steadings for the small holdings; that is what he told me.

47,792. Do you think that the case of that proprietor is exceptional, or would you say that there is a general willingness among the proprietors to break up these farms, if they could afford to do it?—I am not certain of that; I was looking at the matter in this way, that all the proprietors have a treaty of union, and if the one would go above the other he would be in a measure excommunicated.

47,793. If he would act differently from the rest, you think he would be excommunicated?—That is my opinion; I am taking a view of the whole area of land that is going among societies.

47,794. So that you think this treaty of union has something to do with preventing the forming of small holdings?—Certainly; Mr George Malcolm of Invergarry, is the Secretary, I understand, for the proprietors, for that amalgamation that was carried on; they had meetings and were going on in this way all along. I am

Kingussie. Donald Cattanach.

not against that; they must keep up their own side as well as others.

47,795. But you think that that rather works against the forming of small holdings by breaking up large farms and deer forests?—Well, my own opinion is that most of the proprietors would break them up at once except for the sportsmen, who are enticing them too much altogether, for the sake of deer and such game.

47,796. Now, with regard to the action of the landlords in the County Council, did I follow you aright in saying that they acted against the opinions of those who were more directly the representatives of the people on the Council? Did they vote against putting the Small Holdings Act in force?—They go according to the Act; the Act was found unworkable; and then that clause in the Act about the expenses was not clear. To put the expense on a small district like this would be too much.

47,797. I thought you said that the popular representatives took one course, and the proprietors in the County Council took another?—No, not exactly that; but Sir George Trevelyan said that the people were not wanting allotments, seeing that they put in the proprietors in a majority.

47,798. This proprietor you say was not rich enough to put up the steadings that would be required. Is it the case then, with all the high rents that the proprietors are supposed to have got for deer forests, that they are in such a helpless condition as that, speaking generally?—Not as a general rule; my own opinion is that some of them would do it.

47,799. Do you think that this inability to put up steadings is very general, with all the advantages the proprietors are supposed to have got from the deer forests?—The proprietor who spoke to me has no deer forest.

47,800. But you are speaking of proprietors generally. I wish to know whether we are to take that as an individual case, or to consider it as typical?—I gave you that as my own opinion, that some of them would break up large farms; and I gave you my opinion that most likely they have a union in that society of their own, and that one dare not do more than another would do. That is merely my own opinion, however; I am not going to rest upon it.

47,801. Is there not a very general tendency to turn the land into sporting ground? Is not that the tendency that we see generally on the part of the proprietors?—That he was going to break up the land.

47,802. But is not that what we see the proprietors doing in the Highlands,—depriving the tenants of hill pasture and turning that into deer forests?—Yes, but you see the forest was first turned into grazings. First of all the crofters were cleared off by those officers that came from Waterloo, in this part mostly, even from Strathmashie to Dalavert. There was a captain, colonel, and officer in nearly every farm; there were ten at any rate in the big farms that I named to you. The land was cleared, and then put under sheep; and the sheep farms were afterwards made deer forests. Gaick, however, was never a sheep-run, but had black cattle and ponies.

47,803. But are there not forests that were made directly, without going through that process? Do you know the forest of Abernethy for instance,—was not that forest grazed by the tenants' sheep before it was turned into a forest?—I am not so well acquainted with Abernethy; it is not long since it was converted into a deer forest.

47,804. And you are not aware whether the small tenants had a right of putting their sheep on that forest, and that they were deprived of that right?—Is it by force you mean?

47,805. It does not matter by what process; but did not the proprietor get the land in some way or other from these tenants, and turn it into a deer forest?—Yes, that is quite right.

47,806. Do you think there is any desire on the part of the proprietors to give back the pasture to the tenants of the low-lying grounds?—In my opinion, not the majority of them.

47,807. With regard to the erection of steadings, do you think now that if the crofters got small holdings with security of tenure they would put up the necessary buildings themselves?—I know some of them would.

47,808. So that to a great extent you think the lands would be taken up without there being any help given them by Government or any other public source?—I am not certain of that in a far-away place like Sir John Ramsden's. Old arable land is very ill to cultivate, and a party going there, perhaps with small means, would not be very willing to go in. But there is one thing that I am always contending for: how is it that Scotland is not getting money as well as Ireland? That is a matter that you, My Lord, and the other gentlemen of the Commission should contend for also.

47,809. Would it not be better if these people could make a living on these farms independently, without help from the outside at all? If they got a fair rent, security of tenure, and a size of farm suitable for them, would it not be a much better thing for them to do without help?—Oh, yes, there are a good few who would take it that way and be able to go into it.

47,810. And you think such a scheme as that would be successful?—I do; that is my opinion.

47,811. *Mr Gordon.*—You were telling us about the former rents of the big farms: can you give us any reason in your own knowledge why the rents have fallen?—I think it is owing to the bad times, the markets going up and down, and so on.

47,812. Has the fall in rents led, in your opinion, to turning a part of the higher ground into deer forest?—Not at that time. I don't know about the deer forest at Monadh-liath on The Mackintosh's estate,—it is not long since, but the old forest that was made here was not on that account.

47,813. What was the object then; to bring in an increased rent?—My opinion was that the object was partly for sport. Ardverikie was then in the hands of Cluny Macpherson, and so was Ben-Alder; and before that time the farmer who was there had a good sheep stock on it.

47,814. On what farm?—On Ben-Alder.

47,815. Whose estate is that on?—On Sir John Ramsden's. As to the reason why Cluny Macpherson sold that estate to Sir John Ramsden I cannot say. I think it was the Marquis of Abercorn who made a deer forest here first of all.

47,816. About what time was that?—About fifty-six years ago.

47,817. That would be about the year 1838?—Yes.

47,818. These were very bad times for farmers, were they not? Possibly you do not remember them?—It was a very good time for sheep then.

47,819. I don't think times were very good then?—I cannot say that I remember particularly about them, but I remember the year 1838. They were coming on very well by degrees at that time.

47,820. They had very low prices from 1838 up to 1854, had they not?—Yes, but what was the rent then in comparison with afterwards.

47,821. What I want to get your opinion about is this: what was the immediate cause of the land having been recently afforested? Was it not the fact that sheep were not paying?—Most likely the sheep were not paying so well as the deer: there must be something at the root of it.

47,822. The farmers here, in the farms of Shirrabeg and Shirramore, had nothing to do with deer; they were simply sheep farmers, and did they not find that they were unable latterly to give the rents which they formerly paid?—Yes, I knew the tenant who was there.

47,823. He was unable to renew the farm at the old rent?—He was wanting the farm also at a reasonable rent.

47,824. He wanted the farm, but he could not afford to give that rent?—No.

47,825. Now, there must have been some reason for that: either that the expense of wintering had increased, or that the price of sheep had decreased? How is it then that all the farms in Sir John Ramsden's hands are under sheep?—Sheep must be paying well when that is the case.

Kingussie. Donald Cattanach.

47,826. Is it not because he cannot get the old rent? Now you told us about this regiment of people that at one time could have been raised on the west half of the parish, in your grandfather's time?—One half of a regiment.

47,827. Would it be possible, do you think, that these same people could occupy that land now to profit?—Their children.

47,828. I mean the same number of people?—I am not very sure if the same number would; I would not like the croft to be very small,—I am against that, but to divide the arable and the pasture.

47,829. But you say you were for thirty-five years a shepherd?—No, but I was a shepherd thirty-five years ago.

47,830. But you have a knowledge of sheep?—Yes, partly.

47,831. Is it possible in the meantime to farm one of these high farms with a wedder stock, profitably?—Yes, according to the rent.

47,832. But, even supposing you paid no rent I am not sure that you could farm it profitably?—Oh, I scarcely think that.

47,833. What would you pay for the wintering of 2000 sheep stock?—Five or six shillings per head, by sending them to the low country.

47,834. You would pay all that?—Yes. Now, for wedders you would get from 40s. to 45s. or 47s. and up as far as 50s. I think Lady Menzies was once getting that.

47,835. But what would she get now?—Now, take out the rent and take out the wintering and all the expenses and I think you would have 15s. or thereabouts over.

47,836. It may look well enough on paper, but I fancy it would hardly work so well. Take last year, for example; the same sheep that you spoke about as fetching 40s. to 50s. only fetched 35s. last year?—I cannot speak as to last year's prices; I pay very little attention to it now.

47,837. But you are speaking of facts that must happen, if we are to follow your advice. It is a very serious question if you put men down into a place where they cannot live?—But I gave it already as my opinion that they would be able to live. When they lived there before, why should they not do so now?

47,838. Because the expense of wintering is greater; that is one reason?—Well, let them keep less sheep, and put the lands under black cattle, which would stand all the winter gales, and horses also.

47,839. I am questioning you about the higher grounds. I quite admit that if you got them at a moderate rent it is possible to make them pay. But the higher lands that are at present under deer were formerly grazed by a wedder stock, which it is notorious to every man who knows about the sheep business would not now pay: they cannot occupy these grounds with sheep to profit?—I would like that you would give me that in writing before I could give an opinion on it.

47,840. You will have it in writing?—Well, that is my opinion: that they would pay.

47,841. I am sorry to say it is not mine. That is the great difficulty, the higher grounds?—The higher grounds are excellent pasture; you cannot get better pasture scarcely in the Highlands of Scotland, or even in the south of Scotland, taking the heather and the grass together. There are valleys in Sir John Ramsden's lands, west there even to the top of Ben-Alder, where you will find wild clover.

47,842. What height is that?—Well on to 4000 feet.

47,843. You know that no live animal could be kept up there in the winter time?—The flock that I was herding was kept just on the south side of the loch where Sir John Ramsden's deer forest is now.

47,844. But not at the height you spoke of?—Not at that height always, but sometimes if a fine winter day would come, even the cows would go up in the spring time. A man who went up after them was once caught in the snow-drift, and he was lost. The pasture is very good on all the hills, even on Carn-Dearg; and even on this side of Ben-Alder, I have seen a flock of sheep with a gamekeeper under Lord Bentinck beside where I was herding sheep then.

47,845. *Mr Sutherland.*—In everything that you have spoken to, you speak from your own experience?—Partly from my own experience, and partly from the traditions of my forefathers.

47,846. But with regard to the capability of these places for carrying sheep you are speaking of your own experience?—Yes.

47,847. What is the price at the present time of a wedder sheep in the market?—I don't know; I have not paid much attention to the matter for two or three years back.

47,848. Have you any idea approximately of what the price is? What would a good fat wedder sheep fetch in the market?—I cannot say.

47,849. Can you tell us what is the price in the market of a stag?—No, I was never in the market where I could see a stag.

47,850. So you don't know the difference in value between them?—I believe, however, that the carcases of deer have been put into the market from this country, for all that.

47,851. But you yourself never saw one in the market?—No, I did not.

47,852. I rather directed my question to the point of the difference in value between the product raised under one condition and that raised under the other; between the deer and the sheep?—Well, there is no doubt that the deer would pay the proprietor better than the sheep: he is perhaps getting a higher rent for sport.

47,853. So your answers to previous questions were directed entirely to the profit to the proprietor?—To the profit of the proprietor, I should think the deer would be more profitable to him, seeing he keeps deer in preference to sheep.

47,854. In other words, keeping it as a deer forest is more profitable to the proprietor than having it as a sheep-run?—In my opinion that is most likely, or else he would turn the lands back into sheep-runs.

47,855. You stated, I think, the area of Badenoch was about 1000 square miles?—From that to 1400 square miles.

47,856. And that that was inhabited at present by about 100 families, exclusive of the villages?—Yes; that is a rough estimate of the number.

47,857. What clan country is this?—Most of them are coming under my own clan.

47,858. Which clan?—The Mackintoshes, and the Macphersons are the most; the proprietors.

47,859. Were these two clans exclusively Badenoch ople?—Yes; the Macphersons and the Mackintoshes, from very far back.

7,860. And is that the territory that you say now is practically held by 100 families,—the land that these two clans occupied?—Yes.

47,861. The territory of the two Highland clans of Macpherson and Mackintosh is now distributed over 100 families, exclusive of the villages?—But at that time the most of Badenoch was under the Duke of Gordon.

47,862. It makes no difference under whom it was; I am talking of the distribution of the land among the people?—Yes, that district is now swallowed up with about 100 families, exclusive of some cottars and the two or three villages.

47,863. Then, about the forest of Gaick: you corroborated what Mr Campbell, the previous witness, said with regard to the deer forest of Gaick having been grazed by horses and cattle?—Yes.

47,864. Whose horses and cattle were they?—I was told by my grandfather that there was a grazier there once called George Strathdee, and, I think, his grandson is here still,—perhaps he is in this house here. He was grazing cattle then I was told; I saw the man myself.

47,865. It was called also a summer grazing?—Most likely.

47,866. Whose cattle grazed there in summer that did not in winter?—I am not very sure of that. What

Kingussie. Donald Cattanach.

I was told is that that man was then grazing black cattle,—not horses; I don't think he was going in for horses, but black Highland cattle. The same grazier was also in Strathcrrick and in Gaick.

47,867. I do not wish to detain you much longer, but I would like to ask you one question about the difficulty which you said would be encountered in making new holdings. I think you said it was a proprietor who suggested the difficulty to you. Now, has anything been done in this district by proprietors in the way of enlarging the grazings of crofters?—Yes, on the Belleville estate.

47,868. With that exception, do you know any other?—No, I do not remember at present.

47,869. You are aware, are you not, that the extension of grazings does not necessitate the erection of new buildings?—Grazings come in more handy than putting up new buildings.

47,870. Extension of grazings would not require new buildings at all?—No.

47,871. Then that objection to the enlargement of holdings could not exist?—No.

47,872. And yet you only know the one case,—was it on the estate of Belleville where such extensions have been given?—I don't remember just now.

47,873. Now, with regard to the money, you were saying that Highlanders ought to get the same as Irish tenants. Have you any idea who has to pay for that money?—Most likely perhaps I would pay some of it myself.

47,874. Are you aware that it is all left on the tenant?—It does not matter when it is coming back again; he would get his living out of it.

47,875. But where the money comes from the Government, or from a bank, or elsewhere, it is all the same to the tenant?—It is all the same to the tenant, the same as all the other things that are going back and forward in the world.

47,876. Had you it in your mind when you made the statement, that the whole thing had to be paid for by the tenant in the end?—Well, I have no objection to that at all; let them pay that, giving them plenty time to do it.

47,877. Then you think the tenant could give all the security that is necessary?—Oh, yes, they are all honest people in the Highlands, mostly.

47,878. But apart from their character would there be any other security?—Yes, most likely: the Government would require security, there is no mistake about that.

47,879. What security suggests itself to your mind that could be given for the land?—I don't know: perhaps they would not take my policy for the like of that.

47,880. But it is important to have your opinion on it?—Well, let them have the money from the Government and put it into a bank, and put a surveyor or an officer to look after it and to have control over these farms.

47,881. But does no material security of any kind suggest itself to your mind?—No.

47,882. Suppose buildings were put up?—There are some that would put them up themselves.

47,883. And do you think a great number of them would be able to do that, especially in this locality?—Perhaps not a great number, going so far back as Sir John Ramsden's lands; but round about here there are a great many that would take the farms here and put steadings on them too.

47,884. You stated before that there were a great number of advantages for profitable occupation now that were not available 80 years ago?—Yes, there is no doubt about that.

47,885. Is there for one thing a vast improvement in the facilities of communication,—the railway for instance?—In everything mostly. Just compare the state of matters now with what it was a hundred years ago, when it took a fortnight for a letter to come from London.

47,886. And if you wanted any material for building a house, there was nothing except what you made yourself?—It would just come from the Baltic Ocean or any ocean that is round about there; it would take a week at any rate.

47,887. If you wanted to build a house now, is it not the fact that in a very short time you can get from Edinburgh or Glasgow window frames, for example, that were made in America?—The whole of the house: I was making them myself.

47,888. And is that one reason why, in your opinion, it would be easier for them to make a livelihood than before?—Better in every respect; better for tradesmen and joiners and merchants and every class, helping each other in every way and putting money into circulation. Besides, it would be for six or seven families instead of one.

47,889. You said also that, in your opinion, the climate was improving. That leads me to ask about this being a frosty country?—Not to a very great extent; sometimes it spoils the crop. Two years ago it spoiled the crop, but that is the only occasion I remember, except one other year.

47,890. You are not free from frost, then?—Not altogether: but the frost was also in the low country, near the sea.

47,891. And in the south country?—Most likely.

47,892. Are you aware that the hop crop in the southern parts of England is frequently spoiled by frost?—I was not aware of it, but I am aware of it now.

47,893. In fact, there is no place in Scotland that is free from frost?—No.

47,894. It may be more severe here, but it is met with all over at the same time?—Even in the oldest historical ages we read of the people living in the woods without clothes or shelter of any kind.

47,895. So you think that this question of the severity of your climate does not enter very seriously into the question?—Not at all.

47,896. Is not this place a very fashionable health resort?—Yes.

47,897. Those whose frames become enervated in warmer climates come here to be set up, do they not?—It is the healthiest place in the known world, so far as the fresh air is concerned.

47,898. As a matter of fact, it is a great health resort, is it not?—Certainly, by all means.

47,899. What is the altitude of the cultivated land of Newtonmore?—I should say between 500 and 700 feet. [*Mr Watson, Surveyor.*—810 feet.]

47,900. Do you know the farm of Glenbanchor?—Yes.

47,901. Is there any land cultivated there?—Not now.

47,902. Did you ever see it cultivated there?—Yes.

47,903. Did it yield good crops?—As good as are in the country. I was there as a boy, and the recollection of the colour of the oats is still in my mind, it was such a pretty red; just in the centre of that glen.

47,904. Do they raise crops there now?—No, it is under sheep.

47,905. Was it on account of the frost, do you know, that they stopped cultivating it?—Oh, no, not on account of the frost.

47,906. Are you aware that it is over 1000 feet high?—Well, I would not take it to be more.

47,907. Are you aware that it is about 1000 feet?—No, I do not know; I should not think it is 1000 feet.

47,908. Did you ever see people on that farm?—Yes.

47,909. More people than are there now?—Yes, I have seen between thirty and forty scholars coming to our school from the glen.

47,910. And how many families are there to-day?—Two families; two shepherds.

47,911. When did the land cease to be in cultivation?—A few years ago.

47,912. And, in your opinion, would that be a suitable place for crofters?—A very suitable place.

47,913. How do you hold in Newtonmore; are you crofters?—No, feuars; the feuars have a few acres.

Kingussie. Donald Cattanach.

Kingussie. — Donald Cattanach.

47,914. Have you a feu of the land and of the house together, or have you got them separately?—Separately.

47,915. You have feus of the houses and you are given the land from year to year?—Yes, we are given the acres from year to year.

47,916. Are the feus perpetual, or building leases?—They are for ninety-nine years.

47,917. Did you build the houses yourself?—Yes.

47,918. Did you do that without any help?—Yes, without any help from any one.

47,919. You did not get Government aid for doing that?—No.

47,920. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Do you think it would pay a proprietor to divide a farm into small holdings?—Yes, I think so, why not?

47,921. Would he not have to build a house and steading for each holding?—That is just according to agreement: if he thinks that proper himself. It would not pay him for a while to put up steadings and everything; but after a while I should think it would pay him, unless he would go too high altogether, thinking he was going to make a fortune out of a few crofts.

47,922. How long would it take before he was repaid the money expended on the steading?—That would depend on the size of the steading and the size of the croft; but just to pay interest in the pounds, starting at 3½ or 4 per cent.

47,923. Supposing you were the laird of a moderately-sized farm outside this mysterious 'treaty of 'union' that you tell us of?—That was just my own opinion.

47,924. I had not heard of this union before, but we will suppose it exists, and that you were a proprietor who wished to break up your farm into four smaller holdings. What would the dwelling-houses and steadings cost you for each of the four?—Between £200 and £300.

47,925. Well, four of these would cost £800 taking it at your lower figure?—Yes.

47,926. Now, keeping your farm as one holding, what would the dwelling-house and steading cost,—it would not be so much, would it?—Oh, no, it would not be so much; it is only one steading, perhaps a little larger.

47,927. Still it would not cost £800?—No: well, perhaps about £800.

47,928. One steading?—Yes, one steading; the dwelling-house and steading would come to very close upon that figure,—I mean of the class of most of the farms hereabout.

47,929. I think you ought to put up a fairly good dwelling-house and a fairly good steading for a good deal less than that. What size of farm are you speaking of?—If 20 acres were put out, with pasture accordingly for sheep and cattle in a township, that would support a family.

47,930. What is the size of the large farm, with a dwelling-house and steading, that would cost £800?—Perhaps 100 acres arable might be in one of them, and 200 acres in another, and so forth.

47,931. But that size of farm would divide into more than four small holdings?—Well, the dwelling-houses that are put up to-day are very costly,—very picturesque and very expensive; but fifty years ago it was very different; why, now-a-days the dwelling-houses themselves cost £300 or £400.

47,932. On the small holdings?—On the big farms.

47,933. But how many holdings for crofters would one of these big farms make?—Just according to the size of it; at 20 acres the farm of Ballachroän West and Pitmain would accommodate between ten and twelve crofters.

47,934. That would mean the erection of ten or twelve dwelling-houses and steadings?—And perhaps more.

47,935. Take ten or twelve at £200 each,—that is over £2000?—Yes.

47,936. Which would be £1200 of additional expense to the proprietor at the outset, to say nothing of fencing or any other improvement?—Well, put the price on the crofters, and then in such and such a time according to agreement the price would be paid.

Kingussie. — Donald Cattanach.

47,937. But I want to know how is it going to be paid?—By the crofters paying a percentage in the £ of the cost of building until the cost was repaid.

47,938. Would you like to take a croft on these conditions, burdened with interest so that you would have to pay the cost of your dwelling-house as well as the rent of your croft?—Yes, if I was for a croft I would take it on that condition myself.

47,939. Have you had any practical experience of farming as well as shepherding?—Yes, I have some experience of farming; I would manage a farm if I were to go into it.

47,940. Just imagine yourself the proprietor of one of these large farms, and that you have made up your mind to break it up into ten small holdings; would you like to face the additional expense of this £2000 for the new dwelling-houses and steadings?—Yes.

47,941. Supposing that you had not much ready money in hand?—You are taking in the twelve crofters for that sum. Now, the proprietor and themselves might agree, and go in for that sum of money, and get it from the bank and pay interest or discount on it, until such time as the money was repaid.

47,942. Yes, but somebody would have to be paying the mason meanwhile for putting up the dwelling-house?—I am taking in the whole scope, that the proprietor and the crofters would go together and take it out from the bank.

47,943. You mean that the proprietor and the crofters are to find the money between them?—Yes, and to put up the buildings, and the crofter to repay the amount borrowed, through time.

47,944. But remember that the crofter, in addition to having to provide half of the cost of the house and the steading, would have to find money for the stocking of the farm?—Well, put all that on. I was told that some of our proprietors are dealing with their crofters in this way.

47,945. Do you not think it is a very serious item of expenditure that the landlord would have to meet, when he finds that by breaking up one farm into ten holdings it would cost him at least £2000?—He would not be losing a penny, for that £2000 would come back to him again when the crofter would pay it.

47,946. But are you quite sure that he would get back this £2000?—Quite sure; if not the proprietor would have the stock.

47,947. I do not think many men of business would care to go into a transaction of that sort?—That is most part of their business; over in America, where it is very usual to mortgage farms, you will find one-third of the farms under mortgage.

47,948. I am afraid these are hardly such profitable transactions as you appear to think?—Yes, if the proprietor and the crofters went together to break up the land. Look at old 'Ossian' Macpherson; he would not part with these crofters for anything; they were a guard round about him like soldiers, and when he was on his death-bed there were two of these crofters watching him every night. He wished to give them a life lease before he died, but they would not accept it to dishonour his son. If proprietors would come in that way now, they would just come to be like one family again. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Was that 'Ossian' Macpherson?—Yes. He knew the position and the state of the country; he was educated among the people, and lived in their midst.]

47,949. Is it the case that the landlord who wished to break up a large sized farm into ten holdings would have to face a very considerable additional expense in building the dwelling-houses and steadings that would be required for these ten holdings?—No.

47,950. But somebody would have to put them up?—Not in the least, I look at it in this light; at first the crofters would pay interest, not the proprietor at all, and through time the whole would be paid; then the whole would fall to the proprietor and to the crofter.

47,951. But you are looking too far ahead: I want

Kingussie. — Donald Cattanach.

you simply to look at the initial cost of the experiment. Somebody would have to find £2000 to set up these ten dwelling-houses and steadings, is that not the case?—Certainly.

47,952. *Mr Macleod.*—Do you know anything of a place called Aberarder?—Yes.

47,953. Can you give us any particulars about it; how is it occupied at the present time?—I am not very sure about that, because I was told that Aberarder was grazed, rented for grazing to Sir John Ramsden.

47,954. Perhaps you could tell us first who is the proprietor?—Cluny Macpherson; it is in the parish of Laggan.

47,955. Can you tell me the extent of it?—Not exactly, but I can give you an idea how many miles are on the road: it will be between five and six miles long.

47,956. What would be the average breadth then?—About the same.

47,957. And you understand it has been let as a grazing to Sir John Ramsden?—So I was told; but there are some here who could give you the exact information.

47,958. Can you tell me how it was occupied in your memory?—I remember one Sinton a farmer there, and I was told one Macpherson had it before his time. After Sinton it was one Purdie who had it.

47,959. Putting it shortly, has it always been occupied as a sheep farm within your recollection?—Yes.

47,960. How was it occupied before it was a sheep farm,—do you know that, or did you ever hear it from your father or grandfather?—Yes, part of it; there was a croft on this end called Dubh-loch Croom,—a good croft; and at Aberarder there was another; it was a kind of township as far as I can remember, between the west and the east, and Loch Crunachan and all these coming into it.

47,961. Have you any knowledge as to whether the small tenants that were in that place left it of their own will, or were forcibly removed?—In my opinion, they were forcibly removed: there is a man living here,—but he is blind now,—who saw them there; he was in their houses.

47,962. Is that man here to-day?—He is in the village here; you may send for him if you like,—William Mackintosh: his son told me that his memory is as strong as ever. He would give you full information about the people who were living there. In Shirramore there were sixteen crofters forced out.

47,963. We have just been told that Mr William Mackintosh cannot attend: what have you heard from him?—I was told by his son that when he was a boy he was in the house of one of the crofters who lived in Aberarder farm.

47,964. But what I want information about is whether these tenants left of their own free will?—I cannot say as to that.

47,965. *The Chairman.*—It appears from the Valuation Roll that the lodge and offices of Aberarder are let at a rent of £70, the shootings at a rent of £600, and the deer forest of Aberarder at a rent of £500. Now, there is just one thing I would like to ask and it is this: do you know whether the crofters of Badenoch possess any hill pasture at present?—Oh, yes, and good hill pasture too.

47,966. A considerable stretch of it?—Yes.

47,967. Have all the crofters in Badenoch hill pasture?—Not all of them; there are two or three over there in Glenfeshie whose hill pasture was cut away from them in Mackintosh of Mackintosh's deer forest some years ago: but they have an outlet to the foot of that hill pasture. But over on this side here, on Belleville's estate, they have very good hill pasture; and the same is the case with Sir John Ramsden's land west there in Crathie,—very good hill pasture.

47,968. Then, does there not exist any desire for additional hill grazing by the crofters in the area you have been speaking of?—Yes; some of them would require to have more arable.

47,969. They are desirous more for additional arable than for additional grazing?—Some of them, and others would rather have the pasture.

Kingussie. — Donald Cattanach.

DONALD MACPHERSON, Newtonmore (74)—*examined.*

Donald Macpherson.

47,970. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

47,971. How were you occupied when you were a younger man?—I was a shepherd.

47,972. Where were you engaged as a shepherd?—Over at Knappach.

47,973. Are there any particular lands you wish to bring under our notice?—Yes, the land at Glenbanchor, where my father had a croft.

47,974. Have you come here as an individual, or were you appointed a delegate?—I was sent for.

47,975. Do you remember crofters living at Glenbanchor?—Yes.

47,976. How many?—I remember nine living there.

47,977. Was there a township?—Yes.

47,978. On whose estate is it?—The estate of Belleville.

47,979. How is that land occupied now?—It is under sheep.

47,980. Is it part of a sheep farm?—Part of the farm of Banchor.

47,981. Is it in your opinion suitable for occupation by crofters now?—Well, it would not do in small crofts; it would not pay.

47,982. What size of holdings would require to be formed there in order to pay?—They would need to be a good size larger than they were before.

47,983. Much larger than the old crofts?—Yes.

47,984. Some arable land and hill grazing besides?—There was arable land and grazing too.

47,985. But could there be self-sustaining holdings formed there?—Oh, yes; but it is late, and it is high.

47,986. Then, is it your opinion that it is a suitable place or an unsuitable place for new holdings being formed?—There could be good sized holdings, and pasture along with them.

47,987. Then, would you be in favour of holdings being made there, or do you think it is not a very suitable place?—It would do for large holdings but not for small crofts as was before.

47,988. What rent do you have in your mind when you speak of a large size?—To have one in place of two of the crofts.

47,989. You would have a holding twice the size of the holdings you used to know?—Yes.

47,990. What size would that be?—Twenty acres or so.

47,991. Of arable land?—Yes.

47,992. Both for sheep and cattle?—For sheep and cattle.

47,993. What rent would you propose for such a holding?—I could not put a rent on it; it would be according to the times and the prices.

47,994. Is there any other piece of ground that you could bring under our notice for consideration besides this Glenbanchor?—There is plenty land through the country that is not taken in.

47,995. Just try and mention the particular places?—There are large farms all round.

47,996. We have heard a great deal since we began this meeting about these farms: do you corroborate the evidence that has been given to us about them?—Yes.

47,997. Is there any special matter you would like to call our attention to, or may we take you generally as agreeing with the evidence that has been given by the preceding witnesses?—Yes, I agree with what was said.

47,998. Do you want to add anything to it?—Nothing that I know; I would answer any questions.

47,999. If there is any particular piece of land that you know specially about and would like to direct our attention to, we should be glad to hear you; on the other hand, if we may take you as generally concurring with what has been said, we need not detain you?—I

Kingussie.

Donald Macpherson.

think it has been told plainly already that the large farms here have plenty of land and I need not go over that again.

John Macdonald.

JOHN MACDONALD, Mason, Newtonmore (36)—*examined.*

48,000. *The Chairman.*—You are a mason at Newtonmore?—Yes.

48,001. Do you desire to speak about any particular lands?—A little about Glenbanchor, just what I know. My father was a crofter there at one time; he died when I was only nine years of age, and my mother strove hard to keep this poor place going for our living, but by the time I was seventeen years of age we were turned out. I was the oldest of the family; there were four of us, and we were turned out just when we were getting fit to work the place.

48,002. Who was your landlord?—Belleville. The rent was raised two years before we were evicted. We had been paying £20, and it was raised to £23, 10s.; the crofters never went against that, they paid it without remonstrance.

48,003. Were you in arrear of rent at that time?—No, quite free; there was not a penny of arrear on the place at all.

48,004. What was done with the holding?—It was put under a sheep farmer.

48,005. Then, were there any other removals in the vicinity of your place?—Five crofters in all were turned out.

48,006. Where did your family go to?—We came into Newtonmore, and some of us started a trade; a brother of mine has been shepherding, and two of us went to the mason trade.

48,007. All these holdings have been consolidated into a sheep farm?—Yes.

48,008. And carried on as a sheep farm since?—Yes.

48,009. Were they very suitable holdings when you remember them?—Oh, yes: some years I saw very good crops, and other years very middling.

48,010. I suppose each of the holdings consisted of arable land and outrun, and some hill grazing?—Yes.

48,011. Is it your opinion that such holdings, or rather large holdings, could now be formed there?—Yes: I think if it was made into three large holdings it would do very well.

48,012. Would occupants be got for these holdings who would undertake them without outside assistance?—It is my opinion that they could.

48,013. Were there good crops grown on your holding?—Yes, I saw very good crops.

48,014. Corn and potatoes?—Corn and potatoes and turnips.

48,015. And barley?—Yes; but in other years the crop was very poor.

48,016. Did your holding in your recollection suffer much from frost?—Oh, yes, some years. The year before we were evicted we repaired all our houses; by this time we had got over our troubles. Our houses were, of course, poor houses, thatched houses, but we put new wood into them, which we bought in Glentruim and carted for seven miles. We had just got that winter's use of it when we were turned out at the term, and never got a penny of compensation.

48,017. How had your holding been made: had you got arable land, or had it been reclaimed?—Oh, yes, we had arable land.

48,018. But had it been made arable by your family's exertions, or was it arable when you got it?—It was my grandfather who went there first.

48,019. Did he get a holding there, or did he make the holding?—He got a holding.

48,020. Did he extend the arable?—I don't think he did.

48,021. Did he get a building, a house?—There was a house there when he went.

48,022. I daresay he repaired it from time to time?—Yes.

48,023. Is there any other land that you know about?—No, all the rest was before my day, and I do not wish to speak except of what I know clearly. Kingussie.

John Macdonald.

48,024. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—I understand you were seventeen years of age when your mother lost her croft?—Yes.

48,025. Did you go to the mason trade then?—Yes, I commenced the mason trade at once whenever we were clear of the place.

48,026. Then you have had no actual experience of farming since you were seventeen years of age?—Yes, I could work a farm right enough.

48,027. But have you, as a matter of fact, done any farming since you were seventeen?—Not any.

48,028. *Mr Sutherland.*—You are in Newtonmore now, are you?—Yes.

48,029. How did the crops that you had in Glenbanchor compare with the crops you have now in Newtonmore?—Some years they were quite as good as in Newtonmore, but in other years the frost, of course, is more felt in Glenbanchor.

48,030. When there is no frost in other places there is frost in Glenbanchor?—Yes, and I think it is stronger in Glenbanchor.

48,031. Probably, according to the altitude. Is the difference in height very great?—Yes, a good bit.

48,032. But you always had crops: you always turned it up?—Yes, of course, but there would be years when we would have to buy seed. But there was splendid pasture along with it.

48,033. What stock had you there?—150 sheep.

48,034. Each, or altogether?—I think we had the largest number there.

48,035. But you had 150 sheep stock of your own?—Yes, with 6 cows and a pair of horses.

48,036. Have you a feu at Newtonmore?—Yes.

48,037. Have you any land there?—Just a tenement, just a feu.

48,038. Did you build a house at Newtonmore when you went there?—Yes, ourselves.

48,039. Without getting any compensation for the old place?—Without any.

48,040. How long ago is that?—Eighteen years in May last.

48,041. And is it still in one holding now?—Yes, it is all under sheep yet.

48,042. When did it go out of cultivation?—We heard to-day that it was cultivated at one time and that it is not now. Was it allowed to go out of cultivation when the people were turned out?—Yes, it has not been cultivated since.

48,043. The cultivation ceased when the people left?—Yes, I believe there was only one offer for the place, and if it had not been for that offer we would have been in it to-day.

48,044. Had you a lease?—Yes, but the lease expired two years before the crofters were turned out.

48,045. And the leases were not renewed?—No, whenever the leases expired the rent was raised. In our case the increase was £3, 10s.

48,046. So that is an explanation of where part of the present population of Newtonmore came from?—Yes.

48,047. Where did the rest of them come from?—I cannot say.

48,048. Do you know any other holder of a feu in Newtonmore at present who was a crofter formerly in the country round about?—Yes, there are some in Newtonmore who were crofters in Strone and that district; but I don't think they were evicted; they left of their own accord.

48,049. You said you do not know any other land to which you wish to call our attention?—No; all that I know concerning any other part is that my paternal grandfather had a farm in Glenmore called Biglan. He was evicted out of that along with several others to make room for deer and he went to Glenbanchor.

48,050. When was Newtonmore made, do you know?—I cannot say.

48,051. On whose estate is it?—On Belleville's estate.

48,052. So that you were only shifted from one part

Kingussie.
John Macdonald.

of the Belleville estate to the other?—I do not know whose estate Glenmore is on.

48,053. You erected that house at Newtonmore upon a feu?—Yes; we just bought the feu and built the house.

48,054. And does the land which you got, as we were told to-day, follow as a right to the feu,—has every feuar got a piece of land?—Just ¼ acre I suppose.

48,055. What is the price of the ¼ acre?—We pay just 10s.: that is at the rate of £2 an acre.

48,056. For the arable land you have?—For the feu: we have not got other arable land. We have two feus.

48,057. How many apartments are in your house?—There are two properties, two houses.

48,058. But are the houses built on feus at Newtonmore of much the same size?—There are different sizes, some a storey and a half, and others two, while some have only one storey.

48,059. Have they generally got slated roofs?—Yes, except three or four.

48,060. Are they as good houses as you would expect on a small farm, or as would be necessary on a small farm?—Yes, I think the smallest would suit very well on a small farm.

48,061. And did they build them without any assistance?—Yes.

48,062. Do you know any reason why they should not build them also on small farms if they got them,—equally good houses?—I think it could be done.

48,063. It was done in the past?—Yes.

48,064. *Mr Maccallum.*—You know Glenbanchor better than the rest of the land round about here, but you must have a general knowledge of the country. Do you think there are many other places fully better for occupation by crofters than Glenbanchor?—Yes, many that are far better.

48,065. I suppose you agree with the evidence that was given by the other witnesses, so far as your knowledge goes?—Oh, yes: of course, they are older and have more knowledge.

48,066. Now, when you find a place that is suitable for a small holding, do you think there would be any great difficulty in getting the buildings put up?—In a good few cases I know that plenty would build if they got a piece of land at a fair rent.

48,067. They would more readily do that if they had security of tenure, I suppose?—Oh, yes.

48,068. And a fair rent fixed by some impartial tribunal?—Yes.

48,069. Now since this land has gone out of cultivation, has it deteriorated in quality, do you think? Would Glenbanchor, for instance, keep as large a stock now as it did at the time when it was converted into a sheep farm?—Oh, yes, I think the ground is much better; it is the better of the rest. It is bound to be stronger now for crop and pasture and everything.

48,070. You think the arable land is quite as good?—Yes, and better.

48,071. But is it not your opinion that if land is out of cultivation for a long time the pasture deteriorates?—A few years would take it in right enough.

48,072. It might be better perhaps for re-cultivation; but being out of cultivation for a long time surely deteriorates the pasture?—Yes, for a few years. Of course, it would be seven years before it would be all under cultivation, the same as it was before.

48,073. Then, do you think there would be any loss at all to the proprietor in the process of breaking up the large farms into moderately-sized ones, or do you think he would be compensated by the increased value of the land and that it would be more easily let?—I don't think it would be a loss to the proprietor; I think we were paying more rent for Glenbanchor than the proprietor is getting for it now.

48,074. The lands would be very much more valuable in small holdings with suitable steadings on them, than as presently occupied?—That is my belief, at any rate.

48,075. *The Chairman.*—Do you remember how many acres arable were in your holding?—About 17 acres arable is what we had.

48,076. And you had an outrun?—Yes.

48,077. And had you hill grazing besides?—Yes.

Kingussie.
John Macdonald.

48,078. What was the extent of the hill grazing?—I could not say: it was in common.

48,079. It was held in common by your father and the other crofters in the immediate neighbourhood?—Yes.

48,080. But you do not remember its extent?—No.

48,081. Do you remember the total stock upon the grazing,—first cattle and then sheep?—I have not got it, but I could easily make it up.

48,082. Just make it up and let us have it in the course of the day.* Can you tell me what were the rents of the other holdings where the removals took place, when your rent was raised to £23, 10s.?—My uncle was paying exactly the same rent: it was raised from £17 to £23, 10s.

48,083. And what about the others?—There was another Macdonald who was paying £12 I think, and it was raised to £14, 10s.; and a cousin of his again, Alexander Macdonald, I think, was the name, who was paying £12 also, and it was raised to £14, 10s.

48,084. Anybody else?—There was another crofter, Macpherson by name; I think it was £19 he was paying, and it was raised to somewhere above £20.

48,085. Are these all the tenants who were in Glenbanchor?—No; there was another place called Dial'-chaoirinn which now goes under the name of Glenbanchor. The tenants were named Kennedy and they paid £40 of rent, which would make the rent in cash £126 when under crofters.

48,086. Your view is that the rent now paid is lower than what was got from these individuals when they had these separate holdings?—Oh, yes, much less. The present rent is £120.

48,087. *Mr Maccallum.*—What became of the other tenants who were evicted; did they get farms elsewhere on the estate?—Some of them got a croft, and most of them are dead now.

48,088. Did most of them get some other place on the estate?—One of them got another place; all the rest went into villages.

48,089. *Mr Macleod.*—Were you forcibly removed, or did you go away yourselves?—Of course, we were forcibly removed; we could not get the place; it was advertised.

48,090. But, I suppose, you went away yourselves when you saw you could not get it?—Oh, yes, we never went against them.

MALCOLM CATTANACH, Slater, Newtonmore (74)—*examined.*

Malcolm Cattanach.

48,091. *The Chairman.*—Are you a relative of Donald Cattanach?—Yes, he is a son of my half-brother.

48,092. Do you carry on a trade at Newtonmore?—Yes, I carry on the slating trade.

48,093. Had you been a shepherd in previous years?—No; I was born at Milton, on the estate of Mr Macpherson.

48,094. Have you a written statement?—Yes. Glenbanchor is the first farm that Mr Macgillivray has along with the Mains of Banchor. In Croft-Còinneach there were formerly three tenants; in Milton, where I was born and brought up till the age of twelve or thirteen when I came down to Newtonmore, there were four tenants; in Lurgan three tenants; in Dalchully three tenants; in Easterton of Glenbanchor four tenants, and in Westerton of Glenbanchor five tenants. Fifteen families once occupied this place now in the possession of Mr Macgillivray, and never has a plough been put on the land for fifteen or sixteen years.

48,095. What was the date when these changes took place?—A great many of them were before my time; I don't know the date of those in Glenbanchor, but I have bought corn at the sale of some of them.

48,096. How long ago is it since the last of them took place?—Ten or fifteen years, perhaps.

48,097. How many removals took place ten or fifteen years ago?—Dalchully three, Easterton four, Westerton five; these all took place ten or fifteen years ago.

* See page 1171.

Kingussie.
Malcolm Cattanach.

48,098. And do they now form part of the farm of Glenbanchor?—Yes, all these cottars were there cultivating the land, and I was counting that they were very contented when I was cutting the corn there. I have seen the cattle of those who were there at the time; it was one widow, I think she left of her own will.

48,099. And all that land is now consolidated with the farm?—It does not belong to the farm at all; it never belonged to Banchor. It was tenanted by these crofters.

48,100. What was done with it when the crofters were removed?—It fell into the hands of Mr Macgillivray.

48,101. And became part of his farm?—Yes, but it is under sheep.

48,102. Is it not worked along with his farm?—No.

48,103. Is it held under a separate lease?—A separate lease altogether. The sheep never followed Banchor.

48,104. What is it used for now?—Sometimes I go up there perhaps to fish, and I see about forty black cattle there in summer, when the sheep are up on the higher hills. He enclosed part of the hill with a fence to keep the tenants out; he has part of his hill pasture along with some tenants, and he encloses the lower part to protect him from the other tenants encroaching upon him. This lower ground that was cultivated is one of the best places in Badenoch for grass, and he always takes up these cattle,—forty, or perhaps a few more. He lets down the sheep, particularly the lambs, when it comes to this season of the year when he wishes to take the lambs from the sheep; they are brought down to this lower part of the hill.

48,105. Is it very suitable for that purpose?—Very suitable.

48,106. It is good ewe ground?—Yes, the lower part of it.

48,107. I gather from what you say that that land would be suitable for new holdings now?—Quite so. I was in Milton, and I remember perfectly being in the mill along with the miller and his son and some one who had grain in the mill at the time; and the miller then said that Banchor made more meal that year than Strianan.

48,108. What is the character of the soil?—Very deep and good.

48,109. When crops were grown there, were they good in fair weather?—Yes, and as to the pasture, there is not another land in all Badenoch that would beat it. The old fashion was to let it run out, to strengthen itself; and then Glenbanchor was as good as any other part of Badenoch, if not better.

48,110. You submit that land for our consideration now?—Yes.

48,111. It is land which you think we ought to inspect?—Yes. I would be very happy to get a part of it.

48,112. Would you be willing to take up a holding?—I would.

48,113. How many acres arable would you desire to have in your holding?—I have five sons, of whom three are unmarried, and I would like very much to get a place for them. Three of them carry on the slating, but there is so much competition in the slating that I would like, if Providence will, that I should see them in a better position.

48,114. And could you take a holding without assistance?—I could.

48,115. How many acres arable would you apportion to each individual holding?—Three or four years ago another son of mine and other two offered to take Banchor and pay a forehand rent: I believe we offered £15 more than Mr Macgillivray, but still he got it. That was £110, and I would willingly take a place of say the half of that rent.

48,116. What size would that be?—I think Banchor is about one hundred and twenty acres arable or so: I would be very glad to take sixty or seventy acres if I could get it.

48,117. At what rent?—Just at a fair rent. I have been working to all the landlords in Badenoch, and I have a warm heart to each of them, particularly to those that I count to be Highlanders.

Kingussie.
Malcolm Cattanach.

48,118. Now, would you have any hesitation in taking such holdings, or allowing your sons to take such holdings, notwithstanding the low prices that have prevailed of late?—If we could get a lease, or I would rather say if it could fall in under the Crofters Act.

48,119. You mean a fair rent fixed?—Yes.

48,120. And the fixity of tenure conferred by Act of Parliament?—Yes, just so.

48,121. You have in view a holding with a rent fixed by a tribunal, and fixity of tenure under an Act of Parliament?—Yes. I would gladly put up the house myself.

48,122. You would put up the house entirely at your own expense, and stock the farm and carry it on as a regular holding?—Yes.

48,123. Do you know what led to these evictions that took place ten or fifteen years ago? They are much more recent than almost any evictions I have heard of during the last eight years?—Well, there was one in particular, Macdonald, a shepherd that came from the Braes of Laggan, and there were two widows: the one widow gave up her house in Easterton of Glenbanchor; the other widow was uncommonly industrious,—that is the mother of the lad that was examined,—and they were all in middling condition, perhaps this Macdonald had been a little behind, and as we have been told, this Macgillivray understood that some of the tenants were not in the best position, and he made it up with this Macdonald,—I cannot say whether this is true or not, but that is what was going through the country,—he made it up with Macdonald, if he would send a line to Colonel Macpherson giving up the land he (Macgillivray) would take the sheep at valuation and make Macdonald his shepherd: and as the word went, this Macdonald was very deceitful and got them to sign this,—and Macgillivray got the land. That is what I have been told.

48,124. What was the rent of the holding you were in before the eviction took place?—It was £32.

48,125. Did you hold under lease?—There was no lease. My mother died in child-bed when I was nearly five years old, and my eldest brother, Donald, had been learning the slater trade; and another brother of mine died when he was sixteen years of age down at Alvie. My father got a little behind with his rent,—I think the amount was £14,—and he was evicted.

48,126. Do you know any other lands in this neighbourhood that you wish to submit to our attention?—On Mr Macpherson's estate again in Glentruim I knew a man whose children were about my own age. They called him "Watering Tom," because the horses that ran between Dalwhinnie and Pitmain used to get their water there daily, going and coming. That man said that by going up to the knoll at the back of his house, he could count forty-two 'reeks' of tenants, every one of whom had cattle and sheep. I was told a year ago by one of the shepherds in Etteridge, that Major Macpherson, Etteridge, had been at home, and he and this shepherd were one day going to the hill. They went the way of Phoineas and they were up on a knoll above the meal mill. Well, he said, before I went to the army, I could stand here and count thirty tenants within sight of here.

48,127. How is that land occupied now?—It is now under sheep. There were fourteen tenants evicted in one day out of that place, seventy-four or seventy-five years ago.

48,128. What is the name of that place?—They call it Phoineas, and Etteridge, and Lynallan: it is all under a man called Macarthur, who has much more.

48,129. Is that land that we ought to examine and consider?—Yes. You can drive a coach and pair through all the glens and see the waste with your own eyes.

48,130. Can you give us any idea of the extent of land?—No, I cannot say.

48,131. But is it a place where a number of new holdings might be located with good prospect of

Kingussie. Malcolm Cattanach.

success?—Yes, there were forty-two tenants there, and even supposing you gave it to the half of that number they might live very comfortably by occupying the hill pasture along with the low pasture.

48,132. Low pasture, hill pasture, and a certain proportion of arable land?—Yes.

48,133. Is there any other land besides what you have mentioned?—I know Allt-ban; I have been working there a good deal. Allt-ban partly belongs to Mackintosh of Mackintosh, and partly to Sir George Macpherson-Grant, and falls into the Feshie from the East, where there was the White Mill or *Muileann Bàn*, and the Black Mill or *Muileann Dubh* on Sir George's ground. There is no mill on the burn to-day.

48,134. Is there much land there suitable for cultivation?—There was a good deal over there at Ruthven, and I think there were ten tenants there; my wife was born there.

48,135. Is that land now laid down in permanent pasture?—Partly; it is under the one tenant.

48,135A. His farm is now made up of land which partly at least was at one time occupied by these small tenants?—Yes.

48,136. Do you remember how many small tenants were upon the land that now forms part of Ruthven farm?—There is a place Newton, or Balure as we call it in Gaelic, where there were once three tenants, but now under sheep.

48,137. Is that part of Ruthven?—No, but part of Mr Macpherson, of Belleville, in Glenbanchor. On Ruthven there were nine or ten; I remember carting peats there.

48,138. When were they removed, or when did they leave?—I daresay it would be about forty years ago perhaps. Lieut. Macpherson, or as they called him Lieut. Sandy, had Ruthven and the low ground and the park above; these tenants were up from that again.

48,139. You remember these tenants being on what is now Ruthven farm, and being removed?—Yes, perfectly. West from that again is a place called in Gaelic Druim-dhealgaidh, where there were three tenants in my time.

48,140. Is that part of Ruthven?—That is part of Ruthven now.

48,141. Is there any place else that you can speak of?—Biallid, on Cluny ground.

48,142. How many tenants were there?—They were removed before my days, but I heard it said that between Biallidbeg and Cornach there would be ten or twelve tenants.

48,143. And is that land now under sheep?—Yes.

48,144. Is there any other land you know?—I know Laggan West, and I know every bit of Badenoch.

48,145. Take Laggan: do you remember lands there formerly occupied by small tenants and now by sheep?—Not small tenants, they were removed before I remember: but I was told that in Strathmashie where the lodge is now, the wealthiest tenants in the parish of Laggan were. I have been told that the handsomest man in the Black Watch was one Malcolm Macpherson from opposite the Strathmashie lodge.

48,146. Is that land at Laggan suitable, in your opinion, for occupation now?—Yes, I saw it under big tenants; I saw it under Macnab, and under Macdonald, Shirrabeg, and they were big farmers.

48,147. What rents did they pay?—I cannot say.

48,148. Would they be as much as £100?—Yes, more. There were fourteen tenants out of Shirramore itself: that is a place that was tenanted by small crofters. There were sixteen crofters evicted from Shirramore in one day.

48,149. Is that land now all under sheep?—Yes.

48,150. What is the name of the farm?—It is called Shirramore farm.

48,151. So that in order to the formation of the farms as they now exist, removals took place both of small tenants and of large tenants?—Macdonald of Strathmashie died, and his son died too, and the place fell into the hands of Sir John Ramsden. There was one Kennedy in Shirramore; he would not give the rent Sir John wanted.

48,152. And what happened?—He went away.

48,153. What was done with the land?—The land is in the hands of Sir John, under sheep. Kingussie. Malcolm Cattanach.

48,154. Is that land suitable for occupation now?—Very.

48,155. Is Strathmashie now a deer forest?—I think the lower part of it is under sheep.

48,156. Do you know anything particularly about the deer forests in the neighbourhood?—Yes, I know them all, I have been going through these deer forests while doing slater work.

48,157. You have been a good deal over the ground?—Yes.

48,158. Is there land in any of these forests that you would invite us to consider?—Yes, low down, but not high up: it is more suitable for sheep, I should say.

48,159. Extensive grazings could be formed, but the places are not suitable for occupation by crofters?—Not in the hill, but if they were to get the hill along with the low ground it would be very suitable; there would not be better land in the whole country.

48,160. And do you apply that remark to the forests in this land generally?—Yes, if they got the hill part along with the cultivated land it would be suitable.

48,161. That would be the means of forming successful holdings?—Yes.

48,162. To any considerable extent?—Yes.

48,163. Which forest do you refer to more particularly when you say so?—Well, I know Glenfeshie and Gaick.

48,164. Any other forests?—I am not acquainted with those lower down. I know The Mackintosh's forest up to Cro-clack as we call it.

48,165. And do you apply your observations with regard to land to that forest?—No; the hill pasture there is more suitable I think for sheep, and it is nearer to our ground, to the Glenbanchor ground.

48,166. Would you say that considerable tracts of land are now under forest that are more suited for forest purposes than for sheep grazing or for occupation?—No, but it would be much more suitable for small tenants to have the hill along with the low ground.

48,167. You would rather see that than have them under deer?—I would indeed.

48,168. And would you apply that observation to very considerable altitudes?—Yes.

48,169. Sheep grazing with low ground suitable?—Just so.

48,170. Do you think that would be as profitable to the landlord as the deer forests?—As to the deer forests, I cannot say.

48,171. Do you think that such holdings might be carried on profitably to the landlord as well as to the occupant and tenant?—Yes, and I think that including the shooting, it would pay the landlord better than the way it is now.

48,172. Is there not a good deal of land here under forest that has been under forest for many many years, perhaps for centuries?—I don't know any but in Gaick.

48,173. What about Glenfeshie?—Well, perhaps there would be about forty or fifty years.

48,174. Not more than that?—It might be sixty, but I can hardly think so.

48,175. But Gaick is a very old forest, you say?—Oh yes.

48,176. That is to say it has always been forest as far back as human memory goes?—Yes. It is there that the black Lieutenant *An t-Oifigear Dubh* was.

48,177. Is there a desire for additional land?—Yes. I have been speaking to Mr Macpherson for years now, and I was always expecting that I would get it, and I expect that I will get it from him yet.

48,178. In regard to Glenfeshie, the Secretary has called my attention to the fact that at the close of the evidence given before Lord Napier's Commission by Sir George Macpherson-Grant, Mr Fraser-Mackintosh puts this question:—'Do you know that Glenfeshie is an 'old Scottish forest mentioned in old Acts of Parliament?' and the answer is 'I believe such is the case.'—That is not correct. I have been going up to Glenfeshie to slate kennels and keeper's houses there. A tenant of the name of Bell told me the number, and, as far as I

Kingussie.
Malcolm Cattanach.

recollect, he said that there were 40 horses in the glen from top to bottom,—crofters' horses. I am not sure about the number, but I know it was uncommonly high.

48,179. But was there not an old small forest of Glenfeshie always forest?—No, I don't think so: it was a shooting place: the Duchess of Bedford had been there for years, in summer time.

48,180. It was a shooting lodge, was it?—A shooting lodge.

48,181. Well, there seems to have been an impression that the forest was mentioned in Acts of Parliament?—Well, that is not right. I know the man that got the sheep,—they call him Ailidh Dubh or Black Sandy; he was in Bail'-Odharaidh.

48,182. Would you say that there are no forests in this quarter older than the present century?—None except Gaick.

48,183. And are some of the forests of recent formation?—Yes.

48,184. Have some of them been made in your recollection?—The whole of them except Gaick.

48,185. Then before that, were these lands all sheep-runs and crofters' holdings?—Mostly crofters' holdings: there were large farms too, no doubt.

48,186. But the land that is now forest was sheep farms intermixed with crofters' holdings and common grazings?—Yes.

48,187. The whole of it?—The whole of it. Every crofter had part of the hill along with his croft.

48,188. They all had a right of grazing on the hill?—Yes.

48,189. And they all put whatever stock they chose upon it?—Each had a number of sheep according to the rent he paid. At our place in Glenbanchor the general rule was six sheep for every £1 of rent.

48,190. That was a kind of souming?—Just so.

48,191. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Supposing it was possible to fill the forests and glens with small farmers, I suppose it would have a good effect on local tradesmen, such as masons and slaters?—It would, and it would relieve many a hungry belly from being hungry.

48,192. You are a slater yourself to trade?—Yes.

48,193. Have you ever been a practical farmer?—Not a practical farmer; but I got some 14 acres, more than half of which was waste ground or moss, and my sons took it in. Mr Donald Grant, Belleville's factor, who gave it to me is here; he knows all about me and about the land.

48,194. But you have made your living mostly out of your trade as a slater, rather than out of farming?—Yes, by both.

48,195. More as a slater, however, than as a practical farmer?—No; because there is so much opposition in the slating trade that there is not much profit in it.

48,196. Have you made as much then by farming as by slating?—Of course, whatever time my sons could spare for slating, they would employ it in taking contracts, the same as we do now.

48,197. But pardon my pressing the question: have you made more during your life out of slating than out of farming?—I have, because I had no farm.

48,198. *Mr Sutherland.*—Where was the farm you spoke of having?—I had no farm; it is acres that I have. It is not in the name of acres that I have them, but they are down below Newtonmore. I have two one storey houses in Newtonmore.

48,199. Are you a feuar?—I am.

48,200. Who built the house?—One was built by one Donald Cattanach, and the other by James Macpherson, who was a grieve in Biallid; and I bought them from their sons.

48,201. But they built the houses themselves?—They built them with stone and lime, perhaps seven feet high, and thatched them with divots and straw. I put a little more height on them, and slated them.

48,202. Where were your people before you went to Newtonmore?—Up in Milton of Banchor.

48,203. Now, about this Gaick forest: there has been statements made that it was an old forest, and you say that it was not?—I did not; I say it was always a forest, before ever I was born. I don't know particularly whether it was for deer, but there were deer there before I was born.

Kingussie.
Malcolm Cattanach.

48,204. Did you hear to-day in the evidence given by the previous witnesses, that cattle and horses were summered on Gaick?—I believe they were; because the whole of the district was not so very precious at that time as it is now.

48,205. Is it within your knowledge that what was called a deer forest in old times is a very different thing from what is called a deer forest to-day?—I don't know. But whether it was a deer forest or no, when the 'Black Lieutenant' went there, there were deer on it; it was to get deer that he and his party went there at New Year, and were overtaken by a heavy storm.

48,206. Did you ever hear that there were cattle and horses summered on it at that time?—I think there were; so far as I recollect it was open, not like what it is to-day. There were sheilings as they call them, bothies where people used to live while summering their cattle.

48,207. And the deer were there as well?—The deer most likely would keep to the higher part of the hills. When I used to be there slating, I have seen the deer come down to the dale after dark.

48,208. Have you any knowledge of the fact that a forest as it was called in the old times, to which reference has been made here, was a very different thing from a deer forest to-day?—I don't know; deer were very scarce at that time, but they are very plentiful now, and they may give the place another name if they like.

48,209. But as you know, the essential part of a deer forest to-day is that every animal is excluded from it except deer. Was that the way in the old times?—No, not at all.

48,210. Are you aware of the existence of other old forests in other parts of Scotland?—I know nothing about anything but the deer forests in Badenoch, except what I read in the papers.

48,211. Do you know any of the old forests that ever were called deer forests?—I heard of deer forests that the Duke of Athole had.

48,212. Did you ever hear it called the Athole *deer forest*?—I don't think I did.

48,213. Did you ever hear it called the Athole *forest*?—Oh, yes, that is it, just in common talk.

48,214. Are you aware that an old forest as they had them then could not be erected without a Royal Charter?—I don't think they went that length with it; I think they generally just had it under common.

48,215. Don't you know that the forests acknowledged in these Acts of Parliament were Royal forests?—Yes, I believe they were paying very dear.

48,216. The point is, who had the right to make a deer forest?—I don't know; likely Queen Victoria.

48,217. But the present deer forests are not made by special order of Queen Victoria?—No, I don't think so; by the special order of the proprietors.

48,218. Are you aware whether this forest of Gaick is a forest that was made by Royal Charter, or a forest made by a modern proprietor?—I think it was never done by Royal Charter: I think it was open to all.

48,219. But are you satisfied that it is a fact, so far as you can judge and understand, that when Gaick was a forest in the olden times, there were cattle and horses summered on it?—To the best of my belief and recollection there were.

48,220. Now, as to those other places that you referred to; you spoke of Phoineas; supposing we were to drive by road from Kingussie, we could drive up through the whole of the glen and see the land for ourselves?—Yes; you could drive a coach and pair there as far as Dalwhinnie if you like; it is on the Preas-Mucrach as they call it. One Mr Macdonald who has Crubinbeg has Crubinmore, and he has what they call the Preas-Mucrach up from that.

48,221. Could we see a large proportion of the land that you refer to, by driving up the road that I mentioned?—Yes.

48,222. What other land would you suggest our inspecting?—You could go up to Glenbanchor and see

it, and you could go west and see Sir John's lands, the lower ground, on both sides. The Spey comes north this way, and the road to Fort-William the other way.

48,223. But just tell us whether we can see a great portion of the land that has been mentioned here to-day within easy distance from Kingussie?—Yes. If you like I will go and point out every bit of it.

48,224. Was it your father who held the farm of £32 rent?—No, there were four tenants. My grandfather was there, and had been there before the estate came into the hands of Mr Macpherson. My father was the first tenant that paid a shilling to 'Ossian' Macpherson for rent. They left Ballachroan where my father and grandfather were; they went east to Raitts, as they call it, near Belleville.

48,225. Where was 'Ossian' Macpherson born?—He belonged to this country.

48,226. Do you know the exact place?—I don't know whether it was Ruthven,—I am not sure.

48,227. Do you know if the place where James Macpherson was born is still inhabited?—I am not sure. I am told it was in Nuide; it was there he lived before he went away from this country.

48,228. Are there any people in Nuide?—One farmer; there were four or five when I was young.

48,229. Did you say that the rent of the whole of that township was £32?—Yes.

48,230. Did they pay it together?—Each man paid his own share.

48,231. And did you say that they were behind with their rent?—I say that my father was behind, about £14.

48,232. Do you know how the rest stood?—No, I do not know. I think another man was put away the same time as my father,—one, James Mackintosh, who had come in my uncle's place. When my mother's father came to Milton, when his son married, he gave the half of his place to his son; and when my father married hi daughter he gave him the other half that he had kept in his own hands. So my uncle and my father were both there; but my uncle died, and one Mackintosh, from the parish of Alvie, came in his place. I don't know whether Mackintosh was behind a little with his rent like my father, but he was evicted at the same time.

48,233. Was it one farm that was made out of the place when they were all turned out?—Yes, and Lairg and Croft Coinneach were added to it.

48,234. Did the new farm that was made consist only of the land from which these people who were paying £32 of rent were evicted?—Croft-Còinneach and Lairg were along with it.

48,235. How much rent was charged for the land after it became a new farm?—I cannot say; it was Lairg and Milton and Croft-Còinneach all put together.

48,236. Then there is no way of ascertaining whether it paid more rent as a big farm than it did before?—You can just look to the rental book and see it there.

48,237. *Mr Maccallum.*—You told us with regard to these deer forests that they were pastured by the cattle and sheep belonging to crofters?—Belonging to the nearest tenants.

48,238. And you think it would be to the advantage of the tenants to get back the pasture?—Yes, partly; it is very high, but still in summer it would be beneficial to crofters to have it along with the low ground.

48,239. As they had it before?—Just so.

48,240. I think you also expressed the opinion that that could be done without any great loss to the proprietor,—that new holdings could be formed which would participate in the pasture of the deer forests, and that these could pay such rents that the landlord would not suffer?—No, taking into account the rent paid by the shooting tenant for the grouse I think it would be just as beneficial for the landlord as it would be any other way.

48,241. Supposing the deer forests were done away with and the land given back for pasture again, there would be a valuable sporting rent after all?—Yes, there would. The grouse would be there, you know, and it is a splendid place for grouse.

48,242. You think the grouse rent and the pasture rent would together be equal to the rent got for the place as a deer forest?—I would think so.

48,243. Can you tell me whether the proprietors have been put to a great deal of expense in building houses for these deer forests and in building the lodges occupied by the sporting tenants?—Gaick did not cost very much, it is a very old house, I have been repairing it several times. But there are some that cost more.

48,244. On some of the deer forests, are there houses that cost a large some of money?—Well, the Glenfeshie Lodge would not be a very expensive one; it would cost perhaps from £500 to £600, or even it might have cost as much as £1000 I daresay.

48,245. Do you think that the proprietors have paid more attention to the needs of the shooting tenants than to the small holders of land?—I do: I know that the want of their land is the cause of all the misery and discontent in the Highlands.

48,246. These forests you say have been formed within your own recollection?—Yes. Glenfeshie was formed perhaps forty or fifty years ago. I told you of the man called Ailidh Dubh or Black Sandy, who was in a place called Bail'-Odharaidh next to Kincraig. It was he who got the sheep, and he got a year and a half or two years' credit for them; and that was the first thing that put him on his feet. He was paying £40, I believe, for Bail'-Odharaidh, and I believe it was said that he had only £40 in the world when he took it. By getting credit for the sheep he was able to keep the place and make some money there. But places were not so high rented at that time as they are to-day, in general.

48,247. Then concurrently with the formation of the deer forest, has the population of Badenoch very much decreased?—Very much indeed. I remember when I used to go to church as a boy, the number of people young and old that came from Raitts to attend the Established Church would fill one part of it. Then in Glentruim again, I had the contract of the school house, and I happened to be up slating; and one of the scholars named Angus Macpherson—he is now west at Lagg I think—said 'Well, Malcolm, many is the race 'that I had through these vaults playing hide and seek: 'we were often very nearly 100 scholars but we never 'quite reached that number.'

48,248. And how many scholars are there in that district now?—Perhaps there may be half a dozen or a dozen.

48,249. *The Chairman.*—Do you remember the lands of Gallovie?—Yes.

48,250. And the lands of Shirramore?—I knew some men who went there, and when I went there along with my brother to slate a new building for the man that put them away,—Macdonald was his name and he was getting a house and steading put up,—I saw a great many houses on both sides of the road.

48,251. Was Shirramore occupied by crofters?—Yes; there were sixteen of them, I was told, evicted in one day.

48,252. And what about Shirrabeg?—One Macnab was there, but there was one in it in my recollection.

48,253. Then Dalchully?—There was one tenant there, a Macnab also.

48,254. And is there another place called Blargiebeg?—That is part of Dalchully now.

48,255. May I take it that all these places were formerly occupied by small tenants?—Yes.

ALEXANDER CATTANACH, Mason, Newtonmore (43)—*examined.*

48,256. *The Chairman.*—What is your occupation?—I am a mason.

48,257. Have you a feu at Newtonmore?—Yes.

48,258. Are you a relative of the witness who has just been examined?—Yes, a distant relative.

48,259. Where was your father located?—My father had a croft near Newtonmore.

48,260. Have you come here to speak as an individual or as a delegate?—As an individual.

Kingussie. — Alexander Cattanach.

48,260A. What is it you desire particularly to lay before us?—I just wish to corroborate generally what has been stated.

48,261. With regard to the farms and the forests?—Yes. There are too many large farms, in my opinion, and no small farms or small holdings in the market.

48,262. May I take it then that you are in favour of the formation of an additional number of small holdings?—Yes.

48,263. With arable land and grazing?—Yes.

48,264. Do you think that if such holdings were formed they would be readily taken up?—Yes, I have no doubt of it.

48,265. Is that a feeling which prevails in this locality?—Yes, especially about Newtonmore. People have been evicted into there from Glenbanchor and several other parts of the country and they cannot get hold of a piece of land; we cannot get an acre for love or money. Those that have an acre pay about three times as much as the big farmer adjoining. We pay from £1 to £1, 10s. of rent per annum.

48,266. Is that for arable land?—Yes, per acre.

48,267. And is that higher than the neighbouring farm?—Yes, I believe the neighbouring farms are rented at about 10s. back and fore.

48,268. What are the names of the farms adjoining?—The farm of Banchor was supposed to be given out in acres to the village of Newtonmore at one time; when the village was laid out for feus, they were supposed to get all the arable land of the farm, and there is no other industry for them there.

48,269. Then, do you say there is a serious restriction upon the purchase of land at Newtonmore?—There seems to have been, because this County Council could not acquire it, owing to some difficulty in the Acts.

48,270. Were steps taken to acquire land for new holdings, do you know?—Yes. I was not at home at the time, but there were over twenty who made application to the County Council for allotments.

48,271. And what was the result of the application?—I cannot say exactly, but they did not get the land; it was just put off: it was to be expensive, I understand.

48,272. The process was too expensive?—Yes.

48,273. But when you say there is a desire for land in Newtonmore, is it a desire for small holdings of a very few acres, or a desire for self-sustaining crofts?—There is a demand for both. There are lots of people there who would go in for croft,—the like of myself; I am getting rather old to be travelling the country in search of work. And there are others again in the village who would take up a few acres.

48,274. Suppose you got a croft, could you put up the buildings and enter on the holding without extraneous assistance?—If I got the croft on such conditions that it would keep me living and pay me.

48,275. If you got the croft at a fair rent and had security of tenure, you would venture on the scheme?—Yes.

48,276. And do you say there is abundance of land in the immediate neighbourhood of Newtonmore suitable for that purpose,—both for small holdings and for crofts?—Yes, as good as anywhere.

48,277. And also grazing in the neighbourhood,—high and low grazing?—Yes, there is hill pasture. There are lands in Sir John Ramsden's hands that I reckon would keep from fifty to sixty or seventy tenants.

48,278. These are some of the farms we have been hearing about?—Yes, some of the farms in his own hands, that were occupied by crofters formerly.

48,279. *Mr Macleod.*—There was an expression of opinion here to-day,—I don't know whether you agree with it,—that the proprietor in your district was very anxious to give land to small tenants: do you agree with that opinion?—No, I do not see why he does not give it, as he has been asked so often.

48,280. Then it is your opinion that it would be necessary that some power should come into force beyond what exists at the present time?—Certainly; there is no other way of acquiring it that I know of.

48,281. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—With regard to the land round Newtonmore, which you say is capable of profitable occupation for crofters,—how is it occupied just now? What farms do you refer to?—As large farms and sheep runs take the country as a whole, it is all over, here and there. Adjoining Newtonmore are the farms of Banchor, Glenbanchor, and Biallid.

48,282. Take particularly the land near Newtonmore?—The farm of Banchor is situated quite near Newtonmore.

48,283. What size of farm is that? Can you give us a rough estimate of the acreage?—I think the present tenant pays about £100 of rent. [*The Secretary.*—According to the Valuation Roll the rent of Banchor farm is £100; and of Glenbanchor £120. These are both occupied by the same tenant, Allan Macgillivray].

48,284. It is those two farms that you specially point to as the arable land near Newtonmore?—Yes.

48,285. If you were to take a croft, would you be prepared to live by that croft and give up your trade? Or would you still continue your trade?—It would depend on the size of the croft I might get; if I could get enough land to keep me I would stick to it all the year round.

48,286. What acreage would that be, for a farm that would keep you occupied to profit all the year?—Probably twenty to thirty or thirty-five acres arable.

48,287. And how many sheep?—One hundred to two hundred sheep, and a pair of horses. Of course, it would not do to make all the holdings the same size, because you could not get people with enough capital to take them all.

48,288. It would require a man of some capital to start a farm of that size?—Yes, and some could be made smaller than that but some larger.

48,289. But if you make them smaller than that, is it possible for the man to live entirely by the croft?—Well, my father lived on ten acres, and brought up nine of a family, and I think he brought them up more comfortably than I could do with four by my trade.

48,290. Did he do any other work besides attending to his croft?—Very little, if any.

48,291. Did he do any?—Very little; perhaps a little at odd times.

48,292. How many years ago are you speaking of,—forty years ago?—No, about thirty,—from twenty-five to thirty.

48,293. Do you consider that farming is now as profitable as it was thirty years ago?—I think it is more so. Of course, last year there was a low price, certainly, and it would not be so profitable then; but taking it on an average I don't see why it should not be as profitable.

48,294. But is it not a fact that in many parts of the country, farmers,—men who have been engaged in farming all their lives,—find it much less profitable now than formerly?—Yes, that is so with large farmers; but the small farmer can hold out when the big farmer cannot.

48,295. Can a small farmer tide over two or three bad seasons running better than a large farmer?—Yes, I believe he can.

48,296. How?—He does all his work himself and he has no expenses to throw away upon other people; he just attends to his own business.

48,297. But if a bad season comes, and he may make nothing out of his stock and crop, he must have some money laid by to keep him going?—A small farmer cannot afford to go through the country in his machine, and that sort of thing; he must stay at home and do his work. I think he would do better than a large farmer who perhaps is farming on borrowed money, and has servants at home to do the work.

48,298. It depends of course, a good deal on how a man does his work. But do you think there would be many people in the neighbourhood of Newtonmore who would be able to stock and farm a holding of the size you mentioned?—There are a few.

48,299. Not many?—I could not say.

48,300. I am not speaking of a very small holding but of the thirty acres arable?—Of course that would be rather large for the majority. There might be a few who would take that,—three or four, or perhaps six.

Kingussie. Alexander Cattanach.

48,301. At any rate, a man would need to have some capital to start with before he could stock his farm and work it profitably?—Most of them have good houses; and probably a few cattle; they may have £200 to £400 worth in buildings, and they could raise some money on that to stock a farm. I know lots of them who would do it if they had the chance.

48,302. Speaking of the farms of Banchor and Glenbanchor, you say the land that might be made arable is good?—The land is good, but it is rather high, and in late seasons like this probably they could not depend much on the grain. But there is always food for their stock,—plenty of straw and turnips.

48,303. But you say the soil is good?—Yes, the soil is good.

48,304. What kind of rent would a man be able to pay for that kind of land, the cultivated land, per acre?—I cannot say: I think they generally paid from 6s. to 10s. or 15s. an acre, and about 1s. 6d. per head of sheep,—that is the way the valuation on the Belleville estate was made; so much put on the acre of arable land, and 1s. 6d. per head of sheep.

48,305. Supposing that land to be formed into these holdings, would their rent be equivalent to the rent now paid?—I think it would be more.

48,306. And you think that the farmers could afford to pay that rent and maintain themselves and their families besides?—They have done it before; the tenants who were evicted from Glenbanchor did it.

48,307. Paying 10s. to 15s. an acre?—I don't know what the acreage was, but on the whole they paid more for the place than the present tenant, putting all the crofters together.

48,308. But do you think they paid 10s. or 15s. an acre for the arable land?—I believe that would be too much for arable land in Glenbanchor; probably 6s. or 7s. would be enough.

48,309. That is a very considerable difference?—Yes.

48,310. *Mr Sutherland.*—In estimating the value of arable land in Glenbanchor or anywhere else, you mean, of course, along with the arable land, the use of a proportionate amount of pasture?—I think the pasture was valued separately; it was reckoned that the pasture would take so many hundred sheep or cattle, and there was so much per head put on that number, over and above the arable land. I believe that was the rule, but, of course, I cannot tell you the exact figure.

48,311. In the event of facilities being given to form new holdings, you, being a mason, would, of course, be able to do a great deal of the preliminary work of the buildings yourself?—Of course, I could put up my own buildings.

48,312. And I think you stated generally that you could take a new holding without any outside aid?—Yes.

48,313. Are there many in the same position, do you think?—There are a good many.

48,314. *The Chairman.*—Are the lands of Glenbanchor and Banchor on the same estate as Newtonmore?—Yes.

48,315. Then adjoining Newtonmore, is there a place called Biallid?—Biallid is on the Cluny estate, farther west.

48,316. Quite so, but it is near Newtonmore?—Not very far from it; within a mile.

ohn acdonald.

JOHN MACDONALD, recalled—*examined.*

48,317. *The Chairman.*—You send us a note* with regard to the stock held by the crofters who formerly occupied Glenbanchor?—Yes.

Kingussie.

John Macdonald.

48,318. Take first your mother's holding: she was Catherine Macdonald, I think?—Yes.

48,319. How many sheep had she?—One hundred and fifty.

48,320. And how many cows?—Six.

48,321. And followers?—Yes.

48,322. How many horses?—Two horses.

48,323. Then, Donald Macdonald, how many sheep had he?—Just the same.

48,324. And the same number of horses?—Yes.

48,325. Archibald Macdonald; how many sheep had he?—About 100.

48,326. How many cows?—Three cows and followers.

48,327. How many horses?—One horse.

48,328. Next, Alexander Macdonald; what stock had he?—Just the same; 100 sheep, 3 cows and followers, and a horse.

48,329. Then, Ewen Macpherson; what was his stock?—One hundred and eighty sheep, or so, but I am not certain about this number; 6 cows and followers, and two horses.

48,330. That makes a total of 680 sheep, 24 cows and followers, and 8 horses?—Yes.

48,331. You spoke of the rents having been raised. Do you know if, after the rents were raised, repairs were made by any of these crofters upon their dwelling-house or steadings?—Yes, we repaired all our houses.

48,332. Was that in the belief that when the rent was raised you would be allowed to remain in the place?—Yes: the repairs were required, and we never expected to be turned out.

48,333. And it was after these repairs had been going on that the notices were served?—Yes.

48,333A. Did you get any compensation for these repairs?—No.

48,334. Did these crofters pay any rent in addition to the money payment?—I do not quite understand.

48,335. Take the case of your mother: she paid a certain rent in money: was there anything else due for the holding?—No.

48,336. Were there no services; no cartages, or repairs of embankments, or so forth; or do you know about that?—No, I cannot speak to that.*

SIR GEORGE MACPHERSON-GRANT of Ballindalloch, Bart. (55)—*examined.*

Sir George Macpherson-Grant.

48,337. *The Chairman.*—I understand that you desire to submit a statement to us; you submitted a full statement to Lord Napier's Commission in 1883?—That is so.

48,338. And you desire us to consider that as a statement which we may take as your statement now?—If you please, to shorten the proceedings; possibly with some additions or explanations which you will allow me to make. I may mention as regards the statement which I had the honour to make before Lord Napier's Commission, it was agreed to by all the proprietors on this slope of the Grampians, with the exception of His Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. At present, I am informed that His Grace has agreed through his representative, who is here, to join with the other proprietors in putting in that statement, if you will be pleased to receive it as coming from him as well as from the other proprietors, and he will thus occupy the same position as the six other proprietors on this side of the Grampians. We are very anxious to give the Commission the fullest information we possibly can regarding the position of these estates and their management; but we have really very little to add to what was said before Lord Napier's Commission, because we do not think things have altered very much during the interval that has elapsed since then. But I am here, so far, representing the other proprietors, and, I desire to make a very short statement on their behalf.

* Statement of stock owned by Crofters in Glenbanchor, at the time of receiving notice to quit. Made out by me, John Macdonald, at the request of the Chairman, Sheriff Brand.

	Sheep.	Cows.	Followers.	Horses.
My mother Catherine Macdonald, . .	150	6	6	2
Don. Macdonald, .	150	6	6	2
Archibald Macdonald, .	100	3	3	1
Alexander Macdonald,	100	3	3	1
Ewen Macpherson, .	180	6	6	2
Total, .	680	24	24	8

JOHN MACDONALD.

Kingussie, 14*th August* 1894.

* Macdonald has since written explaining that each croft contributed to the estate, five days work of man and horse annually, equal in money value to about £10 per annum.

Kingussie.

Sir George Macpherson-Grant.

I am anxious to answer all questions about my own estate in the fullest manner, and I may also inform your lordship that the representatives of all those other proprietors, to whom I have referred, are also present, and will afford you any information in their power which you may desire to have.

48,339. Do you wish to read a written statement?—I have a few notes here; the following is what I venture to lay before you as representing the other five proprietors:—

'We make reference in the first place to the statement read and the evidence given before Lord Napier's Highlands and Islands Commission at Kingussie in the year 1883, and also two further statements that were made by Mr Allan Macdonald for The Mackintosh. We cover, then, the following forests:—Abernethy, Glenmore, Rothiemurchus, South Kinrara, Invereshie, Glenfeshie, and the forest of Gaick. I have explained that the Duke of Richmond and Gordon, the proprietor of Glenmore forest, was not on the former occasion a party to the tendering of the general statement referred to, but he now concurs in it, and he submits a short statement having special reference to the circumstances of his own forest of Glenmore. Very little alteration has taken place with regard to the forests above named since 1883. The total rental is now £88 less than it was in 1883; the local assessments in the several parishes have also varied very slightly, but the difference in the gross amount of the assessment now raised and the amount raised in 1883 is inappreciable.

'To the former Commission it does not appear to have been stated very clearly that not only are all these forests above named unseparated from each other by any fence, but they are also open towards the east and south to the Braemar and Athole deer forests.

'The facts which we shall emphasise before you to-day, my lord, are these:—

'(1) That under any circumstances most of the land within the area of these forests suitable for grazing is suitable for summer only, and that for no longer a period in the average of years than from 1st May till at latest the middle of October.

'(2) That there is already in the districts of these forests land used as summer grazings capable of carrying, and which does carry many more sheep than the districts are capable of wintering.

'In these circumstances, to increase the summer grazing area could be of no real advantage to the districts.

'Perhaps you will allow me to read one or two words as to my own property.

'The Estates of Invereshie and Dalraddy contain 97,700 acres, occupied as follows:—

	Acres.
By Deer Forest, as near as we can make it,	63,600
By Tenants over £30 rental,	32,300
By Tenants £30 rental and under,	1,800
Total,	97,700

'The rentals are apportioned as follows:—

Sporting rental including Deer Forest, Grouse Shootings, and Fishings,	£6012
Fifteen Holdings over £30 rental,	1721
Thirty Holdings £30 and under,	224
Miscellaneous,	303
Total,	£8260

'I was astonished to hear some statements made here to-day about the number of small tenants. There are as I say thirty small tenants, rented under £30 on my property.

'None of these crofters hold under the Crofters Act, that is to say, they have never applied to the Commission nor had their rents judicially fixed. They are all tenants-at-will, their leases ran out, and they did not express any wish to renew them as far as I know, while I for my part had no desire to impose leases on men that might exclude them from benefits which they would otherwise receive.'

Kingussie.

Sir George Macpherson Grant.

48,340. Were the rents re-adjusted, although they did not apply to the Crofters Commission?—Oh, yes, we had made abatements of rent. I must tell you that my estate is a very high-lying one, ranging from 800 to 4149 feet above sea level, more than half the area lying over 1750 feet above the sea. None of the ground afforested lies under the 1000 feet level, there is no arable land enclosed, and it is all remote from centres of population.

'The forest of Glenfeshie and Gaick, comprising 56,600 acres of the whole area under forest, have been frequented by deer from time immemorial. A gentleman who gave evidence a little ago spoke of Glenfeshie as if it were a comparatively new forest, but this is not so. I repeat, very much on the authority of Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, that Glenfeshie is one of the Scottish forests mentioned in the old Acts of Parliament.* The remaining 7000 acres, which has an average barrenness, probably not exceeded in the Grampian range, was cleared and afforested in 1872. This, I may mention, is fully explained in the evidence I gave before Lord Napier's Commission. It was formerly held as commonty by the tenants around its base, and being surrounded by deer forests was extremely difficult and expensive to shepherd, as well as being of trifling value as a grazing. An arrangement satisfactory to the tenants was come to when it was cleared, and no tenant was removed from his holding in doing so.

'Of the holdings over £100 of rent, there are only three that come under the designation of grazing farms, and there is no arable land attached to these farms that could possibly be done without. In fact, the tenants annually spend large sums in wintering their sheep elsewhere, for want of sufficient arable land at home.

'The crofters are mostly maintained by work given them by myself, and in connection with the deer forests. Large sums, averaging about 70 per cent. of their rentals, are annually spent by the sporting tenants, and their contributions in alleviation of the public rates are considerable.

(Signed) Geo: Macpherson-Grant.'

48,340A. You are of opinion that the land could not be more advantageously used than at present?—Not as a whole,—I think not.

48,341. You say that while there are considerable tracts of grazing land, they are suitable only for summer?—Certainly.

48,342. Are there no parts of them that would do for wintering purposes?—Well, I should not like to try and winter sheep at 1750 feet above sea level. As a matter of fact, sheep are not wintered there.

48,343. You say that there were at one time certain tracts of land round the bases of the higher altitudes, in the hands of crofters?—There are now.

48,344. Have the crofters got these lands now?—I cannot say they are crofters, but the tenants are there now, not one man was moved.

48,345. But was any grazing land taken from them?—Yes, I explained that.

48,346. To what extent were lands taken away?—I think I put it down as 7000 acres, but you will find it in the statement I made before the Napier Commission. I explained that it was done in consequence of arrangements of excambion with another proprietor. I got the tenants to remove their sheep, and they received a very large abatement of rent.

48,347. Any further particulars we may wish on

* In Act No. 68 of the year 1685, the following entry occurs:—

'Ratification in favors of George, Duke of Gordon, &c., of the Marquisat, Earldom and Lordship of Huntlie—

'As also the forrests of Badgenoch under written, viz.:—The Forrest of Beinallar, The Forrest of Drumnochter, the Forrest of Gaick, and Forrest of Glenfishie, with the haill rights, privileges, profits and Casualitys belonging to any forrest within the said Kingdom."

Kingussie. — Sir George Macpherson-Grant.

that point, we shall find in the statement you made to Lord Napier's Commission?—Yes.

48,348. We heard a great deal of evidence to-day which I daresay you also heard of certain places,—perhaps I could not call them townships, but old places where crofters formerly lived and resided?—Yes.

48,349. I suppose we may take that evidence as correct in point of fact?—Not on my property, except in one case only, the case of Ruthven; and when the clearances took place there I was not born, or was too young to know anything about it.

48,350. That evidence was correct enough, was it?—I could not say it is correct, without having time to examine it.

48,351. Have there been any communication in recent years between some tenants and proprietors with a view to such tenants acquiring additional land in this quarter?—I can only speak for my own property.

48,352. Has there been any such communications in regard to your own property?—Not to any extent.

48,353. *Mr Sutherland.*—I shall be satisfied with putting a question with regard to what you have stated just now. The Chairman has already asked you generally, and you have answered definitely, that you see no possibility of forming new holdings on your property?—No, pardon me, I think the Chairman asked me if in my opinion the land was as profitably occupied now as it could be, and I said that, generally speaking, and on a very large scale, it certainly was. I certainly do not dispute that you could plant down a holding in some places that probably might be advantageous to the community, but on a large scale, I think from the altitude at which the land lies, you cannot grow crops with any success, and besides that, I do not see where the expenses are to be met.

48,354. I think you stated that another deficiency that would arise anywhere in forming the holdings was that the sheep would require to be wintered elsewhere?—Yes.

48,355. That is done now, as a matter of fact, is it not?—Yes.

48,356. If smaller holdings were created, could not the tenants of these do the same thing as the present tenants do?—If you diminish the wintering by making small holdings, you enormously diminish the value of the small farms.

48,357. What would be the proportion between the arable and pasture?—I don't quite follow the question.

48,358. Supposing you were to take away from the pasture land by making land arable, what would be the proper proportion to maintain between arable and pasture in a holding?—I cannot answer that question quite in detail. What I mean is this: a sheep farmer in Badenoch at present must send the greater portion of his stock at very great expense to a lower place to winter; that we are all agreed upon. If you are going to limit the pasturage which he presently has for wintering, you force him to send away a large proportion of sheep, and you would therefore materially interfere with the man's profitable occupation.

48,359. But would it not rather tend the opposite way,—would he not rather winter his sheep on the arable land at home?—I do not think you can winter 200 or 300 sheep on twenty or thirty acres of land. I think those sheep must go to the wintering.

48,360. But would not the proportion of arable to grazing be the same upon a small farm as upon a large farm?—It depends on how you cut it up. As far as I can make out, the model holding is one of from 20 to 30 acres of arable, with summering for four or five cows and 200 sheep; well, I don't think you can winter that amount of stock on 20 acres of land. That is all I say.

48,361. You don't dispute the fact that whatever has to be done now to winter sheep could be done if they got smaller holdings?—Provided they have got the money to do it.

48,362. But the conditions would be the same?—I don't agree with you there; I don't think the conditions would be the same at all.

48,363. Even granting that the conditions were not the same, could not the small holder do what the large holder does now,—send his sheep to the low ground to winter?—Of course he could, but I should think he would find it a very troublesome and expensive business, and one which would quite run away with the profits of his summering.

Kingussie. — Sir George Macpherson-Grant.

48,364. Would you be astonished too to hear that it is done in other parts by small holders?—Not if you say so.

48,365. *Mr Maccallum.*—You speak with regard to all the forests in the district, I think?—I have spoken generally as to the view of those proprietors, stating how the land is occupied at present, and how we think it is best occupied. I can only speak as to my own property in detail, but the other properties are represented here as well.

48,366. And you say there is a great deal of land there that is suitable for no other purpose than deer forest?—I say it is more suitable for deer forest than for anything else.

48,367. But we had the opinion of a very practical man to-day, that land that would maintain deer would also maintain sheep, that, in fact, sheep would live and thrive where deer would starve?—I differ from that opinion; because I find that you do not send the deer to wintering and you do send the sheep to wintering.

48,368. But is it not the case that some of the deer starve in the winter?—Not largely that I know of.

48,369. You have heard of that?—I have not heard of any animals starving.

48,370. It would be ruinous, I suppose, for a farmer if his sheep died at the same rate?—I do not know what the death-rate among deer is.

48,371. These lands were used not only for sheep but also for black cattle; we have had evidence to the effect?—Which lands?

48,372. I think your statement was a general one, applying to all the forests?—I cannot speak in detail for any of the forests except my own. I can speak of the forest of Gaick, and of the Glenfeshie forest, but I cannot go into details about the forests of Glenmore or Abernethy.

48,373. But in your statement before Lord Napier's Commission you referred to the Abernethy forest?—I read a general statement which was prepared on behalf of Lady Seafield, the proprietrix of the Abernethy forest, as well as the other proprietors.

48,374. Is it not the case that all the forest of Abernethy was pastured by the tenant's stock? Had they not a right of pasturage in the forest?—I am sorry to appear reticent, but really as I explained already, I have never set foot on the forest of Abernethy, so I cannot give particulars about that forest.

48,375. It is all in the statement made to Lord Napier, and I understood you to say just now that with regard to the forests generally it was the upper parts that were taken, and that these were either not suitable for or never used by the tenants?—I did not say so; I never said so.

48,376. Then, can you tell us whether the stock of sheep in the district of Badenoch and Strathspey has diminished since the formation of the deer forests?—On my own property it has; I have explained it.

48,377. And you say that they have to send the sheep away to wintering in the present condition of affairs; but must not that arise partly from this, that they have to keep their sheep now in summer on what would make good wintering ground if their sheep were kept on the higher parts in summer?—Possibly that might be so to a certain extent. Of course, as I said in my evidence to-day, we saw that in the case of Gaick for instance I don't believe there is a single sheep farmer here who would put a sheep there before the middle of May, and I don't think he would leave them as long as October. Practically he could get no rent for it. If you can only graze sheep on those Highland hills for four or six months in the year, and have to pay four times the value for wintering, it seems to me not a very good speculation.

Kingussie.

Sir George Macpherson-Grant.

48,378. It would certainly be difficult to let these high places alone, but if they were given in connection with the lower ground, would these forests not be lettable?—I am talking of ground which is over 1000 feet high.

48,379. But was not that land held in connection with some lower ground formerly?—Well, it was long before my time.

48,380. Then supposing there were cattle and horses put upon these hills, could not the tenantry easily winter these at home on the lower grounds?—If you cover all these hills with horses and cattle, I am afraid the difficulty would increase. Of course it would depend upon the number of horses and cattle you put on: if you put on very few no doubt it might work; but if you are going to stock these great Grampian mountains 4000 feet high, with horses and cattle, I am afraid the difficulty would be as great as the difficulty of wintering sheep.

48,381. You cannot give us the history of the Abernethy forest?—I would rather not, for I do not know it sufficiently well. But there is a gentleman here who can give you all the details you desire, I have no doubt.

48,382. And you cannot give us statistics as to the sheep stock presently in Badenoch and the sheep stock in former times when the forests were not in existence?—No, because these forests that I am speaking of have been in existence from time immemorial. I have explained why a certain number of sheep were taken off one part of my property; and I explained before Lord Napier's Commission how a sheep farmer, whose name is very well known to some members of this Commission, made a voluntary arrangement with the shooting tenant to give up his sheep. No other sheep have been displaced on my ground in my time or in my father's time, nor any tenant evicted.

48,383. *Mr Macleod.*—You have said that you were astonished to hear the statement of one witness to-day as to the number of small tenants on your property; and that, as a matter of fact, there were thirty on your own property?—That is the return I have.

48,384. Can you give me any analysis?—Do you mean of their occupations, or of the rental?

48,385. The rental would give a fair idea as to the size of holdings?—I have not got the rental here, but I can give you the names and occupations, and the amounts they draw in the summer time for outside work, and that sort of thing.

48,386. What I really want to know is this: you traversed the statement of the witness, and I presume what the witness had in his mind, was a man who was to a considerable extent making his living off the holding, and only assisting himself in some small degree by extraneous labour. As I understood it, you have in your list included every small tenant, on your estate?—Yes.

48,387. Although the piece of ground he has may be no larger than a garden?—Allow an acre or more. I may not have followed the evidence, but I think it was the first witness, and he rather startled me by saying that this 1400 square miles was inhabited by a hundred holdings. I looked into the matter and found thirty on my own property alone.

48,388. I think what was in the mind of the witness in speaking of the hundred farms was those who possessed very large grazing farms, and smaller tenants, who were almost if not quite subsisting by their holdings?—Well, I mentioned that I have only three such.

48,389. How many tenants have you under lease?—I don't think we have any.

48,390. How many that you could really say are crofters?—Your definition of a crofter is a man who pays under £30 of rent: I look upon such a man as a small farmer.

48,391. Well, say a small farmer?—I have told you already thirty.

48,392. He takes us down to a holding of an acre, which is a very small croft?—How much higher would you like to go? I am anxious to give you all the information I possibly can.

48,393. Can you tell us what reduction of rent you made voluntarily to those small tenants?—About 25 per cent.

48,394. You said that you had three large or fairly large tenants?—Yes.

48,395. Was the reduction of rent to them greater or less than that, or was it the same?—It was less.

48,396. You don't know what the difference was?—It must have been 15 to 20 per cent., I should think.

48,397. Have these small tenants got any pasture?—Oh, yes. There is a small village over here which is more like a township, I daresay, than anything else we have got in this country, and the people there all keep cows and have some cow pasture. I wish it was better pasture than it is; but, as I said before, a great many are employed on the estate, and we have never had any trouble with them at all.

48,398. They have not sheep?—No, they have none, with the exception, perhaps, of a pet lamb, or a few sheep about the doors.

48,399. Are there any small tenants anywhere else that have any sheep?—Not sheep in common.

48,400. Would it be possible without interfering with the other arrangements of the estate to add to the pasture, do you think, of these small tenants?—Well, I should be very glad to make my small tenants as comfortable as I possibly can, but in the general management of the estate you must not destroy your larger farms.

48,401. What lies contiguous, say, to the pasture that these people have?—One of the large sheep farms I have already alluded to.

48,402. But it would not interfere with the working of this large deer forest area?—It is a long way from the deer forest; the deer forest is a long way off from here.

48,403. You say that there has not been to any extent upon your property, so far as you know, any demand for additional land?—Not to any great extent, so far as I know; practically none.

48,404. *The Chairman.*—I observe that in your statement before Lord Napier's Commission you say under the heading 'Rental in 1853':—

Thirty small farms and crofts not exceeding £30 of rental each . .	£217 5 7

and under the heading 'Rental in 1883.'

Twenty-four small farms and crofts not exceeding £30 of rental each .	£163 5 6

Now may we take these statements as representing accurately the difference in the number of crofters upon the property referred to in this evidence, between 1853 and 1883?—I cannot explain that off-hand: there was a large increase in cottars' holdings and gardens, and I suppose that is how it balances. [*Mr Macleod.*—Or is it not the difference between the rental of these smaller tenants before the pasture was taken off?—No; the holdings were not diminished in number by taking those sheep off].

48,405. How do you account for the difference between the 30 small farms and crofts in 1853 and the 24 in 1883; were these removals?—I don't know, but I don't think so.

48,406. How do you account for the difference?—In 1853 I personally could not know much about it.

48,407. But this is your own statement?—Yes, I know that, and I am perfectly certain that at the time it was absolutely correct, but I am very sorry that to-day I cannot explain it.

48,408. May I venture to ask at what date you came into the property?—I was 55 years of age on the 12th of August, and I succeeded my father about the year 1850.

48,409. Then both of these statements are in your own time?—Yes, certainly, in my own time; but in 1853 I was a boy at school.

48,410. Do you happen to know whether any removals took place during your father's time,—of

course, you cannot speak of that from your own knowledge?—No, I cannot speak as to that.

48,411. But you do not quite profess to account for this difference just now?—No; but if it is not asking too much, I should be very glad to make it out to night and let you have it. I have not the slightest doubt that it is quite capable of explanation; at all events you may be assured it is not put here with any desire to deceive you on the point.

48,412. Oh, no, certainly not. Has there been in your time any afforestment of land that was previously grazing land or crofter's land on your property?—I have given two instances which you will find mentioned in my evidence before Lord Napier's Commission at p. 2971. You will see under the heading of 'Clearances,' two cases, one with the object of carrying out a desirable excambion with my friend The Mackintosh, and the other was the case of Mr Macrae, whose name has been mentioned here to-day, who made an arrangement with the shooting tenant of Gaick to clear away some sheep. These are the only clearances.

48,413. Does this statement to which you have referred us, inform us of the extent of afforestment?—Yes; Coire-Roy, 5000 acres, cleared of sheep in 1872; and in Macrae's case the grazing tenant alleged that he had to reduce his sheep stock by 1500 head. The shorthand writer has put a note of interrogation after that '1500 head': I don't know why he did so. These are the only two cases in my time.

48,414. What is the total number of grazing farms upon your estate?—Well, there are 15 holdings with over £30 of rent.

48,415. And what is the highest rent?—The largest farm is Killiehuntly, the rent of which is £220.

48,416. Are any of these farms at present in your own hand?—No, I have no farms in my own hand except my Home Farm at Invereshie. I have never had any farms in my own hand on my property here.

CHARLES BOWMAN LOGAN, W.S., Edinburgh (57)—*examined.*

48,417. *The Chairman.*—You appear on behalf of the Seafield estate?—Yes, for the Countess Dowager of Seafield.

48,418. Do you wish to submit any statement?—I adopt the general statement made by Sir George Macpherson-Grant, but I have a short additional statement in regard to the estate of Lady Seafield. 'The portions of Lady Seafield's estate in Inverness-'shire, which appear to come within the scope of the 'present Commission, consist of the parishes of Aber-'nethy and Duthil. These parishes are practically 'alike in respect of climate, soil, and other charac-'teristics. The river Spey separates them from one 'another, Abernethy on the right or south-eastern side 'of the river, forming part of the northern slope of 'the Grampian Mountains, and having a mean altitude 'of about 1200 feet, the lowest portion being about '700 feet and the highest point nearly 4000 feet above 'sea-level; and Duthil lying over against Abernethy 'on the north-westerly side of the Spey, and having 'about the same mean altitude. The population of 'Duthil is 1728, and of Abernethy 1354.

1. '*Duthil* extends to about 55,000 acres, 5872 'acres or thereby only being arable land. Along with 'the arable land there are upwards of 28,000 acres of 'pasture land and 3470 acres woodlands let to the 'agricultural tenants. Very little land which has been 'at any time cultivated, or which is capable of being 'cultivated, is under pasture now. The agricultural 'tenants have always largely consisted of the crofting 'class. There are in all 160 separate holdings, and 'only one holding yields £200 of rent. Eight holdings 'are let at rents above £100, while there are 123 'holdings with rents less than £30. None of the 'tenants made application to the Crofters Commission 'to fix a fair rent except one, and he withdrew his 'application. The majority of the tenants hold under 'formal leases, the greater number of which have been 'renewed since 1886 at rents mutually re-adjusted 'between proprietrix and tenants. The only deer 'forest in the parish is Kinveachy which is virtually 'a wood forest. This parish and Abernethy parish are 'famed for the excellence of their natural pines, and 'the moorlands and the hill lands, to an altitude of '1200 feet, are well adapted for this kind of wood 'culture. About 30 years ago the Earl of Seafield 'resolved, in terms of a report received from experts, 'to plant large tracts of moorland which had previously 'been yielding an irregular crop of natural grown firs. 'He accordingly enclosed about 17,000 acres, which 'for agricultural purposes were practically valueless, 'the total rental at that time being not more than '£200; and he planted on the enclosed grounds about '11,000,000 of fir and larch trees. Eleven thousand 'of these 17,000 enclosed acres form the Kinveachy 'Forest, and of these 11,000 acres, fully two-thirds are 'planted ground, the bulk of the remaining extent 'being the high ground which was considered too 'exposed and sterile for planting.

'Outside the limits of the deer forest there are '6000 acres of enclosed planted ground. All of these 'plantations are in a thriving condition. Neither in 'this case nor in that of Abernethy was the forming of 'a deer forest part of the proprietor's original inten-'tion. The deer forests were the consequence rather 'than the cause of the land being enclosed. There is 'no arable land within Kinveachy forest enclosure, 'except about a couple of acres which have not been 'occupied as a croft for about 35 years. The last 'tenant left of his own accord some years before the 'lands were enclosed. With this exception there is nc 'part of the enclosed land capable of being brought 'into cultivation.

'The rent of the deer forest is £700.

2. '*Abernethy*, as has already been said, in its main 'characteristics resembles Duthil. It extends to 63,000 'acres, of which only 3900 or thereby are arable. 'Along with the arable land there are let to the 'agricultural tenants upwards of 23,000 acres of pasture 'land and 1000 acres of woodland.

'There are in all 137 separate holdings. The largest 'agricultural rent does not exceed £140. Only two 'holdings are let at rents above £100, while there are '110 holdings with rents less than £30. The planta-'tions in Abernethy were made about the same time as 'those in Duthil. Prior to this time there were 10 'holdings in the upper part of the parish which were 'then added to the area growing wood and afforested, 'the tenants having agreed to give up possession upon 'getting other equally suitable and comfortable holdings 'in the neighbourhood. There is annexed hereto a 'schedule giving particulars of the holdings vacated and 'the holdings taken in substitution. I may explain that 'this schedule is the same as that appended to Sir George 'Macpherson-Grant's evidence before Lord Napier's 'Commission (p. 2979). It will be observed that the 'present holdings extend in all to 210 acres arable, and '963 acres pasture and yield in yearly rents £190, 'while the former holdings extended to 78 acres arable 'and 200 acres pasture exclusive of the sterile part of 'the mountain and were rented at £100 or thereby. 'The forest extends to about 26,000 acres, of which 'about 7,600 acres are growing wood, nearly the one-'half of which was planted. A considerable area of 'the forest ground consists of the high sterile slopes of 'some of the hills in the Grampian range, on which no 'cereal, or grass or wood crop could be grown. The 'rent paid by the tenant is £1600.

(Signed) 'CHAS. B. LOGAN,
'Commissioner for the Countess Dowager of Seafield.

14*th August* 1894.'

List of Tenants removed from Abernethy Deer Forest, 1869–70.

Folio in Tenant's Ledger.	Names.	Possessions.	Extent in Deer Forest. Arable. ac.	ro.	po.	Pasture. ac.	ro.	po.	Total. ac.	ro.	po.	Rent. £	s.	d.	Particulars of Possessions supplied in Lieu. Farms.	Extent. Arable. ac.	ro.	po.	Pasture. ac.	ro.	po.	Total. ac.	ro.	po.	Rent. £	s.	d.
759	Alexander Fraser,	Auchdergannoch,	10	1	13	17	1	7	27	2	20	14	2	0	Farm of Lochnellan (Inverallon),	7	2	...	156	1	...	163	3	...	9	0	0
761	James Grant,	Kichanloope,	4	2	8	19	2	34	24	1	2	5	2	0	Died while in possession,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
662	James Cameron,	Rynettan,	18	2	33	35	2	7	54	1	...	25	8	0	Farm of Tomachrochar,	71	2	...	80	3	...	152	1	...	58	0	0
763	John Cameron,	Ruanloit,	2	...	2	4	2	22	6	2	24	4	4	0	Farm of Toberaie,	21	...	...	238	...	...	259	...	...	15	12	0
781	L. & D. Smith,	Rynuie and Ryneecan,	11	...	21	44	2	35	55	3	16	16	0	0	Farms of Mains of Tulloch and Tomagowhan,	50	3	...	117	1	...	168	...	...	55	0	0
782	James Grant,	Ryvoan,	2	1	36	2	2	20	5	...	16	5	12	0	Employed as Gamekeeper at Rynettan; afterwards got Farm of Brainedin,	25	...	...	14	...	...	39	...	...	25	0	0
719	Donald Anderson,	Iuchtomach,	6	3	36	20	3	16	27	3	12	7	12	0	Employed as Gamekeeper at Rynettan,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
720	Alexander Grant,	Lynmacgilbert,	3	...	10	11	1	29	14	1	39	4	12	0	Died while in possession	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
721	John Stewart,	Boglachynach,	2	1	23	30	...	19	32	2	2	3	12	0	Farm of Doir,	8	2	...	82	...	...	90	...	...	6	0	0
758–9	Alexander Grant,	Easter and Wester Rynerrich,	16	...	24	13	2	32	29	3	16	16	10	0	Farm of Lynebeg,	26	...	...	275	...	...	301	...	...	22	0	0
			77	3	6	200	2	21	278	1	27	102	14	0		210	1	...	963	1	...	1173	2	...	190	12	0

48,419. You say that on the Duthil portion of the estates there are 123 holdings with rents not exceeding £30?—Yes.

48,420. Have any of these crofters applied for enlargement of holdings?—No, there have been no applications. There was one application which was understood to be for fixing the rent, but it has been withdrawn.

48,421. Then in the case of Abernethy you say there are 110 holdings of a similar class. Has there been any application for enlargement from them?—None.

48,422. You speak of grazing farms: are any grazing farms on the Duthil and Abernethy estates forming parts of the Seafield estate in the hands of the proprietor?—None.

48,423. They are all let?—All let.

48,424. And I suppose I may take it, all let on leases for terms of years?—The large majority. A few are not, but the much larger number are.

48,425. Are you aware whether within the limits of land under your management there is any desire for new holdings?—I have no reason to think so. There may be a few cases; it is impossible to say among that large number that there is not, but there is certainly no general desire.

48,426. You have had no applications of that sort?—No.

48,427. You speak of holdings on these two parts of that estate not exceeding £30 of rent. Have you many cottars on the Duthil portion?—Yes, there are a few cottars.

48,428. Do they pay rent?—Some do, and some do not.

48,429. Are these cottars there with the permission of the estate, or are they there of their own free will?—With the permission of the estate; they are all recognised as residing there and having their holdings.

48,430. As to the cottars who do not pay rent, are they persons who live upon crofters' holdings, or have they non-rent-paying holdings of their own from the estate management?—They are chiefly upon the larger farms, and work on the farms.

48,431. That is to say, they are labourers attached to the farms?—They really are, although they have separate small holdings.

48,432. Then we may take it that there are no cottars who, if we may use the expression, are parasitic upon the crofters' holdings?—That is so.

48,433. And do you apply that remark to the parish of Abernethy?—Yes.

48,434. That all or nearly all the cottars on the estate are attached more or less directly to large farms?—Nearly all, if not all.

48,435. *Mr Maccallum.*—These two forests seem to have been formed in a different way from that in which forests are generally formed,—that is to say they were really formed at first for planting?—They were.

48,436. And there are extensive plantations?—There are.

48,437. You say that there was a good deal made of the natural wood,—that is, that the trees were a source of revenue to the estate. Can you say whether these new plantations have been financially successful?—I think I may say they have; they are gradually coming to yield a good return.

48,438. Better than the return from the woods when they were allowed to be pastured?—Yes.

48,439. And sufficient to repay the estate for all the outlays, &c. on the plantations?—I think we may say so. Of course, in the case of timber you have to wait a very long time for your return, and it is very difficult to say how it meets the expenditure and accumulated interest; but we hold that they do pay, and yield a good return upon the original outlay. In this connection I may refer to the evidence which was given before Lord Napier's Commission by the Hon. Thomas Bruce, who was then Lady Seafield's Commissioner. He there went very minutely into the question of the wood plantation, and I think you will find a good deal of information about the woods in his evidence, p. 3004.

Kingussie.

Charles Bowman Logan.

48,440. In Duthil you say 17,000 acres were enclosed for planting on the advice of experts?—Yes.

48,441. Can you tell us how that land was occupied before it was enclosed?—It was more or less pasture of a rough kind and very much in common.

48,442. Had the tenants in the neighbourhood the right to put their stock on that pasture?—Upon certain conditions and in certain proportions; and I may add that it was a source of constant irritation and even of litigation, owing to the difficulty of adjusting the rights of the different tenants. I believe the arrangement was that for each £1 of rent a certain number of sheep were allowed to be pastured, and, of course, the tenants who were nearest the pasture had a much better chance than the others. Some put more than their proper share on, and there was constant friction and disputes. It was thought desirable that a stop should be put to these; and now it is our great desire in every case not to have commonties, but to divide the pasture so that each tenant may have his own.

48,443. But land that is suitable for planting would also be good pasture, would it not?—After the wood gets up a certain height it is pastured.

48,444. But this land that was enclosed, seeing that it was thought suitable for plantation, must have been valuable as pasture to the tenants who had it?—Yes, but it was considered that both for the proprietor's sake and the sake of the country at large the wood was the better product of the lands, it being thought very desirable to extend the area under woods and forests in Scotland.

48,445. Do the tenants in the neighbourhood get the benefit of the pasture after the trees attain a certain height?—Yes, they do; the land is then portioned off and fenced for the adjoining farms.

48,446. And the higher ground is devoted entirely to deer,—they cannot have access to that now?—No, it is left for deer.

48,447. Is there any diminution in the number of tenants since the formation of the deer forest in Duthil?—Not any serious diminution; there may have been one or two holdings where the tenants died and a re-adjustment was made, but there has been no substantial alteration of the number of holdings.

48,448. And as to the number of sheep now held by the tenants and the stock they held when they had the land that was planted, how do the two compare?—I have no statement of that.

48,449. They had a considerable number of sheep in former times, I suppose, and I take it that now they have not nearly so many; is that your view?—Well, with regard to Duthil, when the deer forest was enclosed there was a large additional amount of wood pasture opened up to the tenants, so that they got considerable compensation in a way which enabled them probably to keep up their stock.

48,450. Can you say whether they had to dispose of their stock at the time when the 17,000 acres were enclosed?—Yes, they had to some extent.

48,451. You say that the Abernethy forest was formed in very much the same way; it is a larger forest?—Yes.

48,452. And ten holdings were cleared entirely in order to form that forest?—Yes.

48,453. Which are included in the forest now?—Yes. At the time of the planting, the plantation was brought down so as to cover these holdings.

48,454. And these tenants you say were provided with holdings on other parts of the estate?—Yes.

48,455. How was it that the estate was able to do that? Were other people cleared to make room for them, or were the holdings diminished in order to make room for these ten tenants cleared out of the forest?—It was all done by arrangement, and not suddenly: it was gradually done, and as these other holdings fell in, perhaps by death or the people leaving, the tenants who were in the holdings now under forest were given these vacant holdings.

48,456. How long did it take to have all ten removed?—Though there were ten altogether, they were gradually provided for elsewhere; thus we find that the first mentioned in the list got another farm, the second happened to have died, so that his case did not fall to be dealt with; the next three got farms, the next one was employed as a gamekeeper, another was also, and another died in possession; so that there were only six to provide for, which was not a difficult matter.

48,457. Can you say at all whether other holdings had to be diminished in order to make room for these six?—I believe not. They got separate holdings that fell in.

48,458. There happened to be six other vacancies at the time?—Not all at once; it took a little time to adjust. It was not all rushed through in one season, but gradually done.

48,459. The removals were spread over a certain number of years?—Yes; not very long; perhaps a couple of years.

48,460. Then, I suppose the same holds good with regard to the forest of Abernethy, that it was pastured by these tenants' stock?—It was.

48,461. And there is a great diminution of the sheep stock on that account?—There must be a considerable diminution.

48,462. There appears to be a large number of moderately-sized holdings in these two parishes under Lady Seafield?—Yes.

48,463. And, I think, you stated that there did not seem to be any strong desire for the formation of new holdings. It may not be very practicable, I admit, to find new holdings among so many moderately-sized ones; but, do you find that when any of these moderately-sized holdings becomes vacant, it is applied for by a large number of people?—Well, not by a large number, for we are always anxious to continue the croft in the same family; but now and then the adjoining farmer wishes to have it, and we do not encourage that, if we can help it, if the farm is large enough to maintain a man and his family.

48,464. You never find any difficulty in letting a moderately-sized holding?—Never.

48,465. But you have no doubt heard of the great difficulty that there is in letting large farms?—I am aware that there is.

48,466. That difficulty is not experienced on this estate, composed as it is chiefly of smaller holdings?—Certainly not experienced on this estate.

48,467. Do cottars on the estate apply for farms that fall vacant?—Two have done so. The fact is that our farms very seldom fall vacant; we always carry them on to the representatives if possible.

48,468. Is it your opinion then that there would be a considerable number on the estate who would be willing to take farms if it were possible for them to get them?—I am not able to say as to that.

48,469. *Mr Sutherland.*—How long have you been responsible for the management?—I have only been Commissioner for six or eight years, but I have known the estate for a much longer time, as I have been connected with it professionally during the whole of my professional life.

48,470. You know, of course, about the planting and rearing of trees?—I know very generally; I don't profess to have practical knowledge on the subject.

48,471. What I want to ask you is about the general aspect of the question. I think you stated in reply to a question that you found it a very satisfactory investment?—In this country it is.

48,472. What is the particular nature of the ground in which trees flourish best?—If you would allow me to refer again to the detailed evidence given by Mr Bruce, he went very fully into the matter.

48,473. Does he refer particularly to that district?—Specially to that district; he was Commissioner on the Seafield estates at the time, and it was he who organised that large scheme of planting. In his evidence before Lord Napier's Commission he explains the matter very fully, and I cannot add to it from personal knowledge.

48,474. Did you ever hear of the difficulty of planting on a large scale, because of the long time during which the capital invested must remain unremunerative?—Oh, yes.

Kingussie. — Charles Bowman Logan.

Kingussie. — Charles Bowman Logan.

48,475. How long is it before you get a return?—Well, thinnings begin earlier, but for the real substantial profit you have to wait fifty or sixty years.

48,476. Have you ever heard any calculation made over the whole period giving the return per acre?—Yes, but I have not it in my mind at the present moment.

48,477. May I ask you generally if you have ever heard that it was £1 an acre for every year that the land was under timber?—I cannot say,—I think I have heard that, generally speaking, but I cannot say that from knowledge.

48,478. No doubt you have a good knowledge of the Highlands generally. Do you think that a great deal of land that is now lying waste could be profitably planted?—That is simply my impression; I could not say so from any knowledge of the nature of the land itself or of planting.

48,479. Is there anything special in the nature or character of the land on the Seafield estate that renders it more favourable for the planting of timber than any other estate?—I am not aware that there is.

48,480. So you think it is quite likely that timber could be profitably planted on any other place?—I should think so.

48,481. I need not ask you whether it improves the amenity of the whole country?—That is a speculative question rather.

48,482. There cannot be very much doubt about that?—It improves its appearance no doubt.

48,483. Have you ever been struck in places where trees grow by the facilities afforded to neighbouring small holders, *e.g.*, if there is any improvement wanted about a small holding in the way of erecting fences, &c.?—For all these purposes it certainly is beneficial.

48,484. Have you observed the want of these facilities in districts where there is no timber, and how the holdings are much neater in appearance when near a plantation?—If wood for fencing can be obtained within a short distance, of course it is a great advantage to the district.

48,485. And also as firewood in the houses?—Yes, also as firewood.

48,486. We have heard objections urged with regard to the length of time the land is put out of pasture. Is that a difficulty?—To some extent it is, because, of course, you cannot allow the land to be pastured until the trees have attained a certain height.

48,487. How many years are in that interval, as a rule?—It depends a good deal on the ground; it runs from twelve to fifteen years in general.

48,488. The grazing animals would require to be excluded for that period of years?—Yes.

48,489. *The Chairman.*—There is one feature of the estate management on the Seafield estates which seems to be almost unique. Every effort has been made, you say, to make each holding independent of the others by giving it separate pasture?—Yes.

48,490. Is it the fact that there is no common pasture either on Duthil or Abernethy?—Very little. There are two or three small pieces that are held in common, but these we hope gradually to separate also.

48,491. To bring under the other separate system?—Yes.

48,492. Under which each holding, in addition to having its own arable and outrun, has separate grazing of its own?—Yes. Of course, the system involves more fencing.

48,493. Is that fencing done at the expense of the estate?—Yes.

48,494. And is the upkeep of the fencing also a charge on the estate?—It is done by arrangement between the estate and the tenant; but there is no difficulty in the working of it.

48,495. What may we take as the average rental of a crofter's holding on the Seafield estate?—There is a large number below £30. [*Mr Smith.*—In the two parishes the average rent under £30 is £9, 17s. 6d., and including the rents above £30 the average rent is £15].

48,496. *Mr Sutherland.*—What proportion of the estate of Seafield is in Inverness-shire?—These two parishes of Duthil and Abernethy are all in Inverness-shire; Cromdale is in Morayshire.

Kingussie. — Charles Bowman Logan.

DONALD GRANT, Grantown (62), Agent for Dochfour, Rothiemurchus, and Belleville estates. Donald Grant.

48,497. *The Chairman.*—Have you any statement to make, Mr Grant?—I have no statement to make, but I shall be very glad to answer any questions.

(There were no questions asked).

WILLIAM MARSHALL SKINNER, Drumin, Ballindalloch, Factor for His Grace the Duke of Richmond and Gordon (51)—*examined.* William Marshall Skinner.

48,498. *The Chairman.*—Have you a written statement to submit?—I have.

48,498A. Kindly read it.—'The deer forest of Glen-'more is situated on the northern slope of the Cairn-'gorm Range, in the united parishes of Abernethy and 'Kincardine, and county of Inverness. It extends 'to about 15,000 acres, and includes a portion of 'comparatively low-lying ground at the foot of the 'hills bearing old natural grown fir wood. The altitude 'of this lower portion ranges from 1051 feet to about '1500 feet, and that of the higher and larger portion 'from 1500 feet—at about which height timber ceases 'to grow and the ground becomes sterile—to 4083 'feet at the top of Cairngorm.

'There is now no arable land within the forest, 'except small patches cultivated by the gamekeepers. 'The forest is entirely enclosed along the lower 'boundaries where contiguous to pasture occupied by 'agricultural tenants, the only unenclosed boundaries 'being those marching with the adjoining deer forests 'of Abernethy, Glenaven, and Rothiemurchus.

'The ground was first afforested in 1859. Previous 'to that date it was occupied for many years as sheep 'pasture in connection with the farms of Achgowrish 'and Pityoulish, holdings partly arable and partly 'pastoral, and situated lower down and some distance 'from the low forest boundary.

'In 1859, the tenants of these farms, by arrangement 'and during the currency of their leases, voluntarily 'gave up the portions of their pasture now afforested, 'in respect of which their rents were reduced £100 'each, the tenants still retaining the lower and more 'valuable portion of their pasture, extending from 'the forest boundary downwards towards their arable 'lands. No tenant was therefore removed in carrying 'out the afforestment, and the respective tenancies of 'both the farms above referred to have since continued 'in the same families down to the present time. The 'rental of the forest area as sheep pasture may be 'put as above indicated at £200. The present rental 'as a deer forest is £1500.

'The Kincardine property, of which the above deer 'forest forms part, extends to 18,164 imperial acres, 'of which about 4000 acres are under natural grown 'Scotch fir and other wood, the greater part of which 'is within the forest boundaries.

'The extent outside the forest boundary is about '3000 acres, partly arable and partly green pasture and 'heather. This portion is occupied as farms and crofts, 'partly arable and partly pastoral.

'About the beginning of the present century there 'were six holdings within the area now under deer, 'the tenants of which pastured the lower-lying portions 'of the glen, and probably cultivated more or less the 'portions now represented by old grass land or green 'pasture, the extent of which is about 100 acres.

'These holdings became gradually merged in the 'larger farms of Achgowrish and Pityoulish, and in '1843 the whole are included in the rents of these 'farms, and so remained until the date of the afforest-'ment in 1859.

'A rental for crop 1843 is appended, which includes

Kingussie.

William Marshall Skinner.

'the grazing rent of the lands afforested in 1859, 'viz. :—

		£	s.	d.
1.	'Achgowrish, James Shaw . .	210	0	0
2.	'Pityoulish, Major Cruickshank .	194	10	0
3.	'Croftmore, Donald Smith . .	15	0	0
4.	'Saw Mill and Crofts in the Pro- 'prietor's possession, . .	0	0	0
	'Total Rental of the Estate .	419	10	0

(Signed) 'W. M. Skinner,
'Factor for The Duke of Richmond and Gordon.'
14*th August* 1894.

48,499. Are there any crofters' holdings on the lands you have been speaking of?—There is only one, the holding of £15 rent.

Alexander Macpherson.

Alexander Macpherson, Solicitor, Kingussie, Factor for Cluny and Glentruim (55)—*examined.*

48,500. *The Chairman.*—Have you a statement to submit to us?—I have prepared no statement, but I am ready to answer any questions regarding the Cluny and Glentruim estates.

48,501. Do you know about the older deer forests in Badenoch?—I know something about them, from some old MSS. of which I got possession some time ago, written by the late Capt. Lachlan Macpherson of the 52nd Regiment, long popularly known in Badenoch as 'Old Biallid,' at Cluny's request, for a gentleman who intended to write a history of the Scottish forests.

48,502. What information can you give us from these MSS. with regard to the existence of these old forests?—I have got the MSS. here, and I am prepared to read them if I may do so.

48,503. Are they very long?—The part that relates to the old deer forests is not very long. [*Mr Sutherland.*—May I ask whether the expression 'deer forest' is used in the MS.?—I think so: yes, it speaks of the 'Badenoch deer forests']. The quotations I would like to read are the following:—

'The Earls of Huntly possessed by far the most 'extensive range of hills as deer forests in Britain. 'They commenced at Ben-Avon in Banffshire, and ter- 'minated at Ben-Nevis near Fort-William—a distance 'of about seventy miles—without a break, except the 'small estate of Rothiemurchus, which is scarcely two 'miles in breadth, where it intersects the forest. This 'immense tract of land was divided into seven distinct 'divisions, each of which was given in charge to the 'most influential gentlemen in its neighbourhood. The 'names of these divisions or forests are:—1st, Ben Avon; '2nd, Glenmore, including Cairngorm; 3rd, Brae 'Feshie; 4th, Gaick; 5th, Drumuachdar; 6th, Ben Alder, 'including Farron; and 7th, Lochtreig, which extended 'from the Badenoch march to Ben-Nevis. The extent 'of these divisions was nearly as follows:—Ben-Avon 'about 20 square miles, Glenmore 20, Brae Feshie 15, 'Gaick 30, Druimuachdar 25, Ben-Alder 50, and Loch- 'treig 60 square miles—in all, 220 square miles. 'The whole, however, were not solely appropriated for 'the rearing of deer, for tenants were allowed to erect 'shielings on the confines of the forest, and their cattle 'were permitted to pasture as far as they chose through- 'out the day, but they must be brought back to the 'shieling in the evening, and such as were left in the 'forest overnight were liable to be poinded. These regu- 'lations did very well between Huntly and his tenants, 'but they opened a door for small proprietors who held 'in feu from the Gordon family to make encroachments 'and in the course of time to acquire a property to which 'they had not the smallest title. The old forest laws in 'Scotland were exceedingly severe, if not barbarous. 'Mutilation and even death was sometimes inflicted. 'It is related that Macdonald of Keppoch hanged one of 'his own clan to appease Cluny Macpherson of the time 'for depredations committed in the forest of Ben Alder, 'and it is a well-known fact that another hunter (called '*John Our*) had an eye put out and his right arm 'amputated for a similar offence. It is also said that 'he killed deer even in that mutilated state. No 'alteration took place until after the Rising of 1745, 'when the whole forests were let as grazings except 'Gaick, which the Duke of Gordon continued as a deer 'forest until about the year 1788, when it was let as a 'sheep-walk, and continued so until 1826, when the 'late Duke of Gordon (then Marquis of Huntly) re- 'established it. It is now rented by Sir Joseph Rad- 'cliffe; but as he takes in black cattle to graze in 'summer, the number of deer is not great, perhaps not 'more than two or three hundred. The deer in this 'forest are small, and are principally hinds, but in all 'the other named forests it was not uncommon to kill 'harts that weighed twenty-four and even twenty-seven 'imperial stones.

Kingussie.

Alexander Macpherson.

'The forest of Ben-Alder is now rented by the 'Marquis of Abercorn; but as the sheep were only 'turned off in 1836, there are not many deer as yet: 'however, as the Marquis of Breadalbane's forest is not 'far distant, they will no doubt accumulate rapidly. 'This forest lies on the north-west side of Locherricht, 'and contains an area of from 30 to 35 square miles. 'Its lie is in a south-west direction. The boundary on 'the south-west is the small river Alder, on the north- 'west Beallachnadui (the dark vale) and the river Caal- 'rathy, and on the north-east it is bounded by Loch- 'pathag and Farron. The mountains are high, probably 'near 4000 feet above the level of the sea; and there is 'a lake, about two miles in circumference, at an eleva- 'tion of at least 2500 feet, abounding with trout of 'excellent quality'.

Then about Gaick the same writer says:—'*Gaick.* '—There are many circumstances connected with this 'forest that give it an interest. Its lie is in a south- 'west direction, bounded on the south by the Braes 'of Athole, on the north by Glentromie, on the east 'by Corry Bran, and on the west by the Glentruim 'Hills. In the centre of Gaick there is a plain of 'about 8 miles long, and in this plain there are three 'lakes—Loch-an-t-Seillich, Loch Vrotain, and Loch-an- 'Dùin—all abounding with excellent trout and char, 'and another species of fish, called dorman by the 'country people.'

My next quotation is from Scrope's 'Days of Deer- 'Stalking.' [*Mr Sutherland.*—Is that a sportsman's guide-book?—No, it is not; it is a history of the Scottish deer forests written or published about half a century ago. It gives the more modern measurements of the extent of the different deer forests].

'*Glenfeshie*, in the parish of Kingussie and county 'of Inverness, is bounded on the south and south-east 'by the forests of Mar and Athole, on the west by the 'forest of Gaick, and on the south by the estate of 'Invereshie; by survey in 1770 it contained 13,706 'Scots acres. It was let in 1752 to Mr Macpherson of 'Invereshie, and continued to be rented by that family 'until 1812, when it was purchased from the Duke of 'Gordon by Mr Macpherson of Invereshie and Ballin- 'dalloch. It has been pastured by cattle and sheep 'since 1752.

'*Gaick*, in the parish of Kingussie and county of 'Inverness, is bounded on the south and west by the 'forest of Atholl, on the east by the forest of Felaar 'and the estate of Invereshie, and on the north by the 'lands of Invertruim, Ruthven, Noid, Phoness, and 'Glentruim. It contains three lakes stocked with char 'and large trout, and salmon are occasionally found in 'them, ascending by the water of Tromie from the 'Spey. By survey in 1770 it contained 10,777 acres. 'It was let in 1782 as a sheep-walk to Robert Stewar 'of Garth for nineteen years. In 1804 it was let to 'Colonel Gordon of Invertruim [Invertromie?], who 'occupied it as a grazing till 1814, when the Marquis 'of Huntly got it from his father as a deer forest. In '1830 it was purchased by Mr Macpherson-Grant of 'Ballindalloch, from the Gordon trustees, and it is now 'let to Sir Joseph Radcliffe, Bart., who strictly pre-

Kingussie. — Alexander Macpherson.

'serves it as a deer forest, and has an excellent 'shooting lodge near the centre of the range.

'*Drumouchter*, in the parish of Kingussie and county 'of Inverness, is bounded on the south by the vast 'forest of Atholl, on the west by the Duke of Athole's 'and Sir Neil Menzies's properties, and on the north 'and east by the lands of Glentruim and Cluny. By 'survey in 1770 it contained 5782 Scots acres, ex- 'clusive of Ben-Alder, which forms a part of it, and 'contains 14,927 acres. It was let for pasture to 'Lachlan Macpherson in 1773. In 1829 it was pur- 'chased from the Gordon trustees, along with the 'lands of Glentruim, by Major Ewen Macpherson of 'the H.E.I.C.S., and is occupied as a sheep-walk and 'grouse-shooting range. Ben-Alder is now the property 'of Ewen Macpherson, Esq. of Cluny, and has recently 'been let to the Marquis of Abercorn as a deer forest.

'*Glenmore*, in the parish of Kincardine and county 'of Inverness, containing 10,173 acres, was formerly 'a great pine-forest. It is bounded on the south by 'the forests of Glenavon and Mar. It is used now for 'pasturage. Cairngorm forms part of this forest.

'*Glenavon*, in the parish of Kirkmichael, county of 'Banff, contains 22,086 Scots acres. Since 1773 it 'has been occupied as a grazing, but it is said that the 'Duke of Richmond contemplates restoring it to a 'deer forest. It adjoins the forest of Mar.

'*Glenbuilg*, adjoining Glenavon, 3396 acres.

'*Glenfiddich*, parish of Mortlach, county of Banff, '5522 acres, is possessed by the Duke of Richmond as 'a deer forest, and has always been retained as such by the Gordon family.

'Of all these ancient forests, the last and Gaick are 'the only ones now strictly preserved for deer; the 'others are pastured by black cattle or sheep, and are 'therefore only partially stocked with the noble 'animals.'

48,504. Where did the MS. come from, may I ask?—I got it from the grandson of the writer; he is now the proprietor of Corriemony.

48,505. I think you are the author of a recent book on Badenoch in the olden time?—I am.

48,506. Do you know these forests in detail? Have you been through them?—I have not been through them, but I have been on Gaick and Glenfeshie a good deal.

48,507. Only these two?—Only these two.

48,508. Are you able to say with regard to these two whether there are lands there capable of profitable or advantageous occupation by crofters?—I should say not, except for a very small portion of the year,—perhaps from the end of May, or not sooner than the middle of May, until perhaps the beginning of October.

48,509. On what ground do you say so?—On account of the altitude; you could not keep sheep there during winter and there is no wintering for them at home.

48,510. I suppose we may have an opportunity of seeing the forest lands?—They are quite accessible.

48,511. *Mr Sutherland.*—The paper you have read is not your own statement, but do you assume responsibility for it?—I certainly do, from what I know about the character of the writer.

48,512. The writer speaks of the laws of Scotland in olden times being barbarous and cruel. Can you tell me what Acts of Parliament that remark is intended to apply to?—I cannot say.

48,513. The only reference given is to certain acts of cruelty on the part of some Highland Chief, but have you any reason to suppose that if there was anything barbarous or cruel in the conduct of the Chief, he was acting in accordance with Acts of Parliament?—I think he must have been, or the writer would not have mentioned it in the way he does.

48,514. Did the Chiefs in the Highlands always act in accordance with Acts of Parliament?—They were sometimes very barbarous.

48,515. But you cannot refer me to the Acts specifically?—No. I have never come across any such Acts, and I have gone over a good many.

48,516. *Mr Maccallum.*—At the time when that document was written, I think it is said towards the end that all these forests were pastured with the exception of two,—Glen-Fiddich and Gaick?—Yes. Kingussie. — Alexander Macpherson.

48,517. So that in that year these were the only two forests in existence?—Practically, at that particular time.

48,518. All the rest were pastured by tenants' stock of sheep and cattle?—Quite so. I may be allowed to say that I am quite prepared to answer any questions regarding the Cluny and Glentruim properties: there were some statements made here to-day in connection with these estates.

48,519. *The Chairman.*—If there is anything you would like to say bearing on the evidence that has come out to-day we shall be glad to have it?—I may mention with regard to the farm of Middleton on the estate of Cluny Macpherson which became vacant last year, that we advertised it to let in allotments,—it has about 60 acres of fairly good arable land,—at rents to be adjusted with the County Council, and we did not get one single offer.

48,520. When was that?—In the spring of last year.

48,521. Had you had any indications before that of a desire for small allotments?—There was a great deal of talk about the people wanting more land, and we resolved to put the matter to the test; with the result I have stated, that we did not get one single application for the land.

48,522. Was the matter made widely known?—It was; we spent a good deal of money in advertising it. Something has also been said about Aberarder, and I should like to explain about that also. The lease terminated under a Mr Purdie, and in 1891 we advertised the farm for a very long time, and offered to divide it into two separate holdings and to build a new farm house and steading; but we never got a single offer for it.

48,523. What would the rents of these have been?—The rent when the lease terminated was £700.

48,524. You offered to divide the farm into two holdings?—Yes.

48,525. Had it been two holdings at any previous time?—No, only one holding for a considerable time previously.

48,526. And what rents were you prepared to accept?—We were prepared to accept any reasonable rent.

48,527. The estate you say would have put up the new buildings required?—Yes.

48,528. And any necessary fencing?—Any necessary fencing besides.

48,529. *Mr Sutherland.*—You would be expecting that that would form two holdings of about £350 each?—We were prepared to take a considerably lower rent than £350; we hardly expected to get £700 for the two holdings because the prices of cattle and sheep were coming down.

48,530. Would you not be justified in expecting more rent when you sub-divided the farm?—Of course we would, but we did not expect even the £700 if we erected the dwelling-houses, because the rents of farms all over Badenoch had gone down very considerably.

48,531. Was there any evidence given here to-day by a witness who could speak about the farm of Middleton?—I am not aware, but there was evidence given to the effect that there was a cry for more land.

48,532. But was the fact which you have stated within the knowledge of any who have given evidence here to-day?—It must have been, because it was very well known at the time; I think one of the witnesses referred to it. One of the witnesses also referred to Aberarder being converted into a deer forest. It is now sublet; the tenant who took it as a deer forest at £500 found that it was not going to work well, and he sublet the grazing at a lower rent than he paid himself.

48,533. What was the reference to Middleton which you say was made by a witness here to-day?—I forget the exact allusion, but, I think, it was Mr Campbell, the first witness, who referred to it.

48,534. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Was this farm of Middleton advertised in the local newspapers?—Yes. I exhibit a copy of the advertisement:—

Kingussie. Alexander Macpherson.

'ESTATES OF CLUNY MACPHERSON.

'The arable farm of Middleton, in the parish of 'Laggan, extending to 60 acres or thereby, is to 'let as from Whitsunday first.

'The proprietor is prepared to let the farm in 'allotments or small holdings, on terms to be 'adjusted with the County Council, provided 'the whole farm is so taken up.

'Applications to be lodged with Alexander Mac-'pherson, solicitor, Kingussie, factor on the 'estates, on or before the 22nd current. Kin-'gussie, 6th Feb. 1893.'

48,535. *Mr Sutherland.*—It was only to be given in allotments on condition that the whole farm was so taken?—So it was stated in the advertisement.

48,536. *The Chairman.*—But I understand you to say that you did not get any application for it?—No.

48,537. Or inquiry?—Nor inquiry.

48,538. *Mr Sutherland.*—Don't you think the proviso would exclude that?—I don't think so. There are a number of people in Laggan who profess to be anxious to take small holdings.

48,539. Don't you think the taking over of the whole farm would prevent some from coming forward?—You might divide it into four or five.

48,540. But don't you think that if the condition of taking the whole farm were taken away it might have elicited applications?—I don't think so, because it was quite natural that we should have made that stipulation.

48,541. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—If there had been a very strong desire on the part of the people to take small holdings, you would have expected applications from at least half a dozen?—Quite so: we were prepared to let it to three or four, or five or six.

48,542. *Mr Sutherland.*—But how were the public to know that, seeing the proviso is so distinctly stated?—Well, they made no inquiry.

48,543. But, don't you see they were practically prevented from that by that proviso?—I don't think so if so many of the people were really as anxious to acquire small holdings as they were said to be.

48,544. *Mr Gordon.*—What is the nearest place to this farm of Middleton?—Laggan Bridge.

48,545. Is there any work that the people could have got if they had settled there?—They might have gone out as gillies, as many of them do; or they might have got work as tradespeople, such as masons, and the like.

48,546. But there is not much outside work to be had near?—Not much outside work.

48,547. I have no doubt that might operate as one element in the case.

48,548. *The Chairman.*—Did you contemplate dividing the farm into small holdings by which a person could live?—Yes, to a great extent, perhaps combined with some other employment.

48,549. The idea was that the holdings should be of such a size that the occupants could live partly by the produce of the holding, and partly by outside labour?—Quite so.

48,550. *Mr Maccallum.*—Did you communicate with the County Council in regard to this plan?—No, we made no communication to the County Council.

48,551. How, then, was it possible for you to advertise about the adjustment of terms by the County Council?—We were quite prepared if we had got offers, few or many—three or four, or five or six, to refer the whole matter to the County Council, and adjust the rent of each holding with them.

48,552. But you put into this advertisement a thing for which you had no proper authority,—that you are prepared to let this land 'on terms to be adjusted with 'the County Council,' although you did not know whether the County Council would adjust them or not?—No, we did not know whether they would or not.

48,553. How did you think the County Council would be so very subservient to the estate management?—We did not want the County Council to be subservient to the estate management, but rather to the crofter population.

48,554. Under what Act were they to adjust these terms with you?—I am not at this moment aware under what Act they might do it, but they were supposed to have the power to allocate allotments. Kingussie. Alexander Macpherson.

48,555. Might not the people suspect that the process involved delay—that there was a great deal of time to be lost between you and the County Council?—I don't think that would operate in the slightest degree against the scheme.

48,556. You did not offer this land to the County Council to be bought by them or let to them?—No, we did not do that; we simply advertised it in the manner you see in the advertisement.

48,557. But why not proceed on the Acts that have been passed for settling these matters?—That might be an expensive process, as you were told here to-day.

48,558. Not if the proprietor is willing to give facilities?—Well, the proprietor in this case was quite willing to allot all that farm.

48,559. But no such communication was sent to the County Council?—No, we waited to get in offers, in the belief that they would come in.

48,560. But is it not the County Council that are to put the Act into force?—I am not aware; I have not a copy of the Act before me.

48,561. Are you not aware that it is an Act that is to be put in force by the County Council?—I am not aware of the exact provisions of the Act.

48,562. It is not an Act which falls to you to administer, but the County Council, and no communication was sent to them in regard to the matter?—No communication.

48,563. What did you expect the County Council to do?—As soon as we should get the offers in, we would submit them to the County Council, and if they chose to take the matter up we would say we are willing to let this farm in allotments, according to the rents that you may consider fair and reasonable.

48,564. You thought the County Council would fix the rents for you?—We were prepared to agree to that.

48,565. To any rents that the County Council would fix?—Which might be fair and reasonable, at all events.

48,566. You see what the thing is worth now?—Well, of course, there must be two parties to a bargain.

48,567. You say that the terms are to be adjusted with the County Council and that you would accept 'these if they were fair and reasonable' in your opinion; what was the worth of that to the people?—Well, we were really quite prepared to accept whatever rents the County Council might consider fair and reasonable.

48,568. *The Chairman.*—Had endeavours been made to let this farm before, or in one lot?—No; no such endeavours were made till afterwards.

48,569. Had a lease fallen in?—Yes, the lease had fallen in.

48,570. What, in particular, led you to make this proposal?—The cry for 'more land' on the part of some of the Laggan people, for small holdings.

48,571. Had that cry reached you from individuals, or was there just a vague idea in your mind that such a desire existed?—Statements were made in public that the people wanted more land; there was a cry for more land, and Cluny resolved to test it by placing this farm at their disposal.

48,572. Has it been let since?—It has.

48,573. To a single tenant?—To a single tenant.

ALEXANDER MACDOUGALL, Factor for Sir John Ramsden. Alexander Macdougall.

48,574. *The Chairman.*—We have a letter from Sir John Ramsden, addressed to the Secretary, in which he says:—'Sir, in my own unavoidable absence I have 'requested Mr Alexander Macdougall, who acts for me 'at Kingussie, to attend the sitting of the Royal Com-'mission, and to say in my name that if there is any 'information relating to my estates in Badenoch and 'Lochaber which the Royal Commissioners wish for, I 'will cause it to be furnished; and further, that if it 'should be their pleasure to visit and inspect any part 'of my lands I beg they will do so, and I have given

Kingussie. — Alexander Macdougall.

'directions that any facilities it may be in my power to 'provide for enabling them to make such inspection with 'ease and comfort may be placed at their service. I 'have the honour to be, &c., J. W. Ramsden. 13th 'August, 1894?'—I am not prepared with any statement,—Sir John did not authorise me to give any; but if you would be so good as to give me a note of any queries he would be very willing to give you the fullest information in his power.

48,575. You mean in writing?—Yes, in writing; and in the meantime to give you all facilities for viewing the grounds and any other assistance you desire.

48,576. But you have no written statement to submit?—No.

48,577. And you are not prepared to answer questions at present?—No.

48,578. You would rather give in a statement in writing?—Yes.

48,579. We have not been in the habit of doing that; but perhaps if we desire it you would attend another meeting of the Commission later on?—Yes, I should be very glad.

48,580. You would probably have no objection to come to Inverness?—No.

48,581. And would you kindly be ready then to answer any questions we may wish to put: and possibly you may have a written statement ready to submit by that time.

Allan Macdonald.

ALLAN MACDONALD, Solicitor, Inverness, Commissioner for The Mackintosh of Mackintosh (50)—*examined.*

48,582. *The Chairman.*—You are Commissioner for The Mackintosh?—Yes.

48,583. Have you any written statement to submit?—No, I have not.

48,584. Is there anything you wish to say?—Yes, I wish to elaborate the remark that I made this morning during the examination of the first witness. I did not exactly hear all that that witness said, but as it struck me he seemed to say that the tenants had been turned out to enable this land of Coignafearn to be afforested. He explained afterwards that what he meant was that that happened forty or fifty years ago. Now, I cannot speak of anything that happened so far back as that; I have only been factor on the estate for the last twenty years. But I never heard that land had been afforested before my time; I have always understood that it was a sort of natural forest or natural resort for deer. When the forest was made or extended in 1882, we took away about 1000 acres of pasture from some of the crofters. There is a crofting township of nine holdings there who used to have an outrun of about 10,000 acres. I may say that the whole estate of Coignafearn extends to about 38,000 acres of which 28,000 acres have been cleared for deer. It was in order to complete a corrie that about 1000 acres were taken from these crofters. But I wish to explain that the matter was carried through in a perfectly amicable manner, and that the crofters affected by it got their rent reduced on their own terms. When they came down to see Mackintosh at Moyhall, they were asked what they wanted and how many sheep they would lose by this portion being taken off. They said it would reduce their stock by about 800 sheep; that they valued a sheep at 10d., and that they would be quite willing to take that for them if they got an additional reduction of £12, being the amount which for some purpose or other one of my predecessors, Mr Fraser-Mackintosh, had added to their rent, when he was Commissioner on the estate. I accordingly sometime afterwards wrote this letter, dated 25th February 1888. 'At 'the last rent collection at Moy, you told me that yourself 'and the other Coig's tenants would consider it a fair re- 'duction of rent in respect of the hill ground recently 'resumed and fenced off by The Mackintosh, if, in 'addition to the reduction spoken of at Moy, when 'you and John Mackintosh, Cognashee, met The Mack- 'intosh and myself there, you were also relieved of the 'increase of rent imposed in Mr Fraser-Mackintosh's Kingussie. — Allan Macdonald. 'time, viz., £12. In order to come to a friendly 'settlement with you and to avoid the trouble and 'expense of a valuation, The Mackintosh is willing to 'agree to these terms. He is thus willing to allow you 'the following abatements:—(1) For the reduction of 'your stock by 800 sheep—which is your own estimate '—at the rate of 10d. per sheep, which you yourselves 'state was the rate fixed between yourselves and the late 'Mackintosh—the present chief's father—£33; (2) 'the sum by which the rent has been raised since you 'made that arrangement with the late Mackintosh, '£12; in all, £45. Your total rent will thus be reduced 'to £135, and the reduction will take effect from the 'time you first became entitled to a reduction, which, 'I think, you said was Whitsunday 1886. I shall be 'glad to hear from you that you and all the other 'tenants agree to this arrangement, when I shall at 'once draw up a short Minute of Agreement between 'yourselves and The Chief. I am sending a copy of 'this letter to Mr Macgillivray, Achingall.' Then, in answer to that letter I received this one, which I shall read to Your Lordship, from John Mackintosh.

"Coignafionnternach,
1st March 1888.

'Mr Macdonald,

'Sir, I received your letter of the '27th, and I have seen all the other tenants and they 'all agree with the offer The Mackintosh is giving 'and we all wish to thank The Mackintosh for agree- 'ing with us. Hoping there will be no more disagree- 'ing between us. I am, truly yours, John Mackintosh, 'in name of all the other tenants.'

48,585. Was that land which up to the date of that arrangement held by the crofters under Act of Parliament?—No; it was held originally under a lease, and latterly by tacit relocation for many years.

48,586. But it was held by crofters?—They have never applied to the Crofters Commission.

48,587. But they are crofters I suppose under the Act?—Yes, I presume they are.

48,588. And this was part of their common grazing?—Yes.

48,589. Which was taken from them under this arrangement which you have described?—Yes.

48,590. So that this was land which they held with security of tenure under an Act of Parliament, taken from them by The Mackintosh, acting through you, by means of this arrangement?—Yes. [*Mr Gordon.* Did they get the reduction of rent as from Whitsunday 1886?—Yes. That was before the Act was passed?—Yes].

48,591. No doubt the Act of Parliament was passed on 25th June 1886, but the arrangement here was, I understand, concluded in March 1888?—That is so.

48,592. Well, the transaction is completed now, and perhaps there is no use of saying anything more about it, but it is the first transaction of the kind that I heard of?—As you have seen, it was quite an amicable arrangement.

48,593. You say the crofters were satisfied with it?—Yes; there is their letter.

48,594. That land was taken from them in order to form a corrie?—To complete one side of a corrie.

48,595. And, of course, the area taken was all that was necessary for that purpose?—Yes; we took it from the river.

48,596. Was there any measurement made from the 6-inch scale map, or how are you able to say that there were just 1000 acres?—I really cannot tell you at this moment; I don't think there were quite 1000 acres.

48,597. There is some difference between you and other witnesses, you know, as to the extent and the area: may it have been a good deal more than 1000?—The witness said more than that, but, I believe, it was in reality less.

48,598. I think he rather indicated more; but were there sufficient means taken to ascertain the precise area?—A fence was put up, so that the tenants saw

the piece of land that was taken off; but I cannot at this moment say whether it was measured or not.

48,599. The usual method for landlords getting land which becomes the crofters by Act of Parliament, is by application for resumption of holding?—Well, that is so in the case of crofters; but I expect these gentlemen did not want to be crofters, although they actually were under the Act.

48,600. *Mr Gordon.*—The arrangement is thus stated in the letter: 'Your total rent will be reduced to '£135, and the reduction will take effect from the 'time you first became entitled to a reduction, which, 'I think you said, was Whitsunday 1886.' The fence was put up before the Act was passed.

48,601. *The Chairman.*—But the transaction was completed in 1888 after the Act had been in operation for two years?—That no doubt is the time when the transaction was completed; when it began to be spoken about was several years previously.

48,602. *Mr Sutherland.*—I should like to ask you one question with regard to the voluntary nature of this surrender of their grazing. Of course, you have shown us that it was voluntarily surrendered by the reading of the letter?—Yes.

48,603. But, did the people know that they had the means of resisting the demand if they chose?—Oh, perfectly well.

48,604. What means do you think they thought they had?—I don't know any crofter in the country who did not know the meaning of the Act of 1886 by the end of two years after it came into existence.

48,605. Under which this transaction did *not* take place?—This did not take place.

48,606. If they were aware of the privileges they had under the Act, why did they not enforce them, and stand upon them?—Because they were quite willing to oblige the proprietor. They were on very good terms with the proprietor, and were quite willing to oblige him; and it was better for themselves.

48,607. So that less land is better for them?—Less land, with less rent.

48,608. How far would you carry that principle?—I carry it here in this case; I am not responsible for any more.

48,609. Is that area the exact point at which it stops, if there is not a principle involved in it?—There is no principle involved in it. These people gave up so much of their land in order to oblige their proprietor, in return for the reduction of rent, and they never asked for any other compensation.

48,610. Did they know that they could under any circumstances contest that conclusion of the landlord?—I have no doubt they did.

48,611. And knowing that they had a remedy, they chose voluntarily to take the restricted area instead of the large area?—Most distinctly.

48,612. You are satisfied in your own mind as to that?—I will take my oath on it, if you like, for I believe it to be the case.

48,613. But you stated as a principle that there was no injury done to them, because if there was a reduced area, there was also a reduced rent?—I say there was no injury done to the tenants in this case, because they got compensation for the reduced area.

48,614. Then, if you were to reduce the area by another half, and take off half of the remaining rent, do you hold that there would still be no injury?—I am not going to say anything about that.

48,615. That is carrying out the principle?—I am not here for principles, but for facts.

48,616. What is the difference between the principles and the facts? What distinction do you draw in your own mind between the principle and the fact?—If you are asking the difference between a principle and a fact, I really must decline to chop logic with you.

48,617. But you stated the principle yourself?—No, I did not state any principle.

48,618. You stated that there was no injury done to them because if their area was reduced their rent was also reduced?—I said there was no injury done to these tenants, because their rent was reduced in proportion to their loss of area.

48,619. And arguing in the same way, if the area was still further reduced, and the rents also still further reduced, there would still be no injury?—That may be your opinion, but it is not mine.

48,620. But it is your own opinion?—No, it is not. You will allow me to have my own opinion, if you please.

48,621. Have you any practical knowledge of sheep farming, may I ask?—No, none.

48,622. Does The Mackintosh let his sheep farms at 10d. per sheep?—Well, I may say that they could only summer sheep up here; and I never made the calculation of what The Mackintosh charges per sheep.

48,623. Is it not common to let farms on the principle of so much per sheep?—I never let any on that principle.

48,624. You never heard that it is common in certain parts of Scotland?—I never did till this moment.

48,625. You did not hear what price they charged for sheep?—No.

48,626. And do you think that 10d. per sheep was quite an adequate reduction?—It is what they asked.

48,627. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—The reduction of rent was given on their own terms?—On their own terms.

48,628. And if they had asked a larger reduction they might have got it?—I believe they would.

48,629. They thought they were asking what was fair to themselves and to the proprietor?—Certainly, I understood so.

48,630. *Mr Maccallum.*—You stated that it must have been present to the minds of the crofters that they had protection under the Act?—I believe it was.

48,631. Was that present to your own mind when you were making this arrangement?—I did not make the arrangement.

48,632. Was it not through you that it was made?—No, they came down to Moyhall and made the arrangement there.

48,633. But you were one of the parties to the transaction?—I heard the transaction discussed, and was afterwards the hand which reduced it to shape or writing.

48,634. I ask you then, was it present to your own mind that the tenants had that privilege under the Act?—I don't know that it was; I really do not remember at this moment.

48,635. You think it was in the mind of the crofters, but you don't know whether it was in your own mind?—I have not the slightest doubt they knew of it, and I have not the slightest doubt that I did, although I do not at this present moment recollect whether it was specifically mentioned or not.

48,636. It is an important matter, this fact of the security which they had under the Act; and they had by this arrangement conferred a great obligement on the proprietor. Do you remember whether there was any conversation between you and them as to their rights under the Crofters Act?—No, I do not remember of any.

48,637. Seeing you do not remember that, is it not more likely that these people did not know their rights?—I don't know: I say I am almost sure that they did.

48,638. Would it not be natural for them to bring this forward as an argument in their own favour, that the land was theirs so long as they paid a fair rent for it?—They did not bring forward any such argument. There is no law, so far as I know, which prohibits tenants from doing a friendly turn to their landlord. I am quite sure that they were quite willing to give up this land on their own terms, and quite thankful to get these terms.

48,639. To get the land off their hand?—To get these terms.

48,640. But the affair originated with the proprietor, did it not?—No doubt it did.

48,641 And the favour was all to him?—Yes.

Kingussie.

Allan Macdonald.

48,642. Not to them?—No, it was no favour to them, it did them no special good: the favour was to the proprietor.

48,643. In fixing the compensation, would it not be natural really to try and consider how these people were sacrificing their rights under the Crofters Act; did you consider that?—I don't know that I did.

48,644. Then further, do you know whether under the Crofters Act the proprietor can resume land in order to make it a deer forest?—With their own consent I presume he can.

48,645. But I mean acting under the Act of Parliament?—Whether he could compel them, do you mean?

48,646. Not whether he could compel them, but whether he could come before the Crofters Commission and seek power to resume the land in order to turn it into a deer forest?—I don't know.

48,647. So that if there is no provision under the Act for resuming land for deer forest, then it would be impossible for him to get it, except by consent of the crofters?—If there is no provision for his doing it compulsorily, of course he must do it by consent.

48,648. So that a very considerable favour was conferred in this case, and still there was no mention made of these rights? Was it not your duty, if they did not know it, to bring it under their notice?—No, I do not see that it was. Further, as I have stated repeatedly, I am perfectly certain they knew quite well what they were doing.

48,649. Do you think you would be entitled to take advantage of their ignorance?—No, I would not be entitled to take advantage of anybody.

48,650. *The Chairman.*—You were acting as agent for The Mackintosh in the transaction?—Yes, to the extent of writing the letter which I have read.

48,651. And the crofters had no agent?—No, they had no agent.

[Adjourned.]

FIFTY-SEVENTH SITTING.

Fort-William.

FORT-WILLIAM, August 18, 1894.

Present:—

David Brand, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh, Sheriff of Ayr and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
Angus Sutherland, Esq., M.P.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

Donald Macphee.

Donald Macphee, Solicitor, Fort-William (49)—*examined.*

48,652. *The Chairman.*—You are a Solicitor in practice in Fort-William?—I am.

48,653. Are you appearing with regard to lands on the Abinger estate exclusively?—No, My Lord, I wish to make a general statement, and will include a reference to the Abinger estates among my observations with regard to the estates surrounding this place.

48,654. Are you appearing as a delegate?—I am a County Councillor, and I am a member of the Land League here, and I represent a number,—not one township in particular, but a number of townships on various estates.

48,655. We shall be glad to hear your statement?—I may say, My Lord, that I am a native of this district, and my ancestors have been here for centuries. The particular part of country where my ancestors on my father's side were settled was Loch-Arkaig, on the Lochiel estate. Of course, I cannot speak from personal recollection as to the evictions or clearances of the people from these places, but there are documents accessible to me, and I have made special inquiry into the condition of the country at the beginning of this century before these evictions or clearances began to take place, and as the result I am pretty conversant with the state of the distribution of population over the place and the manner in which the country was occupied during that time.

Fort-William.

Donald Macphee.

With regard to Loch-Arkaig side there were two glens branching off it,—Glen-Dessary and Glen-Pean,—in which a great many families were settled, as well as at various hamlets along the loch side. These hamlets were cleared at the time when the whole country side there was converted into sheep walks. That there were people there in considerable numbers, I think, appears evident from a reference to a rental or valuation of the farms on the Lochiel estate, which I exhibit to Your Lordship. It was taken about a century before 1883 when this book was published, which is a history of the Clan Cameron, by Mr Alexander Mackenzie, Inverness. Cameron of Lochiel was a subscriber to it, and I do not suppose he would have subscribed for the book and taken a copy of it unless he had been satisfied of its substantial accuracy. In that rental you will find the number of tenants on the various hamlets or localities up at Loch-Arkaig side, and I think they represent a considerable number indeed. I should say by way of explanation that only the tenants who pay a rent who hold directly from the proprietor are entered or numbered in that rent roll; besides them there would be cottars or sub-tenants whose names do not necessarily appear there, so that you can make out from that alone that there was a considerable population there at one time. I understand also that the level of Loch-Arkaig has been raised by forming a bank or weir at this end of it. The level of the loch has risen so much that it has submerged about 40 acres of land suitable for cultivation at the upper end of the loch.

Lochiel read a statement here before the Crofters Commission in which he said that the population there migrated from Loch-Arkaig side down to the Caledonian Canal when it was in course of construction. I do not know that he said expressly that it was in search of employment, but the implication and the inference from what he said was that they left voluntarily in order to find employment on the Canal banks. I do not know that it was mentioned in his statement—Mr N. B. Mackenzie is here and he will bear me out, but in the course of some of the observations that were made in the reading of that statement he said that he was unable to go back to the previous history of the estate management as the estate records only existed for a period of thirty-eight years from the time he made the statement, viz.:—last year. Now, I do not know how he should come to make this statement with regard to a transaction that took place at the beginning of the century if estate records are not in existence prior to a period of thirty-eight years back. But fortunately we do not depend on the records of the Lochiel estate office, because it is a matter of notoriety, and there are witnesses who will be adduced who have seen those who were dispossessed; and it is the subject of a poem by no less a distinguished scholar than Professor Shairp of Oxford titled 'Glen-Dessary.' I have it here and a certain portion of it is copied into a book also by Mr Alexander Mackenzie entitled 'The Highland Clearances,' and I see that the poet says in the introduction that it is founded on fact. It is notorious about here that Professor Shairp spent a good deal of time in this country gathering information on which this poem is based, and it correctly sets forth the facts in so far as it coincides with the results of my investigations. They went out, as the poet says, with herds of sheep and with cattle; they were not a poor destitute lot at all, but their stock was sacrificed by being thrown in the market all at once. The strong and able-bodied among them went to America, and a few, burdened with aged parents, were

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

offered holdings on the margin of Loch-Eil here, and a number of them settled on what was then practically a peat bog, and is so still at Lochy side where they reclaimed land and where their descendants are to this day.

The same thing obviously has taken place up Loch-Eil side, from Corpach to Craigag, and in driving up, as I understand your Lordship and the other Commissioners will do in the beginning of this week, to go to your sittings in Arisaig, you will see unmistakable evidences along the road side of comfortable holdings there which have been cleared, and now form part of the sheep farm.

48,656. On which side of the loch?—On the north side of the loch. Lord Morton's property is on the south side. Then on Lochiel's estate, on the south side of Loch-Linnhe, witnesses will be adduced to-day to prove that between Druimarbin and Onich in Ballachulish there were numerous hamlets on what now constitutes the farm of Coruanan, and Inneirigh and Blar-nan-Cleireach and up there. These have been cleared off. Lochiel's estate on this side just begins where we are sitting, and goes on to Ballachulish. At North Ballachulish, about thirty years ago, or between twenty and thirty years ago, there were forty-two crofters. I do not mean that active eviction was employed in their case; but by a process which was equally effective, twenty of them were suppressed, and their holdings consolidated into a farm which was attached to the hotel there, and is now rented by the Episcopal Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, who rents both the farm and the hotel. The remaining crofts there are of very small size, so small indeed that when one became vacant about two or three years ago with a rental of £2, 12s. Lochiel thought it was so inadequate in size that it would be a good thing to enlarge the adjoining croft. We had not much fault to find with that if the enlargement had taken place out of the twenty crofts which were consolidated into such a large holding; if the necessity existed for enlarging the inadequate sized crofts that remained, then the crofters down there contend, and, I think, with justice, that the enlargement should have taken place out of these 20 acres which were consolidated into the inn farm, and handed over to a man who could make a very good living independently of that land. Land is a necessity of life to a crofter. That land now forms the Home Farm attached to Bishop Chinnery-Huldane's residence there.

The people of Ballachulish and the people of Achintore on the Lochiel estate have also to complain that valuable rights of summer grazing have been taken from them. There is a mountain range on this side of the Moor of Rannoch called Beinn-Bhreac, about 8 miles long, and the tenants of Onich and Achintore, and also the inhabitants of Fort-William, had the right of sending their cattle there during the summer to be grazed at first on the principle of the old shielings. They took their milk cattle there, and converted the milk into butter and cheese; but latterly it was, I understand, used for eild cattle and young beasts. It appears that at that time two proprietors had a kind of run-rig right of proprietorship in that mountain range, and also in Glas-bheinn, but by a system of exchange or exambion Glas-bheinn was assigned entirely to Sir Duncan Cameron, and Beinn-Bhreac, with the exception of a bit at the north end next the estate of Major Walker of Loch-Treig, was assigned to Cameron of Lochiel. These rights were valuable and the people were deprived of them, and, of course, it meant a reduction of the stock they were able to keep. Now, I should have said generally with regard to Loch-Arkaig and the other lands on Lochiel estate, that they are admirably suited for maintaining a large population on moderately-sized holdings.

48,657. You have gone back to Loch-Arkaig. Kindly endeavour to deal with that tract of country a little more in detail. You have referred us to Glen-Dessary and Glen-Pean, and you have told us about townships or farms that existed there in times past?—Yes.

48,658. Can you speak more particularly to tracts of land that you think we ought to consider, or are you only asking our attention generally to the land in and surrounding these glens, and on the sides of Loch-Arkaig?—I am only asking you to look at them generally as the result of my investigation and the perusal of that rent roll.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,659. You attach importance, and not unnaturally, to this rent roll; we had better have it in your evidence instead of by way of reference. Kindly pick out the farms or townships to which you ask our special attention. Does that book give the date of the rent roll?—The book was published in 1884, and Mr Alex. Mackenzie prefaces the reference to the rent roll by saying:—'The following statement giving the names 'of all the tenants, and the total rental paid on the 'Estates of Lochiel, nearly a century ago, will be found 'interesting,' so that that carries us back to about the year 1784. At Achnasoul, on Loch-Arkaigside, there were eight Camerons; that is near Achnacarry on the north bank. At Creiff there was a John Macphee (1); at Salichan there were a Cameron and a Macphee.

48,660. Which side of the loch is that?—I think they are nearly all on the north side. At Muick and Kenmore there was one tenant paying £20; at Caolonich, three Camerons and one Macphee; at Callicharth there were three Camerons, one Donald Macmillan and a John Macphee—that will be between Caolonich and Murlaggan. At Murlaggan there was a Macmillan, a Mackintosh, and a Maclachlan. At Relesmore there was a shieling in the occupancy of Alexander Macmillan. At Invermaillie, on the south side of loch, there was one Alexander Cameron; then at Kinloch-Arkaig, at the upper end, three Camerons. At Lagganfearn, near there Donald Cameron; and at Glenpeinbeg and Lagganfern there was one Ocain Cameron; at Glenpeinbeg there were two Camerons and two Macmillans. Glenpeinbeg is up at the head of Loch-Arkaig; it branches off there. Three quarters of Glenpeinbeg and half of Lagganfern was occupied as I have said by Ocain Cameron; a fourth of Glenpeinbeg was occupied by two Camerons and two Macmillans; Glenpeinmore was occupied by Allan Macmillan; Glen-Dessary by ten Macphees, four Macmillans, and four Camerons.

48,661. Was there a township of Glen-Dessary as well as the glen?—Yes. There are adjacent places like Moy to the south of Loch-Arkaig and Barr and Strone and Inverskilavullin. At Barr there were five Camerons; at Inverskilavullin two Camerons; at Errecht, Allan Cameron, without augmentation. At the two Moys there were twelve Mackinnons and four Camerons. I expected that Mr Alexander Macmillan, the present tenant of Moy, would have come here. I said a little ago that there were twelve Mackinnons and four Camerons at Moy. To show the fitness of the land to maintain a population of that number I asked Mr Macmillan, the present tenant of Moy, which is the only part of these lands in the occupation of an agriculturist and a pastoral farmer, all the rest being deer forest, to come, and give such evidence as he could. With your permission I will read the letters I got from Mr Macmillan on the subject.

48,662. Could Mr Macmillan not attend here himself?—It was not convenient for him to attend, he is a very old man. [*Mr N. B. Mackenzie, factor for Lochiel.*—He is a hale man, enjoying sound health].

48,663. We are not in the habit of taking evidence indirectly from any persons who are able to come and tender it themselves; and unless it is alleged that Mr Macmillan is unable to come I am afraid we cannot accept his letters as evidence? I will adopt his statements and make them my own, and that will obviate the difficulty. Mr Macmillan writes as follows:—'Dear Sir, You could not have found out a more unfit 'person for the important duty required. I never had 'a foot in their forests except a few yards at the top of 'the hill where I march. We dare not go in for our 'sheep except twice a year and then the shepherds cannot 'go in except with the gamekeepers, so I can say 'nothing about what their preserves are like, except 'by hearing others speak of them. If they had come '200 years sooner the Macphees and the Macmillans could

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

'have shown them many a score of reeking lums, with 'stalwart inhabitants on land that to-day lies desolate. 'I have no words to describe the folly, sin, and shame 'of the change. What is sport? a keeper taking an 'old gouty clappy Englishman and placing him on a 'pass, then a dozen or two of beaters to drive a herd 'past him. If he manages to butcher one of them 'he is overjoyed (any old wife could have done it). 'In most cases the victim is a nobler animal than the 'butcher. Grand policy to consign the bonny fertile 'glens of fair Scotia to such base uses. When shall we 'do to others as we would be done by. Therefore, sir, 'as I am incapable for the duty you require, I hope 'you will find one that knows the glens and also can 'describe them.***Hoping you will not be disappointed, 'I am your obedient servant, Alexander Macmillan.' Dated from Moy, 8th August 1894. I wrote Mr Macmillan asking his permission to make use of his letter, and he replies: 'Dear Sir, You are welcome 'to make any use of my poor letter that you please. 'I had no thought of it going further than the eye of a 'private friend, else I would have put a few more 'stubborn facts into it, and given it a more independent 'dress. But you can round the periods and sharpen the 'points. Moy Moss is an object lesson to show what 'can be improved; what is taken in was just the same 'as what is left, and what is taken in is the best field 'in Moy for all crops. Had not the prices fallen and 'labour risen, I would have taken in the whole, 'although I got no encouragement—not a stob—'although there are hundreds of pounds rotting in 'the forests in the shape of wood. When he would 'not give the wood I wanted gamekeepers to put in 'for straining posts, but I did not get them either, and 'as it was no rare thing for a dozen deer to be in the 'corn all night, stripping the heads off, I then wanted 'the factors and the deer put into the Ground Game 'Act, for it was very aggravating to fatten the bonnie 'beasts especially when they were reserved for such a 'base ignominious end.'

48,664. How is that land occupied at present?—The high ground is occupied as a sheep run.

48,665. Who is the farmer?—The writer of this letter, Alexander Macmillan, and he has trenched a considerable area of low ground. He says in that letter that the land is exactly the same as the land all about, and he says that the land taken in is the best field on his farm.

48,666. Are you able to speak of this trenching from your own knowledge?—I am.

48,667. What is the name of the neighbouring forest, the nearest forest?—Invermallie, I do not know what particular name you have for it; it is on the south side of Loch-Arkaig.

48,668. There is a place called Moy down near the Caledonian Canal?—That is the place.

48,669. Is it near the Lochiel forest, or marching with it?—It is. It is on the Lochiel estate, and marching with the forest.

48,670. Is it part of Lochiel forest or part of another forest?—It marches exclusively with Lochiel's deer forest.

48,671. Have you finished your statement?—I think I have said all I meant to say about Lochiel's estate. But I may say generally, and I may say it in this connection too, that there exists a very great demand for such holdings; that is evidenced by the competition when a croft becomes vacant; there is a great competition between the heirs of deceased, or with other people in the case of a man voluntarily removing from his holding. The demand clearly shows that any number of these holdings could be tenanted, the fact that they pay appears to me to be evidenced from this, that Records of the Court do not disclose any actions for payment of rent worth speaking about. You may get an occasional one, but if, generally, the tenants had been unable to pay the landlords would not be slow to seek the assistance of the Court, because it is notorious that Lochiel in particular desires to suppress the crofters there, to reduce their number, and I will give you ground for that opinion. But I say from the fact that hardly a case is enrolled in the Court for recovery of rent, it is plain that the tenants are paying their rents very well indeed. They did that in the days when they were rack-rented or over-rented, because since the sitting of the Crofters Commission in many cases very serious reductions of rents have been effected, and you would naturally expect that before these rents were reduced they should find considerable difficulty in paying the too high rents that were exacted from them. Yet, in point of fact, if you search the records of the Courts you would find no evidence of that existing.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,672. May I ask you whether you have a personal acquaintance with the lands on the north bank of Loch-Arkaig?—No, I did not say that I had a personal acquaintance with them; I have been at this end of the Loch, but I have not travelled up.

48,673. You do not, of your own knowledge, know whether they are suitable for cultivation or occupation otherwise?—No; other witnesses will speak as to that, I am merely giving you the result of my investigation.

48,674. Then, do you know personally the lands in Glen-Dessary and Glen-Pean?—No, because they are still further off than Loch-Arkaig side. You only approach Loch-Arkaig from the Achnacary end where Lochiel's seat is.

48,675. Now you mentioned Lochiel, can you give us the names of old townships going up from Corpach?—I can give you the name of Achdaliew; if you look at that rental you will find that at Corpach and Banavie, prior to these evictions from Loch-Arkaig and other places, there was only one tenant, I think the parish minister. It is land much inferior I understand to the lands from which the tenants were evicted and was only settled down on from sheer necessity. This rental shows that there was a public-house at Corpach, the rent of which was £3, 10s., and Corpach was let to Alexander Macdonald of Glencoe for £120. The fishing of Corpach was let for £2, 5s.; three-eighths of Banavie were let to Mr Fraser, minister, and Patrick Mackinnon. Further up there were eight Camerons. But what has practically been reclaimed or converted into soil capable of maintaining families in some degree of comfort has been soil made by the labour of these men who were evicted from these farms.

48,676. Now, coming to Loch-Linnhe, can you give us any more specific information than we have had from you already with regard to the old townships or old hamlets there; or do you just call our attention to that tract of ground generally?—There are two existing townships there,—Achintore and Druimarbin. With regard to Achintore I might point out an injustice that results from the treatment of it at present to the ratepayers. Achintore begins where we sit just now and extends westward. It was let out to the crofters. It has now been disposed of as a feuing ground, and has been feued out to the extent I should say of fully half a mile westwards from here. So long as the land was occupied as crofts the tenants paid agricultural rents on which they paid poor rates, county rates, and other assessments. Its agricultural value I think we may assume at something between 10s. and £1 per acre; yet when it is feued out to feuars here—I speak in presence of Lochiel's agent—I think I am right in saying that the rate of feu-duty is about £10 per acre. But while the landlord gets at least ten times the rent that he got for it as crofting land, it escapes all taxation and the rent is lost as a taxable entity to the community. It disappears from the Valuation Roll as a subject on which rates might be recovered. They get police protection, but so far as the landlord, whose return from the land has increased from ten to twenty fold, is concerned, he escapes taxation altogether. No doubt it will be said, my lord, that when the feu is given off, the feuar builds a house on it, and that something much more valuable comes into existence as a taxable subject. But I think we have a substantial ground of grievance when we find that the landlord who was taxed before for the small rent levied off the croft escapes taxation altogether when he converts it into a feu, and his rent is secured by the buildings which his vassal places on the feu.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,677. That is hardly a matter which concerns this Commission. You referred to the loss of rights of summer grazing on the Lochiel estate. Can you give us any specific information with regard to that, or point us to any particular tracts of grazing of which crofters or small tenants have been deprived?—I have done so.

48,678. You referred to a demand existing for new holdings; can you tell us from the knowledge in your possession what sort of holdings are in view?—I may say that we have made application through the District Committee to the County Council by men well able to take up these holdings, and I have some of them in Court to-day, natives of some of the districts which were cleared; comparatively substantial men who find themselves perfectly helpless as it were, divorced from land and compelled to live in a crowded village. They are quite helpless, yet if they could get suitable holdings of say from 10 to 12 acres of land they would be able to live in comfort.

48,679. I was about to ask whether they had in view holdings of a kind on which they could live by the holding alone, or is it holdings of such a size that they would maintain themselves partly by outside labour or by fishing?—Mostly holdings of a size that would support them; combined agricultural holdings of 10 or 12 acres, with a right of pasturing 300 sheep or so.

48,680. Then they would desire to get holdings which would occupy their whole time, and by which they could live?—Quite so.

48,681. Not holdings of the kind we are more accustomed to, which are merely homes, and which require outside labour to keep the occupants going?—No; these men are in circumstances that would enable them to take a moderate-sized holding and to make a living by it.

48,682. Was that the kind of holding for which application was made to the County Council?—Yes. Of course, we did not go into details; you are not required in the application to specify exactly what you want; but they did not get that length.

48,683. Is there any desire for fishermen's holdings, very small patches of land where the occupants would live entirely by the sea?—Not in this quarter. There is no fishing in this quarter such as there is in the west of Lewis, or in Barra, or the Outer Islands, to justify the establishment of a colony of fishermen.

48,684. Is there no fishing industry?—None, but salmon fishing; there are white fish but they cannot be caught here in great abundance. There are odd men who devote their time to fishing, but it is a precarious industry, and it does not reward them so well as to encourage others to follow their example.

48,685. Is this desire for holdings to be found in any considerable degree among persons resident in this town?—I have several witnesses here, who are in this town just now, who want holdings, and who can show, if necessary to your lordship, that they are able to take and stock them.

48,686. I was going to put that question. They have in view to enter on such holdings, put up the necessary buildings, and carry on the farm without outside assistance?—Without outside assistance.

48,687. *Mr Sutherland.*—You gave us some indications of a former population; I presume that was in order to show us that there is land fit for the purposes of our inquiry?—Quite so, and they were on these lands for generations; I can show that by reference to such books as Skene's history.

48,688. And the fact that people lived there before, I take it is, in your opinion, *prima facie* evidence that they could live there again?—No doubt of that, and I shall have witnesses here to-day who will speak to this; that the land at that time was treated very much as it is in Switzerland to-day; cattle were grazed on it and the old small breed of sheep. But they were supplanted by the bigger sheep farmers on account of these lands being admirably suited for sheep runs.

48,689. What made them, in your opinion, better fitted for sheep runs at that time?—I do not say that they were better.

48,690. What made them well fitted for sheep runs?—Because the lands were essentially good. Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,691. Do you know the character of land that is best for sheep,—mixed pasture?—I do not venture to give you any opinion as a practical farmer, but the inference I draw from the fact that such farmers as Cameron Coire-Chuinnlidh, one of the most noted farmers of his day, and also a most distinguished family of farmers from the south, the Cunninghams took the farms of Locharkside and held them for some time, and I believe that when they gave them up there were delivered to Lochiel 18,000 sheep.

48,692. But with regard to the fitness of these sheep-runs when they were new for rearing stock, are you of opinion that these runs were enhanced in value by the fact that part of them had been cultivated before?—I have no doubt of that, because even such an expert as Mr Malcolm of Invergarry says, that it is undoubted that land formerly in cultivation affords good pasturage. We know it also from the wintering of sheep here. Sheep are sent to winter to crofting townships simply because they get the benefit of the grass that grows on the cultivated part of the crofts, showing clearly that the valuable part of the wintering ground is not the hill or outrun attached to the township, but the land under cultivation by the crofters. In the same way I should think that the lands from which these people were cleared were lands of identically the same description. They had been cultivated; perhaps not so highly then as now, but, still, these lands, I have no doubt, did form the most valuable part of the grazing, and it is possible that when these lands went back into a state of nature they were not then so capable of maintaining the same number of sheep.

48,693. Then I think a just inference from that statement of yours is that while the small holdings increased the value of the land, the large sheep grazier has deteriorated its value?—Quite so.

48,694. There is a small holding on the side of the hill across the water which I saw this morning—right opposite the hotel?—Yes.

48,695. It is a small holding in the middle of a moor I may say. Supposing that holding were to be laid waste and the tenant driven out of it, do you think it would form a good nucleus for a sheep farm?—I have no doubt it would afford the sweetest bite and the most abundant pasture; not the holding itself but the hamlet.

48,696. Is it your opinion that, extending that example outwards, was the general state of the Highlands before the removal of the people and the formation of the sheep farms?—I have no doubt of that. These are very good illustrations of what I mean; the existing townships from my knowledge of them are on infinitely inferior lines. The best lands were cleared, and those who did not emigrate were permitted to settle down on practically waste lands.

48,697. In your opinion, is it good farming to allow the land to go back into a state of nature?—I cannot speak as a farmer, but as a common-sense man I should say it was the worst policy possible.

48,697A. But from a common-sense point of view, do you think it is scientific farming to allow land to go back into a state of nature?—I do not think scientific farmers would do that.

48,698. You and I could become farmers on that principle?—Quite so. I might say also that I do not think the system has benefited Cameron of Lochiel, and some of the other proprietors, because while the crofters have been getting on, and there is a marked improvement, especially since the passing of the Crofters Act, in the condition of the crofts about here, the circumstances of the extensive proprietors in the district seem to be going back. I find even that such men as Lord Abinger and Lochiel, instead of possessing their sporting grounds, had to let even their dwelling-houses, their furniture, their family pictures, and their napery along with their shootings.

48,699. You devoted what I should consider to be perhaps a little too much time to proving to us that there were people on these lands before?—I am sorry for that.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,700. Well, it is a matter of assumption; it is taken for granted. You are aware that Cameron of Lochiel himself was a member of the Royal Commission of 1884 which made this report in regard to the matter. 'The history of the economical transformation 'which a great portion of the Highlands and Islands 'has, during the past century, undergone, does not 'repose on the loose and legendary tales that pass from 'mouth to mouth; it rests on the solid basis of con-'temporary records, and if these were wanting, it is 'written in indelible characters on the surface of the 'soil'.—Quite so; I agree with that.

48,701. Cameron of Lochiel's signature is to that statement, so that I think that can be taken as a matter that has been settled authoritatively?—Perfectly so.

48,702. You did not say that it was stated directly but that it was implied that the population round Loch-Arkaig-side voluntarily shifted at the time of the formation of the Caledonian Canal down to the Canal side?—In search of employment.

48,703. That might have been literally the case, might it not? But did they abandon their homes for that purpose?—No, they did not. Colonel Cameron of Glen-Nevis at that time was either the factor or the farmer, and people do not go in search of employment preceded by their droves of cattle or accompanied by their furniture and household goods. They would not take their whole farm stock when going in search of work.

48,704. I gather from the general tendency of your evidence that you are of opinion that there is land there fit for the purposes for which we are sent to inquire, and also people willing and able to take that land?—I am satisfied of that.

48,705. And these conditions are to be found in Fort-William, as to people, and in the neighbourhood, and in those glens you have referred to, as to locality?—Yes, and it would be a very great stimulus to exertion on the part of our people here were they sustained by the hope of getting back to the country, for I think nothing is more injurious to human beings than to send them adrift on the world without any hope of returning to their native spots. The prospect of being able to get back here and settle down on their own country again would stimulate them to exertion and do an amount of good. I think that would make it very desirable that facilities should exist for giving them the opportunity of returning.

48,706. During our inquiry we have been met in some places by objections on the part of landlords and their representatives that localities which are mentioned by witnesses before us, are unfavourable because of their altitude. Is this a very high country?—It is.

48,707. Do you know the height of Loch-Arkaig above the sea?—No, but we can find it from the Ordnance Survey Map. I may say in regard to that point that I have witnesses here who were shepherds and gamekeepers, and who will tell you for example that up at Loch-Treig sheep will survive where deer succumb in great numbers, and sheep will pick up a living where no other animal can. I have heard the same thing from others with regard to Glen-Nevis and other farms about here, and I think it is an established fact.

48,708. The height of Loch-Treig appears to be 784 feet above sea-level?—Yes.

48,709. But the height of Loch-Arkaig is only 140 feet above sea-level?—Well, if what I say would prevail at Loch-Treig with its much highera ltitude *a fortiori* would it apply to Loch-Arkaig.

48,710. Or to Kingussie with its 900 or 1000 feet?—Quite so.

48,711. Of course, you would not expect them—it would not be fair to take the height of Ben-Nevis and say that that is the altitude of the country?—No, certainly not, these are exceptional things. There is no vegetation on Ben-Nevis beyond half-way up either for deer or for sheep so that there would be no question of competition there.

48,712. Then you referred to a transaction that took place in the neighbourhood of this town; how was that transference accomplished, from crofts to feus, and what is the date of that transaction do you know?—About thirty years ago. There was not judicial pressure brought to bear, but they were removed.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,713. I was going to ask you whether they received any compensation?—There are delegates from that township who will speak to that matter. But in connection with North Ballachulish I may tell you that so keen is the desire that exists to remain on the holdings there that one man to whom a croft was bequeathed was refused the croft by the proprietor. He applied to the Sheriff Court here to have himself declared heir.

48,714. Was that before the Crofters Act?—No, my lord, since the passing of the Act. He was unfortunately in this position; he and the testator were the sons of sisters, and as land cannot transmit through women he lost the croft; the matter was appealed to the Court of Session and they confirmed the Sheriff-Substitute's view that he was outside the circle of relations favoured by the Act. We appealed to the House of Lords and as the man was too poor to maintain the appeal in that expensive Court we applied to have him admitted to the benefit of the poor roll; but the Committee of Law Lords held that he had no *probabilis causa* seeing that he had the judgment of the Sheriff-Substitute and of the Court of Session against him. We have not got their determination, but I cite that as showing how intense is the desire on the part of the people, when they actually fight for the possession of a £2, 12s. croft through all the tribunals of the land up to the House of Lords.

48,715. Have you in this neighbourhood the same practical confession of failure of the sheep farming system as we have found in other parts of the country; are sheep farmers as prosperous as they used to be?—Few of them exist. Taking Glen-Spean down which I understand you travelled last night; from Breackachy and Ardverikie to Inverlochy you have ground that I should say is capable on the south side of the glen of maintaining 50,000 sheep or so. Out of that there has been cleared Leanachan, on Lord Abinger's estate, 2000 sheep, Coire-Chuinnlidh and Kyllie-honnet 6000 sheep; Fersit and Torgulbin now on Lord Abinger's estate, but recently acquired by him from Major Walker of Loch-Treig and let to Sir John Stirling Maxwell, 5000 sheep.

48,716. Loch-Treig let with Inch 4000 sheep? [*Mr N. B. Mackenzie.*—No, that is not cleared, it is under sheep still]. I make the statement, and I think we will get evidence to support it. Ardverikie deer forest, including Ben-Alder, about 15,000 sheep. In all a tract capable of carrying 30,000 sheep has been cleared on one side of the glen. That is the best side of the glen, and you will find population only on the other side. It is I may say an absolute wilderness from Fort-William to Breackachy, whereas on the other side, particularly on the estate of Mackintosh of Mackintosh, there has been little or no disturbance of population.

48,717. But with regard to the transformation of sheep-runs into deer forests, you say that all those tracts you referred to that carried so many sheep are now deer forests; is that your statement?—Quite so.

48,718. What is the ostensible reason for this change?—Acquisition of money.

48,719. The rent of sheep farms has gone down; is that so?—No, but fewer people are able to take them.

48,720. Or is it because the rents of deer forests have gone up?—Probably; the supply of such land for the gratification of sport is limited, and the wealth of those who desire such places is, I may say, unlimited. Money is no consideration to them, and, in my opinion, land is divorced from its primary use and put to a use that is quite unjustifiable.

48,721. Are those farms that you have referred to made into one or more deer forests?—Several.

48,722. Are they all contiguous?—Almost in line with slight breaks. I can give you the name of the farms intervening and the stock upon them.

48,723. Are they contiguous throughout, are all

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

those forests contiguous all along?—No, but they are almost contiguous, with perhaps a farm going in like a wedge here and there between them. For instance, there is Inverlochy and Claggan at this end with a stock of about 1000 sheep. Then there is Torlundy Home Farm—Mr Smith will correct me if I understate or overstate the numbers, but I estimate the stock at about 1000. Dawnie has 1500 of a sheep stock, Tomnafet 1800, Insh perhaps 2000, Monessie 1000, Inverlair 1700, in all 10,000 sheep interspersed in an area capable of carrying about 50,000 sheep.

48,724. I suppose the number of sheep that went into the market from these tracts of land could be easily obtained. It would not be impossible to obtain an estimate of the number of carcases of mutton that were sent into the market of this country every year from these places when they were under sheep?—No, I think not. I remember discovering the stock lists of Cameron, Coire-Chuinnlidh, extending over a great many years, among the papers in my employer's office.

48,725. Can you give us no idea of the amount of food for the people that gets its way into the market from deer forests?—Very little gets into Fort-William, and I don't know that any goes anywhere else.

48,726. Have you ever formed any estimate of the number of acres required to maintain a deer?—No, I have not.

48,727. Have you ever heard the question asked or talked about in any way?—I could easily work it out. There is generally a certain number of stags assigned to the shooting tenant for each year, and if you take the area of the forest, I think it takes seven years to stock a forest; multiply the annual crop by seven and you may get something like the stock. The calculation could be worked out, but I have not applied my mind to it.

48,728. It would be a rather interesting calculation, would it not?—Yes, but I am sorry I am not in a position to give you the figures.

48,729. Then as to the town of Fort-William itself; it is an old town, is it not?—It is an old town. In the year 1597 an Act was passed by James VI. for the purpose of creating three burghs, one in the Lews, one in Cantyre, and one in Lochaber.

48,730. So it is older than the '45?—Yes.

48,731. Was the fort here built after the '45, as in the case of Fort-George and Fort-Augustus?—No; it was built in 1698, I think.

48,732. Then, has Fort-William obtained an accession of population from the thinning out of people from the districts round about?—Its population has gradually increased, with this result, that when you consider the total population of the parish you may see very little fluctuation; but if you consider the distribution of population you will find the rural population has been steadily declining with almost a corresponding increase in the urban population of this place.

48,733. The two are concurrent?—They are concurrent, whereas in Kilmonivaig, which has not been an absorber of population like Fort-William, there has been a steady decline from 1800, while the population of the country as a whole has almost trebled since that time.

48,734. Now, whatever might have been the drawbacks in olden times,—no doubt in these places and at that time there would be drawbacks—these do not now exist?—Clearly.

48,734A. Such as?—Travelling facilities are very much improved, and farmers can now get their stock sent to market very much better and more quickly than they could then. They can import improved seed or get an improved stock in; in fact, wherever you have travelling facilities you can get all the advantages of civilisation applied to your own particular part.

48,735. You have heard, I have no doubt, comparisons made between the methods of agriculture in those days and the improved methods of the present day?—Yes.

48,736. Do you think that is a fair comparison?—No, the times are different, but you will perhaps permit me to say that in Switzerland I have seen very much the same system followed that was said to prevail in this country. They still drive their cattle there up to the higher parts of their mountains and bring them down just as the severity of the weather drives them, keeping the low-ground pasture clear for winter keep and fodder. That, I understand from reading, is the system which was pursued in the Highlands in olden times. I have been to Norway this summer, and I have seen places there cultivated in much the same fashion.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,737. The Norwegian *sæter* and the Highland shieling are practically the same thing?—I do not know so much about Norway, but I have seen places that in this country would be thought absolutely inaccessible except by eagles or other birds utilised for summer pasture. So steep and inaccessible are the places that wire ropes are attached to the mountain side half way up, and the farmers tie their hay in little bundles and run them down these ropes, otherwise they would not be able to get down a load very easily.

48,738. Then, there is the fact of a railway having been opened here a few days ago; does not that change the circumstances?—It does immensely. That railway runs all along Lord Abinger's estate; it opens up that valley which, as I said, is comparatively well populated on the one side but absolutely deserted on the other and the better side. I would like to emphasise that point, that the part which has been cleared is capable of maintaining four or five times the population that now exists on the other side of the glen. All that district is now placed within easy reach of the large centres by means of the new railway.

48,739. And that without taking into account the facilities afforded by Mr Macbrayne's steamers?—Yes, without taking that into account at all, the whole of that district is tapped by this new railway.

48,740. I suppose then you are of opinion that it is absolutely unfair to compare the state of agriculture that existed on Loch-Arkaig-side before the people were cleared with the state of agriculture that obtains in the neighbourhood of Fort-William now?—That is so. And if any just comparison was made it ought to be with the state of agriculture in the neighbourhood of Fort-William at that time?—Quite so.

48,740A. I may take it generally that you are of opinion that there would be very little danger of these people not succeeding, provided they got such holdings as you indicate?—I have no doubt of it. There is another matter which I would like to mention if it is relevant to this inquiry. I would like to say that there are one or two particulars in which, I think, the Crofters Act could be amended with very great advantage. I refer to the clauses as to the bequest of holdings. This was evidently imported from the Agricultural Holdings Act. In the Act, as your lordship may remember, there is an unfettered permission given to the tenant to bequeath his lease to any person. Now, the restrictions with which the right to bequeath a croft is loaded work out the greatest dissatisfaction and injustice. I think it would also benefit the crofters very much and tend to the general prosperity of this part of the crofting counties at least if the right of free sale of their holdings were conferred on the crofters.

48,741. *The Chairman.*—Adopting the Irish principle?—Either that or in some other way; I think we are independent enough to find a method of remedying the evil among ourselves. But it appears to me, my lord, to be an unnatural tying of people to the land like limpets to a rock; if a man is a crofter it is a sort of slavery to compel him always to be a crofter, but if he wishes to change his condition he must at present forfeit certain valuable rights. I think it would be for the benefit of the country generally when the crofter chooses to change his occupation, as under many conditions it might be for his advantage that he should have the right of free sale. If his family were grown up they might wish to extend their operations if they possessed more capacity than is required for simple crofting, the present position of the law creates difficulty; if a man was enabled to realise his interest in his croft and go to the labour market with what he got for the croft he would have a starting fund with which he and his family could enter a trade or profession with a much better chance of success. Then again, if there were free

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

sale he would be sustained by the hope that though he might not get back to the spot where his forefathers lived yet he would be able, if circumstances favoured him in the struggle for life in the south, to get back to a place if not his own, at least very much like his own. The support and the stimulus that such a hope would impart to him would be the salvation of the man, whereas men going now into large towns and compelled at first possibly to live in slums live so hopeless a life that it accounts for a good deal of the inclination to drown their woes in drink.

48,742. *The Chairman.*—Then, would you also be in favour of repealing the prohibition against assigning tenancies?—The assignment of tenancy or free sale would do; you may adopt any form you like. Then there is another grievance which exists here which I may be allowed to point out. While in any civil suit or in any criminal prosecution the evidence of two witnesses is required to establish the guilt of any man charged with a crime or offence, I see no just reason why there should be an exception made in favour of game laws to the effect of making the evidence of one man, and that man frequently an interested man, such as a gamekeeper, sufficient to convict.

48,743. I think we had better not go into that matter; it is hardly relevant to this inquiry?—I would only say that I see no reason why the ordinary rules of evidence should be relaxed in favour of so exceptional a property and with manifest injustice to Her Majesty's subjects.

48,744. *Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to this question of the amendments of the Crofters Act suggested by you, would you give the crofters the right to sell to any person, or would you limit their right in any way? Might there not be a danger if free sale were allowed that these small holdings might fall into the hands of people who had other holdings, and that the consolidation of the small holdings might be the result?—No, that is not intended; some restriction would be imposed. It appears to me that national defence and the requirements of public health render it necessary that we should have a better distribution of population than we have, because I think it is generally admitted that the long continuance from generation to generation of people in towns produces a debilitated race. Now, I should certainly like to see as many openings as possible provided for a circulation of people from the city to the country, and *vice versa*, and I think it would be proper that some prohibition should be enacted against the consolidation or combination of holdings.

48,745. You think that some such limitation would be necessary, and that the small holdings should be conserved in this transference?—Quite so.

48,746. And in some cases perhaps where the holding was too small, and where it would be desirable to add it to the other small holdings, there might be an appeal, say to the Crofters Commission, for power to do so?—Quite so.

48,747. In your experience, is it the case that since the crofters have got fixity of tenure in their holdings they have improved their dwellings and perhaps also improved their lands?—Unfortunately, in this part of the country I cannot say much about that, without violating confidences given me as agent; but, I may say, generally, that the tenants have been waiting here suspending operations in the way of improvements until they should get their rent fixed, so that whatever money they expended on their holdings by way of improvement could be clearly ascertained and differentiated, so as to establish the amount of compensation they would get for it. The decisions of the Crofters Commission have only been issued so recently with regard to this country that they have had no time yet to carry their resolutions or purposes into effect, but from what I have seen in other parts of the country where a sufficient interval has elapsed between the issuing of the judgment of the Crofters Commission, I have no hesitation in saying that a marked improvement has taken place over many parts of the Highlands,—a very beneficial change.

48,748. Then, by conferring on the crofters the right of free sale, do you think they would be stimulated to make even greater improvements?—I have no doubt of that.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,749. Because just now, if they had to give up their crofts, there would be a danger of their not getting full value for them.—Quite so.

48,750. You have given us a very full account of the distribution of the land here, and I think I gather that the great want is moderately-sized holdings?—Moderately-sized holdings.

48,751. You have large deer forests and very large farms, and you have crofts, but very few moderately-sized ones?—Or even ordinary-sized sheep farms. There is an utter absence of a middle class here,—a class between the landlord and the crofter.

48,752. You tell us also very clearly that there is a great desire to have land, and that there would be a keen competition for moderately-sized holdings?—I have referred to the applications made to the County Council in support of that view.

48,753. Do you find people applying to yourself to mediate between them and the proprietors in order to get land?—I have one man with whom I have done that successfully in Mr Smith's case—Duncan Macdonald, Spean-Bridge. While he is very grateful for what he has got, yet he is quite prepared to stock a much larger place and on better land than has been assigned to him.

48,754. Then the proprietor has not tried to meet this demand for small holdings to any appreciable degree?—Not in this part of the country. These applications, I may say, have come from every part of the country, and I remember County Councillor Smith of Breackachy making a motion in order to test whether this Act was a reality or a delusion, and the committee to whom the petitions were referred returned a report which practically proved that the applicants could get no land under the Act.

48,755. You mean under the Small Holdings Act?—Yes.

48,756. You found that that Act was quite unworkable?—Utterly unworkable.

48,757. After having given it what you considered a fair trial?—Quite so. Without compulsion we cannot get the land.

48,758. How do you account for the proprietors not trying to meet the people, seeing that you say there is great desire, that the people have means, and that large sheep farming does not pay? How do you account for the deadlock?—Those who want sport and want a country devastated to provide sport have generally unlimited means, and can give more than the actual value of the land for agriculture, or pasture, or anything of that kind. But I think to provide sport for one or two at the expense of whole communities of the people ought not to be permitted.

48,759. Do you think that the land held by the crofters just now is better than the land in large farms and deer forests?—By no means.

48,760. With regard to these new holdings that might be formed here, I presume they would have formed them out of what are now large sheep farms, or deer forests. Would you suggest that the new holdings should be in the form of club farms, having separate arable land and the hill ground held in common?—In some cases; that would be one way of using it, but in other cases, such as Lianachan and Dawnie, the land is admirably suited for being let in lots of 12 to 20 acres to single tenants without hill grazing if they cared to take them that way. Other parts would be better managed by taking the hill along with it, and that is generally what is desired,—club farms, in fact. We have one at Kinlochiel, a club farm where five crofters combine and have a stock of 400 to 500 sheep. It is small enough. There are club farms up on the braes of Lochaber at Bohuntine in Glen-Roy; the tenants, I understand, are not crofters, because they were lease-holders at the passing of the Act; but though technically not crofters they are so in reality.

48,761. Have they a club farm at Bohuntine?—They have, and to give you an idea of the size of it I may

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

say that this year they sold a crop of lambs numbering 800. Then there is the Gabhailmhor, which is a large holding also on the opposite side of the glen on The Mackintosh's estate; it is on the left hand as you go up.

48,762. Are these club farms holding a large stock of sheep getting on successfully?—As well as other farms are doing; of course they have passed through a crisis lately as regards prices.

48,763. The experience on the Lochiel estate is that, when a large farm is held by one man, he does not succeed and he throws it up?—Throws it up.

48,764. But these have not thought of putting their farm in the hands of the proprietor?—No.

48,765. And do they pay their rent?—They do. I am referring to the Lochiel estates just now: I am not in a position to state how the Bohuntine and the Gabhailmhor tenants stand with regard to rent, but I know in the case of the Kinlochiel crofters exactly how they stand, because I acted for them. One of them had some arrears, but his was a single instance.

48,766. But the large farms, when let to one individual, seem to be unlettable when they fall out of lease?—They are in point of fact unlet, and I suppose that is the reason.

48,766A. Have the crofters shown their desire to get more pasture by making application to the Crofters Commission for enlargement of their holdings?—They have.

48,767. Have any enlargements been granted?—Yes, but they have not got facilities from the proprietors to get the enlargements. In the case of the Kinlochiel crofters they applied for an enlargement of holding. They got an enlargement in this sense, that a bit of debateable ground was declared to be theirs. That was merely a dispute as to marches; they maintained that their march was so and so, and the proprietor maintained that it did not include a very good piece of pasture, but by an arrangement or adjustment it was agreed that subject to certain rights of pasturage on certain days by the proprietor the tenants should have the exclusive use of this debateable bit of land, and in consideration of that we withdrew a special application for enlargement of holdings. We did not want to have any open questions in view of the arrangement I have narrated. But the tenants of Blaich, on Lord Morton's estate, have got an enlargement of holding, and I may say of Lord Morton that he is an extremely good proprietor, the best that we have about here; the tenants on that holding are now, I think, in the way of getting on well, though for a time, owing to the depredations of deer, they suffered very seriously indeed. The tenants of the adjoining township of Garvan asked for an enlargement of their holdings. Their proposed enlargement extended like a tongue into the deer forest, and his lordship's agents did not see their way to give them that extension in full. They conceded to them a part of the land they wanted, but that land turns out to be the worst of the whole place,—land that they would only have taken as a part of the whole and would never have thought of asking as an extension of enlargement by itself. They have appealed to the Crofters Commission; their object being merely to be relieved of that bit of land which formed the base of the triangle representing the enlargement. That land is so wet and boggy that, by itself, it is of no possible use to them. They would be greatly benefited if they got the enlargement which they sought originally.

48,768. That matter has not been disposed of, I suppose?—No, it is still *sub judice*. I hope I am not expressing any opinion, prejudicial or otherwise—I merely wish to state facts.

48,769. The tenants on Lord Morton's estate, I suppose, feel the benefit of the extension which they have got?—Those on the Blaich estate do, but, with regard to Garvan, so long as this is in an open condition, they cannot say anything.

48,769A. But with regard to the other case?—It has proved an undoubted benefit, although it has only been in operation for over six months or so. They have got their wintering let.

48,770. And it is your opinion that crofters can utilise these pastures to profiting?—Yes, they can sell the right of wintering for a specific sum. Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,771. Now, with regard to the summer grazings, taken from Onich and Auchintore and Blarmachfoldach and other places, can you tell us about the quality of that land; whether it is suitable for sheep?—Beinn Bhreac was stocked as a sheep farm by Mr Campbell of Monzie, and the Beinn Bhreac wedders fetched the top price in the market.

48,772. Then as to the benefits derived from the deer forest, do you think now, that employment on a deer forest has any prejudicial effect upon the people who are so engaged. You tell us that these sportsmen have unlimited means; I suppose they spend money pretty lavishly when they come. Do you think that would have a bad effect upon the people who are engaged upon the deer forest?—I think it distinctly has a bad effect; an unwise expenditure of money makes the acquisition of wealth too easy, and I consider that the man who works hard for his money appreciates its value, and applies it to a better use. Besides, a crofter becomes a much more manly and independent man, because he is not dependent on the caprice or will of one individual, but in the case of the keepers and others employed on the deer forest, the more lavishly they are paid the more obsequious they become, and then their tenure of employment is so precarious. You do not find many very old gamekeepers here; I do not mean to condemn gamekeepers as a class, but the close connection with wealthy people who are lavish in their expenditure has a deteriorating moral effect, and its tendency is to beget a contempt for honest or hard labour.

48,773. *The Chairman.*—You referred particularly to the lands of Glen-Dessary and the lands of Glen-Pean: do you know if these lands are at present held as grazing farms?—No, they are part of a deer forest, I understand; I would not like to speak positively, but I am satisfied they are. We can get that out later on. I am quite content to accept the statement of my friend here on that point.

48,774. My impression is that they are let as grazing farms. Then are you aware whether the lands on the north side of Loch-Arkaig, to which you have asked our attention, are at present in the hands of the proprietor as grazing farms or as forests; or do you know?—You can take the Clunes farm; I understand it is in the hands of the proprietor. The farmhouse is not exactly at the side, it is perhaps half a mile from the east end of the loch.

48,775. At all events, whatever the area, you say that farm is in the hands of the proprietor?—Yes. Mr Weir, Lochiel's sheep manager, stays at Achnasaul, on the north bank of Loch-Arkaig, near its east end, but, I understand, the greater number of the sheep were transferred from the lands immediately behind to inferior lands on the south side of the loch,—Glenmaillie or Invermaillie.

48,776. Can you tell me whether the other lands you have mentioned on the north side of Loch-Arkaig are in the hands of the proprietor, or are occupied by a tenant?—I think a good part of them are thrown into the deer forest of Glenquoich, on the Invergarry estate.

48,777. You are aware that to a considerable extent a practice prevails in some quarters of sub-letting deer forests, and sub-letting shootings. Does that custom prevail to any extent here, to your knowledge?—No; I think I heard this season of a Mr Brinckman sub-letting Meoble, but I don't know whether it is the case or not. At any rate, it is not a general practice here.

48,778. You referred to applications being made to the County Council?—A number of applications.

48,779. How many?—I should think thirty, at least.

48,780. Would you just explain to us what the County Council did with these applications. I take it that they were competent in form, in accordance with the Act of Parliament?—Yes.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,781. Are you a member of the County Council?—I am.

48,782. Tell us what the County Council did with these applications?—The County Council ascertained that the proprietors were not willing to treat.

48,783. And thereupon the thing fell through?—Quite so.

48,784. These applications, I understand, were directed to lands belonging to different proprietors?—Different proprietors.

48,785. Has there been in your knowledge any offer of land by landlords in this locality, by advertisement, or otherwise, in the form of small holdings?—I am not aware of it.

48,786. Has there been any considerable building of new houses on crofters' holdings in this district since the passing of the Act?—For the reasons I have explained, there has not been much; it is only now that they have got their rents fixed.

48,787. They are considering as to improvements in buildings and otherwise?—Yes, there is a general intention to improve their holdings, but I may speak of one on The Mackintosh's estate, and I can particularise it, where improvements to the estimated value of £600 had been carried out by the tenant, Kenneth Kennedy, at Inveroy, or Inver-Roy.

48,788. What rent does he pay?—His rent was reduced to £13 odds.

48,789. From what?—From £17.

48,790. And that has led him to expend something like £600?—Yes.

48,791. That includes, I suppose, a new house and offices?—Yes, steadings.

48,792–93. *Mr Harold Y. L. Smith, Factor for Lord Abinger.*—I wish to ask you whether you have considered the question of what money would be required by these tenants for stocking the new holdings to which you refer?—I think you will find out from the next witness. I will tell you the sum he is prepared to expend, and he is one who was born on Inch estate, which his lordship has lately acquired. He knows the capabilities of the land, and he has a pretty good idea how much will be required to stock it.

48,794. You mentioned that applications had been made from this district to the County Council?—Yes.

48,795. There was one made by one man on Lord Abinger's estate?—Yes.

48,796–97. And that man has had a holding given to him since?—I referred to him by name already,—that is Duncan Macdonald: but he has not got a holding on the land he desired to have,—that is, where his people were settled before. He was ploughman at Spean Bridge for thirty years, and he had saved some money and brought up a family of ten. He thought it extremely hard that he should be cleared off the estate, and I think it would have been a disgrace if he had been. A bit of land was assigned to him at Brackletter,—but the land is very bare,—about as bare and cold and exposed a place as there is in the country. He has had to provide himself with a house and everything. I think I am right in saying that he only got the bare land, which is of very little value.

48,798. You are not right in assuming so. Lord Abinger has provided him with the wood for his house, and with the stones and the lime?—He gathered the stones from the land. Lord Abinger does not make stones.

48,799. They belong to him, though?—He has provided the corrugated roof; you did not give him the sarking, did you?

48,800. I should like to ask whether you have gone into any details to ascertain the success or otherwise of large sheep farms, which you condemn in a rather wholesale way?—No; I say that large sheep farms are distinctly preferable to deer forests; they employ more men who are resident all the year round. But I would prefer seeing smaller holdings; a place held in smaller holdings as a club farm. [*The Chairman.*—I think what Mr Smith means to ask you is whether you have considered sheep farms as a commercial undertaking?] I don't know that I have ever heard of a sheep farmer here resorting to bankruptcy; but I know that many live here with a very respectable sum of money at their credit; so that I gather from that it must have been a very profitable business.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,801. I think you said the crofts were useful for wintering, and I want to ask whether that is due entirely to their being arable land, or whether it is not due in part to the fact that it is low ground, sheltered ground?—I meant mainly that it was arable.

48,802. Is it not also that the ground is low and sheltered; or perhaps you have not considered the point?—No doubt that does make it better.

48,803. That is the important element, is it not?—I should not quite say it is the important element; I will get you low ground on a peat moss between the River Lochy and the canal,—ground on the sea level, you cannot possibly have lower ground,—and yet it is absolutely worthless as wintering, whereas on the other hand I can get you these coveted lands upon Lianachan and upon Fersit and at Loch-Treig-side which are at a very considerable altitude and which are very valuable for the purpose of cultivation. As Mr Sutherland said, the altitude of Loch-Treig above sea level is upwards of 700 feet,—I think I am right in saying 740,—and you could winter a sheep on an acre of that land, while on this peat moss here you could not sustain a sheep on 50 acres.

48,804. *Mr Sutherland.*—And successful agriculture is carried on at Kingussie at 1000 feet?—Quite so.

48,805. How do you explain this apparent anomaly? A question was asked of you about the success of large farms; you did not deny that large farms had been a success?—No.

48,806. How then do you account for their being transformed into deer forests?—I do not like to impute motives, but I think it is just from a desire to have more money.

48,807. *Mr R. Robertson, of Messrs Dalgleish & Bell, W.S., Edinburgh, Agents for Lord Morton.*—You spoke about Garvan and Duisky enlargement. Are you aware that that enlargement was the result of an agreement between the landlord and the tenants, embodied in a joint minute?—That is so. I was not the agent there; it was Mr J. M. Campbell who was agent, but I was present and noticed the whole negotiations. At that time the tenants were very reluctant to enter into that agreement: but the agent,—and I must say I agreed with him,—recommended the tenants to accept it in order to come to an amicable understanding with the proprietor.

48,808. *The Chairman.*—The proprietor was meeting them part of the way, at least?—He was; but I did not realise then that the extent of the enlargement which he proposed to grant consisted of such boggy and unsuitable land. The crofters of that township are in this position: they are quite prepared to take the enlargement they applied for, and they will take this bad land along with the good; but if they do not get the enlargement in its entirety, they would prefer being relieved of this boggy land, which is of no use whatever. There is no doubt that, as Mr Robertson points out, they did enter into this agreement; I may take blame for that, and the agent may, although we thought it would turn out a better thing for them; but they assure us that it is absolutely worthless, and you will agree with me, Mr Robertson, that an increase of £25 was added to them in respect of that extension. They would much rather have that increase taken off and give back the land.

48,809. Where is the locality?—It is at the head of Lochiel. The papers are now back from the Crofters Commission, and I think your lordship will get the plan that was produced.

48,810. What is the name of the nearest township?—It is on the south side of Lochiel, up near the head; Garvan, Duisky, and Blaich.

48,811. *Mr Robertson.*—When you spoke of an appeal being taken, did you mean an application to the Commission, or an appeal against the decision of a single Commissioner?—An appeal against the decision of a single Commissioner.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,812. And I gathered that the object of that appeal was to get behind this agreement with the landlord?—Well, you can put it that way.

48,813. Are you aware that nearly the whole of the Garvan and Duisky tenants before the Crofters Commission last year declared their absolute inability to stock any additional land?—I cannot remember that.

48,814. Well, it is a fact; you may take it as a fact from me; I led the evidence. Most of them were in arrear, and I led evidence to show that they were unable to pay these arrears or to stock any additional holdings. [*The Chairman.*—You mean that was generally said by them while examined on oath and cross-examined?—*Mr Robertson*—Yes.] *Witness.*—And yet you gave them that enlargement?

48,815. That only says so much the more for the landlord?—I have never said a word against the landlord; I think I have said that Lord Morton is a very good landlord.

48,816. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did the enlargement take place before or after the passing of the Crofters Act?—Only last year; it was discussed at the sittings of the Crofters Commission quite recently, in April last.

48,817. During the time when the crofters had a right of application to the Commission to give them enlargement?—Quite so.

48,818. *Mr Allan Macdonald, Commissioner for The Mackintosh.*—I think you said that Kenneth Kennedy had spent £600 on buildings on his croft?—Yes.

48,819. Do you say so of your own knowledge, or are you merely taking his statement before the Crofters Commission?—Merely his statement, but an inspection of the buildings satisfied me that that sum at least must have been spent.

48,820. An inspection of buildings could not have satisfied you as to who spent the money?—No, but that the buildings must have cost that amount. If you say that The Mackintosh built them, then, of course, I will qualify my statement.

48,821. No, I don't say that?—But you don't dispute the statement that he made.

48,822. Was this expenditure, suppose it ever took place, before or after the passing of the Crofters Act?—The greater part of it I should say was before the passing of the Act,—perhaps all of it.

48,823. Will you take it from me that there has been no expenditure by Kenneth Kennedy on the croft since the passing of the Act except the erection of a wooden shed for the shooting tenants' stores that were going up there?—Well, we will leave out all reference to the shooting tenant; I will take it from you that he put up such a perfect and complete set of offices on the croft before the passing of the Crofters Act that it was unnecessary to build any more. But if it had been necessary he would have built them.

48,824. You are aware that Kenneth Kennedy is a gamekeeper of twenty-five years' standing?—Yes.

48,825. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I take the liberty of asking a question or two with regard to the estate of Lord Morton. In reference to that application for more land, was there a condition in the agreement not only with regard to rent, but also with regard to the erection of fences?—There was. I omitted to state that; the agreement imposes on them an undertaking to fence. [*The Chairman.*—Do you mean that that is in the joint minute?—I think I am correct in saying that it is.]

48,826. What was the proposal in the joint minute regarding fencing?—We can get the minute.

48,827. *The Chairman.*—Do you complain that that condition was a hardship?—They considered it a hardship; I merely put it that way.

48,828. Speaking on their behalf, you are now complaining of a thing to which they acceded as parties to a joint minute?—I told your lordship, and I said to Mr Robertson that I did not dispute the fact that they had agreed to a joint minute and must be bound by whatever is contained in that; but I explained to your lordship the circumstances under which they were advised by their agent then, with whom I co-operated, and which I now very much regret.

48,829. You rather take blame to yourself in the matter?—Quite so, for any part I had in doing it. Had I known that the land was so bad as it turns out to be, I should certainly have advised them to have nothing to do with it, unless they got the whole of the enlargement.

48,830. So that the complaint conveyed in Mr Macrae's question is rather a complaint against yourself?—It may be.

48,831. *Mr Macrae.*—No, my lord, I think if I may be allowed I will make it clear that that is not so. My complaint is against the security of the terms. [*To witness*]. Did the landlord in that minute undertake to assist in any degree with the erection of fences?—I should like to see the minute; as you can understand, so many minutes and agreements have passed through my hands that I cannot recall the exact terms of each. (*Copy Minute produced by Mr Robertson and handed to witness.*) I know that, in the case of the Blaich township, for whom I acted, the burden of erecting the fence was laid entirely upon the tenants, and they have put it up. But the land there was worth annexing and they do not complain of it. (*Reads*) 'Campbell 'for the applicants and Robertson for the respondent '. . . . further stated that it had been made a condition 'by the respondent, and had been arranged and agreed 'to that a good and sufficient fence in terms of a 'specification to be approved of by the Commissioners 'should be erected, and after that maintained on the 'boundary of the said lands, between the points marked 'A and B on the said plan thereof, and that by or at 'the sole expense of the said applicants, and that on or 'before such day as the Commissioners shall fix, 'under certification; and that in the event of the applicants failing so to erect said fence, the said assignation and allocation of said land shall be null 'and void, and of no effect.' Perhaps the best way to get out of this enlargement is not to put up the fence. [*Mr Robertson.*—Read on.]

48,832. *The Chairman.*—Just finish reading that clause.—'. . . of no effect, and that the respondent on his 'part undertakes, after the erection of the fence above-'mentioned, to erect and thereafter to maintain at his 'own expense a fence so far as may be required between 'the points marked C and D on the plan; and they 'further crave the Commissioners to make such regulations as are just and proper for the safe burning of 'heather on said land, and such other regulations as 'they may be entitled to make.'

48,833. That is signed by the crofters' agent and by the landlord's factor?—Yes.

48,834. And bears to be a joint minute?—It does.

48,835. *Mr Macrae.*—Do you know the estate of Lord Morton?—I know it generally; perhaps sufficiently for your purpose.

48,836. How many crofters are on it, roughly speaking?—Somewhere about thirty; from twenty-six to thirty.

48,837. Have there been more tenants on that estate at one time than there are to-day?—Yes.

48,838. Within your recollection have there been more tenants on Lord Morton's property?—Yes, who have been cleared off for the deer forest.

48,839. Evicted?—I won't say they have been evicted.

48,840. Well, cleared off. How long since?—Drumfearn was cleared within the last thirty years at all events; perhaps a good deal less than thirty.

48,841. That is one place; can you name another?—I should say Callop, up in the valley between the head of Lochiel and the head of Loch-Sheil.

48,842. Any other township cleared within the last thirty or forty years?—I think one of the Garvans has been; the Garvan occupied by Mr Boyd. Garvan is down again at the head of the loch. There are two Garvans. [*The Chairman.*—Garvan and South Garvan: these are the places concerned in this enlargement, I suppose?—One of them only; the other has, I think, been taken into the deer forest, and the farmer's house is now occupied by the gamekeeper or some other servant.]

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,843. Have you named all the old townships that were cleared and absorbed by the deer forest?—Of course there is Inverscaddle; Conaglen sheep farm has been cleared. I remember a sheep farmer residing where Mr Booth, the factor, now lives at Stonchreggan.

48,844. How long is it since that farm was cleared?—I cannot say exactly.

48,845. Twenty years ago?—I think it was under sheep when I left this country first, in 1864, and the clearance must have been subsequent to that; somewhere between twenty and thirty years ago. But, I may say, that I have information that there were dales or mains up along the River Scaddle, at which there were unmistakable traces of dwelling-houses, showing that a considerable community lived there. There are two or three of those dales up there; one, I understand, is from 20 to 40 acres in extent of excellent land at the river side.

48,846. Was it because these lands were not suitable for occupation that the people were cleared?—I should think not; they were very suitable.

48,847. Were they as suitable as the places where people live to-day on the same estate?—I think I am quite justified in saying that to provide room for some of those who were cleared off, a process of squeezing had to be resorted to, which makes it perfectly safe for me to say that the lands as originally occupied were better fitted to bear the population than under the existing arrangements.

48,848. Was there a considerable population displaced for the deer forest?—No, I cannot say that there was. I may hand in to your lordship a statement addressed by Colonel Maclean of Ardgour, dated in 1850. Upwards of thirty years ago Colonel Maclean sold Conaglen estate to the present proprietor, Lord Morton, and in this statement Colonel Maclean brings you back in his own language to the year 1790.*

48,849. I think you have already said that the deer forest does not improve the condition of people in the neighbourhood. Is that true with regard to Lord Morton's deer forest?—There have been bitter complaints about the encroachments of deer on the crops. I do not say that the same ground now exists for these complaints.

48,850. Am I right in assuming that Lord Morton has not put himself to the expense of erecting a deer fence with the view of keeping his own stock on his own ground, and with the view also of enabling his tenants to live?—That that was the case clearly appeared at the inquiry before the Crofters Commission; and the necessity for this fence is, I think, proved by the non-existence of such a fence then.

48,851. And yet in his minute he binds these crofters to erect entirely at their own expense, and for ever after to maintain at their own expense, the boundary fence between his lordship and themselves?—The minute speaks for itself.

48,852. And he holds them to that, while he states and knows that they are so poor that they can do nothing towards stocking land?—Well, I don't know that.

48,853. *The Chairman.*—This document which you have handed to us headed 'Colonel Maclean of Ardgour 'to his crofters' is dated Ardgour House, 31st August 1850, and it refers to a state of matters existing between 1780 and the commencement of the present century. It bears to set forth that the crofting system, at least on this estate, had hardly then commenced?—The runrig system had prevailed before then. That does not mean that there was no population then.

48,854. The runrig system had prevailed, and as he says, he proceeded to rescue them and himself from that system and to divide the farms along the shores into separate holdings, which appeared to him to be most attainable and most conducive to the interest of both parties?—Yes.

48,855. And after referring to emigration he mentions the process he pursued to carry out this system. He says he 'had four farms upon the shores of Loch-'Eil surveyed and subdivided into allotments, each 'consisting of some arable or land easily improved into 'arable, with each allotment the pasture of four cows, 'three followers, and a certain number of sheep. The 'value of kelp at that period was about its height, but 'as encouragement to improve the soil, I gave it up to 'the occupiers, and to this day yourselves are the best 'judges of its value.' The rents were fixed by three of their own number selected by themselves; and accompanied by the surveyor and the factor he apportioned the amount of rent on each croft separately; and when it was found that disturbance arose from every man attending to his own flock, the system was adopted of the whole sheep farm being put together under one mark and one shepherd, under the control of three chosen men of their number?—Quite so.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,856. That looks very like the modern idea of a Committee appointed under the Grazings Act of 1891?—Yes, and the club farm system.

48,856A. He goes on to say that at the date when he writes (1850), the whole arrears are under 8 per cent., half of which are due by five individuals, and he then advises his tenantry to persevere in their present course?—Of well being.

48,857. This is an important historical document?—I was going to add that Lord Morton,—the predecessor in family and title of the present Lord Morton, took the sheep grazing lands from the tenants on that loch side, and they were to make a corresponding diminution in the rent, but they ingeniously devised another way of assessing the rent, *i.e.*, they placed so much on the acre of arable land and so much on the grazing per head of cattle, and the result, extraordinarily enough, brought out that they had to pay the same rent for the land *minus* the sheep grazing that they had paid for the whole before; so that by this arrangement there was practically a diminution of their holdings and an increase of their rent. He held that increase for 30 years, and so recompensed himself three times over for the price he paid for the sheep stock. The tenants have survived that treatment however.

48,858. *Mr Sutherland.*—Have you observed this statement in Colonel Maclean's paper, 'The crofting 'system was then hardly known'?—Yes.

48,859. Did that strike you as a remarkable statement?—Well, speaking of the population of Loch-Arkaig-side, I should not describe them as crofters, though I don't commit them to any description; and I believe that what prevailed on Lochiel and Ardgour prior to that was practically the same thing that prevailed on Arkaig and other places.

48,860. Colonel Maclean would be very likely to state that accurately, both from disposition and from knowledge?—I believe so. It is admitted by the crofters generally that what he says there is true.

48,861. But I am putting rather a historical question to you. Have you ever heard it stated that what is known as the present crofting system was inherent in Highland history? And how do you account for this statement of Colonel Maclean's that the crofting system was practically unknown in the light of that? Does it not strike you as a remarkable thing?—It is an inaccurate use of terms. What he means is the crofting system as it now exists, under which one has a self-contained lot or area of land not interspersed or mixed up with his neighbour's ground. That is the system that prevails generally now; but even nowadays you find the runrig system prevails among some crofters, and I could give you two instances of that.

48,862. You do not require to give us any instance: every club farm is a runrig?—But I mean as regards arable land.

48,863. But the distinction holds only between arable and pasture. Was the runrig system not devised for the purpose of distributing the land properly?—It may have been that: that one should not get a lot of good land while his neighbour might have to cultivate a bare croft.

48,864. The idea at the bottom of the system was perfect justice to every member of the community?—True.

* For the full text of this circular, see after question 48,876, page 1195.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

48,865. Now, what do you consider to be the essential point of the crofting system as we know it to-day; and what is the necessity for making the modern definition? —I have not applied my mind to that.

48,866. Where is the link that connects the crofter of to-day with the clansman of old? How did the clansmen of the Highlands become the crofters of modern times? Did you ever read in history of a Highland Chief calling his *crofters* together?—No.

48,867. What do you invariably hear of?—His clansmen.

48,868. When did the clansman become the crofter? —There is a decision of the Court of Session to the effect—

48,869. But I want a higher Court than that?—After 1745, I should say that a gradual change took place over the Highlands, and I don't know whether it was later than that date that an engagement took place between the Macdonalds and the Mackintoshes up at Glenroy, which is said to have been the last engagement between two independent armies within the area of Scotland. I don't know whether that was later than 1745,—1600, I am told.

48,870. Was that a transaction regarding the land? —It was. The Macdonalds were, I think, the tacksmen of the time, and the dispute they had with the Mackintoshes was settled by force of arms.

48,871. I need not trouble you much on the historical matter, but this expression here is surely a very striking one, as coming from a gentleman, evidently a Highlander by descent, and one who knew the state of the country well. Is it the fact that the crofter, as he is now understood, was not the work of the Highland people at all? Did he voluntarily become a crofter?—I should say not.

48,872. Was he, in your opinion, made so by process of law?—He was. If we are to go into the question of title, I think the tribal tenure was not a feudal tenure at all.

48,873. Was the one not the antithesis of the other? —The Chiefs of the clans were men who held the land in trust for behoof of the people, and they had no right at one time to exact rents: their office, such as it was, was maintained by contribution from the clansmen.

48,874. *The Chairman.*—I think you will agree that this document rather goes to show that, so far as Col. Maclean's crofters were concerned, they were made crofters, in the modern sense of the word, since they began to exist at the beginning of this century, not by process of law, but by friendly arrangement between themselves and their landlord, who persuaded them to give up the runrig system; and who assigned them separate holdings, they themselves fixing their own rent by a committee of three?—It would be difficult to determine the point at which a man ceased to be a clansman and became a holder of land (we can use that term) in the modern sense of the word. That reference merely denotes the change from holding land under the runrig system, to holding land under the present system of a defined area of arable land, with a right of common pasture on the hill.

48,875. *Mr Sutherland.*—But this transaction took place in the year 1801, and could not the landlord have removed them by process of law at that time if he had wished to do so?—I should say so.

48,876. Did the Act of Sederunt under which all the removals in the Highlands were conducted not exist at that time?—It is a question of law. [*The Chairman.*—I think Mr Sutherland refers to the Act of 1756.]

The circular referred to by Mr Macphee in question 48,848, and in the subsequent examination, was as follows:—

'COLONEL MACLEAN OF ARDGOUR, TO HIS CROFTERS.

'MY FRIENDS,—Our connection existed before crofting 'was known. Near seventy years ago, 1780, I found 'you and your forefathers located in the glens and on 'different farms upon the estate, some holding a fourth, 'some an eighth, and many as low as a sixteenth share 'of the farm—the arable land divided into as many 'parts, and lots drawn for it every season, so that no 'man should sow the same land two years following. 'This pernicious system was more injurious to the 'tenant than to the landlord, but greatly so to both; 'ten years afterwards, 1790, I found you all in the 'same predicament. I was then a Captain of Dragoons, 'and allowed my military service to prevail over duties 'more important both to you and to myself, and things 'remained as they were. At the conclusion of the first 'French war, when I came more among you, I perceived 'it was incumbent upon me to rescue you and myself 'from so pernicious a system, and dividing the farms 'along the shores into separate holdings appeared to be 'the most attainable and most conducive to the interest 'of both parties. On its being first proposed to you, 'all those holding fourth and eighth shares rejected it 'rather indignantly. At that period large emigration 'to America was going on from the neighbouring 'countries, and many of you said, if you were removed 'from your holdings, you would emigrate also. I had 'an aversion to any of you leaving your native country, 'and endeavoured to show you the benefits of what I 'conceived to be a better system, advantageous to both 'you and me. With this impression, I had four farms 'upon the shores of Locheil surveyed and sub-divided 'into allotments, each consisting of some arable, or 'land easily improved into arable—with each allotment 'the pasture of four cows, their followers, and a certain 'number of sheep. The value of kelp at that period 'was about its height; but, as encouragement to im-'prove the soil, I gave it up to the occupiers, and to 'this day yourselves are the best judges of its value. 'You could not at once see all the advantages of the 'plan. The crofting system was then hardly known: 'I did not press you, and gave you time to consider. A 'year or two elapsed before a large majority agreed *to* '*make a trial.*

'At length, in 1801, the allotments were surveyed, 'marked out, and to be taken possession of at Whitsunday '1802. The rent of the farms was fixed according to 'the rents of the day, and three of your number, 'selected by yourselves, accompanied by the surveyor 'and the factor, apportioned the amount upon each 'croft separately.

'The numbers were then put into a bonnet 'and drawn out by one of yourselves—the Hill 'Rent was given gratis for three years, when stone 'houses, head and side dykes were to be finished— 'restrictions were few, intended for mutual advantage, 'but were to be strictly complied with—tenure, based 'on good conduct, industrial and frugal habits, quiet 'neighbours, obedient to the laws of our country. 'Assurance was given that no alterations should be 'made for nine years, and at the end of that period your 'own industrial conduct, with one exception, rendered 'any change uncalled for. Years rolled on before we 'discovered an error in our practice, but which was 'easily remedied and acquiesced in by all: I allude to 'every man having his sheep on his own mark and his 'own *management*, fraught with almost daily disturbance 'to the flock. The whole sheep of the farm were then 'put together under one mark and one shepherd, under 'the control of three chosen men of your number. The 'change has worked well, and all, I believe, are 'satisfied. Sometime ago I offered you leases: your 'reply was, What was to be the use of them? "Had 'any man been removed unless for bad conduct, or had 'any man's rent been raised for forty-eight years? 'What good, then, would a lease be to us?" I agree 'that, when mutual confidence exists, you are better 'without a lease. I know the absence of it has saved 'many of you from bad and indolent habits, and that 'my watchfulness preserved many of you from mischief. 'I shall now close this Address, by thanking you most 'fervently for your general good conduct and persevering 'industry, the beneficial results of which are now 'apparent in your present condition — your crofts 'improved, your rents paid. At this date, the whole 'arrears are under eight per cent.—one-half of which 'is due by five individuals. All I have to add is, 'persevere in your present course;—while I live, mine

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

Fort-William. Donald Macphee.

'to you shall not be charged, and before I go hence my 'endeavour shall be to insure to you support in your 'present possessions. On one point only have you 'disappointed me—the improvement and cleanliness of 'your dwelling-houses. For this you have facilities 'which few crofters in the West Highlands possess. 'You get small timber for houses and offices gratis, 'almost for the asking; and when a man leaves his 'croft, from whatever cause, he receives two-thirds of 'the value of the house and offices, valued by the 'verdict of three sworn burleymen.

'Ardgour House, 31st August 1850.'

Donald Macdonald.

Donald Macdonald, 5 Fassifern Road, Fort-William (69) *examined*.

48,877. *Mr Donald Macphee, Solicitor, Fort-William, Agent for crofters.* — Where were you born?—At Insh.

48,878. Was Insh the property of the Duke of Gordon at the time?—Yes.

48,879. And was it afterwards acquired by Col. Walker, and since then by Lord Abinger?—Yes.

48,880. Insh is situated on the south side of Glen-Spean?—Yes.

48,881. Has it a considerable extent of arable land?—A great deal.

48,882. How many families would that maintain, or did it maintain at one time?—I don't know the exact number: that was before my time. But there is a great deal of arable land about, and first class grazing. I cannot judge how many it would hold or maintain.

48,883. Now, go a little to the north-east, to Monessie and Achnacochine, do you remember crofters being settled there?—Yes.

48,884. How many crofters were settled on these two townships?—Twelve, as far as I remember.

48,885. And were they all removed except Donald Macdonald?—Yes, he took a farm.

48,886. Then going up to Inverlair and Fersit, you do not remember the population being there yourself?—No.

48,887. But you have heard old men say, who were aware of the facts?—I have heard old men speaking about them, and the ruins are there yet; the furrows are still to be seen on the land.

48,888. Is there abundance of ground there and at Fersit to maintain a considerable population?—Well, Fersit is not good.

48,889. But dealing with Inverlair first?—Inverlair has a great deal of arable land.

48,890. Does the new West Highland Railway come through Fersit?—Yes.

48,891. Now to go back from Insh, the next places on the south west are Coire-Chuinnlidh and Kylliechonnet?—Yes.

48,892. Have you seen the ruins of houses there, showing where a number of families used to live?—Yes.

48,893. And do you know that the land is well suited for maintaining a large number of people?—Yes, it always got that name, and the remains may be seen yet.

48,894. Were you there when Cameron, Coire-Chuinnlidh, had it stocked with sheep?—Yes: I was nine years with his successor, Mr Wallace.

48,895. And did it carry a very fine stock of sheep?—Upwards of 6000.

48,896. How many does Insh carry?—Insh is now divided into two separate places; with the wedder ground turned into a deer forest it would hold about 4000.

48,897. What part of the wedder ground was that?—Up towards Loch-Treig.

48,898. What is the name of the forest?—Corrour deer forest.

48,899. Both Monessie and Inverlair are under sheep at present?—Yes.

48,900. But Fersit has been cleared?—Yes, a few years ago. Fort-William. Donald Macdonald.

48,901. Is the land at Inverlair, to which you refer, land under farm grazing, or forest land?—Grazing land just now.

48,902. Then was Torgulbin under sheep in your recollection?—Yes.

48,903. How many sheep would it carry? I understand you went there to keep the sheep off the Ardverikie forest?—When it was a sheep farm, Torgulbin and Fersit were the same, but there were wedders on one part and ewes on the other.

48,904. What stock between wedders and ewes would the two carry?—When it was Macdonald's, I think there were about 5000; but when Mr Craig got it, I believe he put on 6000.

48,905. Now, we shall travel south-west from Coire-Chuinnlidh and Kylliechonnet, do you know Tom-na-fet?—Yes.

48,906. Is that under sheep at present?—Yes, mostly.

48,907. Now, go down to Lianachan, Achnacoichan, and Dawnie?—Achnacoichan and Dawnie are under sheep also.

48,908. But Lianachan is cleared for a deer forest?—Yes.

48,909. Do evidences exist on Lianachan that there was a considerable population there at one time?—Yes, and I have heard old people speaking about the numbers there; over thirty they said.

48,910. Do you know a John Cameron who went out to Australia from Blarmachfoldach? Are you aware whether he was born there?—I do not know.

48,911. But is that land well suited for agriculture?—Oh, yes; there were a great many there, and they were doing well; brave men they were.

48,912. I have no doubt about the men, but was the land good?—Yes, the land is good and fertile.

48,913. And you say it carried a number of fair women and brave man?—Certainly.

48,914. Is Achnacoichan also suitable for small holdings?—It is a good place.

48,915. How does it lie from Dawnie or Lianachan?—It is between the two.

48,916. Is it nearer here?—It is nearer Fort-William than Lianachan, and Dawnie is nearer still.

48,917. Who turned out the people there, do you remember?—Yes, I know who did that; he was father to Dr Kennedy that was in this town here.

48,918. Who was Dr Kennedy?—A man in whose memory a monument was erected in the middle of the town. He had been a crofter with the rest of them; a great many of them were there under the Duke of Gordon. He went to the Duke and told him he would take the places that he used to have, and when he came back he took it for himself and had the rest all turned out. That is how I heard the story.

48,919. You are speaking of the father of the medical man?—Yes.

48,920. Was Dawnie included in Lianachan farm?—Yes, it was at that time.

48,921. So that the people of Lianachan, Achnacoichan, and Dawnie were cleared out at that time to form the farm?—Yes.

48,922. Do you know Creag-Uanach?—Yes.

48,923. That is at the head of Loch Treig?—Yes.

48,924. I believe you were settled there for a good while?—Yes.

48,925. That was the back part of Coire-Chuinnlidh farm?—Yes.

48,926. Did it carry good stocks of sheep and black cattle?—Yes.

48,927. And it was a favourite summer pasture?—I saw black cattle when Cameron, Coire-Chuinnlidh, had it. [*Mr Sutherland.*—What is the meaning of Creag-Uanach?—I cannot explain it, it is a Gaelic name.—But has it no meaning?—I cannot make anything of it.—What is *Uan*: is it not 'a lamb'? And what is the meaning of Loch-nan-caorach?—That is a place for sheep likely.]

48,928. You acted as keeper and shepherd up there by times?—Yes.

Fort-William. Donald Macdonald.

48,929. And you know pretty well the habits of deer as well as sheep?—I ought to; I was all my life among them.

48,930. That ground is pretty high; Loch-Treig is 740 feet above the sea level, is it not?—I thought not.

48,931. Do you not think it is so high?—I cannot say.

48,932. Will you take it if the Ordnance Map says so?—Oh yes.

48,933. Have you seen deer and sheep grazed together in that neighbourhood?—Often, and last year too.

48,934. Have you seen the deer succumb or die off when the sheep were feeling quite well?—Yes; that happened last winter.

48,935. Just tell us what you know about the comparative hardiness of deer?—They were just dying at every turn up yonder; and 300 sheep that were wintered in a small place along with them wintered well.

48,936. What was the death-rate among the sheep?—Nothing of any consequence.

48,937. But, I suppose, some of them did die?—I did not hear of any except two or three; I know there were not many deaths among the sheep.

48,938. But you saw great mortality among the deer?—Yes.

48,939. How many carcases did you see there?—I think I have seen twenty there myself, but that was nothing to the rest.

48,940. Do you know Beinn-Bhreac?—Yes.

48,941. Were you often there in your young days?—Yes, and in my olden days.

48,942. Have you seen the Achintore people and the Onich people?—No, they left there before I went, as far as I remember.

48,943. Do you remember going up there for some cattle of your own?—Yes, I remember that, though I was quite young at the time.

48,944. You found cattle there?—Oh yes, I found cattle.

48,945. Whose cattle did you find there?—I think they were Achintore cattle, but I cannot make a sure story of that.

48,946. You found your own among them?—Yes.

48,947. And you took it away without paying anything for the summering?—Yes, I paid nothing.

48,948. Did a woman come afterwards and claim 5s. as the rent for summering the beast there?—Yes.

48,949. She was there as caretaker for the Achintore people?—I think it was for Achintore.

48,950. You say Beinn-Bhreac is 8 miles long?—Yes.

48,951. Just tell us how it is mapped out among the various townships or farms?—I cannot explain that thoroughly.

48,952. Do you know that the Onich people had a right to part of it?—Yes, I know the ruins of their shielings there.

48,953. Do you know that Blarmachfoldach had a right?—Yes.

48,954. Had Fort-William people a right either to that or to Glasven?—I do not remember; I cannot say.

48,955. You have been a thrifty man, and have saved some money?—Well, some.

48,956. And you are very anxious to have a holding if a holding could be got?—Certainly.

48,957. And do you see lands admirably suited for it from Dawnie up to Inverlair?—All the way.

48,958. You would be content to be in any spot there?—Yes.

48,959. Is the land superior to the land on the north side of the glen?—I consider it is; it is more waste land now when there is no cultivation.

48,960. But it is eminently fitted for being brought back into cultivation?—Yes.

48,961. Could you take such a holding, put up the necessary buildings, and carry it on without assistance?—I think so,—a small holding.

48,962. Do you know that there is a general desire among people of your class to have holdings in the country?—Certainly; they are only compelled to go and pay a high rent in Fort-William.

48,963. *The Chairman.*—What rent do you pay in Fort-William?—£7 for two small rooms; that is for rent and rates.

Fort-William. Donald Macdonald.

48,964. You say you have been a shepherd and gamekeeper?—Yes.

48,965. How long were you engaged as a shepherd?—I was only nine years a keeper, and all the rest of my life I served as a shepherd till I came to Fort-William.

48,966. Where were you occupied as a shepherd?—About Loch Treig-head all the time.

48,967. Who was the proprietor?—When I was there first it was Major Walker.

48,968. Did you act as a shepherd to any one else besides Major Walker?—Places of his were let as farms, and I was shepherd to the farmers.

48,969. All the time you were a shepherd, were you acting to farmers upon that estate?—Yes.

48,970. Sometimes one and sometimes another?—Well, I was on Lord Abinger's estate at the head of the loch for eighteen years.

48,970A. But your occupation as a shepherd took you over the whole of those lands of which you have been speaking?—Yes.

48,971. And you know a great deal about them personally in the past?—I know it well.

48,972. How many hirsels had you?—They had no hirsels; they did not manage that way.

48,973. How did you manage?—It was a large farm, and the one shepherd helped the other. Every shepherd had a piece of his own certainly, but the sheep were all mixed together.

48,974. Different proprietors' stock mixed with each other?—No; all the ground was Major Walker's estate; the Macdonalds of Keppoch had it first, and then a south countryman came, Mr Martin.

48,975. How many sheep had you under your charge?—About 4000 wedders; there were three shepherds of us. That is as near as I can say.

48,976. How long did you act as a gamekeeper?—Nine years.

48,977. With whom were you employed?—With Lord Abinger.

48,978. Was it in the forest or upon grouse shooting?—I was at Creag Uanach, at the head of Loch-Treig.

48,979. Was it cleared as a forest or as a grouse moor?—It was not cleared when I got there, but it was cleared shortly after that, the back hill.

48,980. Were you employed in the forest?—Yes, I was.

48,981. *Mr Sutherland.*—What became of the low ground at Fersit that was not added to the deer forest,—is it still a sheep farm?—There is not a great deal of arable land at Fersit.

48,982. Is it still a sheep farm?—It is a forest now.

48,983. You said the wedder ground was separate and added to the forest?—That was not Fersit.

48,984. Where was that?—The upper end of Loch-Treig.

48,985. But when was the separation made that you talked of between the low land and the high land of the farm?—Torgulbin and Fersit; it was a sheep farm first, and then when it was taken into a forest they shifted the thing and put all the sheep away, and one Mr Cross has it.

48,986. Is the whole of that land a deer forest now?—Yes, the whole of Fersit.

48,987. Now, with regard to the Onich people's right of grazing on Beinn-Bhreac, how was that taken away?—The landlord did it.

48,988. And what is it now? Is Beinn-Bhreac a deer forest?—It is all a forest. [*Mr Macphee.*—I think I explained that; it was sold recently by Lochiel to Sir John Stirling Maxwell.]

48,989. What I want information about is whether there was any compensation given to these people by reduction of rent, or by money down, when the summer grazings were taken away from them?—They got nothing that I am aware of.

Fort-William. Donald Macdonald.

48,990. No reduction of rent?—Well, there are people here who know about these things better than I do.

48,991. *Mr Harold Y. L. Smith.*—Will you tell me whether you have ever applied to anybody for a holding?—No.

48,992. What size of a holding do you want?—Just a small holding.

48,993. How many acres arable?—To keep 200 sheep, and four or five cows and a horse.

48,994. How much arable in connection with that?—Ten acres would do.

48,995. Would that be sufficient to keep you without any other employment?—I think it should, but I never tried it.

48,996. It would not keep you so well as 18s. a week?—I think it would keep me more easily, at any rate.

48,997. That is to say, you would not work so much. Have you the money to take over the stock?—I did not get the place yet.

48,998. Have you the money to put up the buildings?—I did not get the place yet.

48,999. *The Chairman.*—Suppose such a holding were offered to you, would you be prepared to take it up and erect the buildings and carry it on without assistance?—As for the buildings, it is a great drawback certainly.

49,000. Would you be prepared to do that without assistance?—Perhaps I could put up a sort of temporary building.

49,001. You would require assistance for the buildings; or would you undertake to do the whole thing and carry it on without assistance?—As to the building, I would be against the building.

49,002. You would need assistance for the building?—Yes.

49,003. But you could do the stocking for yourself?—Yes.

49,004. And suppose fencing were necessary, could you put up fences?—I don't know; I could help with it.

49,005. If the landlord would meet you, you would do the rest?—Yes.

49,006. You have spoken with regard to the old tenants of Monessie and Achnacochine. Do you recollect a man called James Mackintosh?—They were there before.

49,007. Was there not a man who took the farm in partnership?—Yes.

49,008. Why did you say, then, as a piece of accurate information, that after all the tenants were turned out, Donald 'Marsant' had the whole holding?—He had it after that, and he had it till he died.—[*Mr Macphee.*—I think the witness is dealing with long periods of time, and is skipping over estates.] When he got it first it was the half, and, as far as I understand, Mr Macgregor, banker here, was in company with Mr Macdonald for part of it. Then these Mackintoshes that Mr Smith speaks about got that half.

49,009. *Mr Macphee.*—Mr Macgregor went out?—Yes.

49,010. And he put the Mackintoshes in?—Yes.

49,011. They got into trouble up at Loch-Treig?—Yes.

49,012. And Donald 'Marsant' took the whole thing?—Yes.

49,013. So that you are perfectly correct in saying that Donald had the farm?—Yes.

49,014. *Mr Harold Y. L. Smith.*—But Mackintosh was one of the old tenants, was he not?—Yes, they were one of the old tenants.

49,015. You say that you have made money; did you not make money chiefly as a gamekeeper?—Well, I made it everywhere I had tried it. I think you are going too far. I did not save much money there.

49,016. *Mr N. B. Mackenzie, factor for Lochiel.*—You told us that the Achintore people had an interest in Beinn-Bhreac?—I did not say so with certainty; I said others knew about it better than I do.

49,017. Do you know, or do you not know, whether the Achintore people had any interest in the Beinn Bhreac summering?—There are people here that will tell you better.

Fort-William. Donald Macdonald.

49,018. Do you know anything about it of your own knowledge?—I have seen cattle there, and I don't know whose they were.

49,019. And you guessed that they came from Achintore, is that it?—I think they were going up there, but I cannot speak with certainty.

49,020. Might they not have come from any other township quite as well as Achintore?—Yes, there were other townships: there are people there who can prove it.

49,021. Now, with regard to Onich, do you know of your own knowledge that people there had the rights you spoke of?—I cannot speak with certainty about the Beinn-Bhreac summering at all.

49,022. May I take it that you have a very vague knowledge of this Beinn Bhreac business altogether?—About the cattle grazing I have; it is a long time ago.

49,023. May I go a little farther and say you know nothing about it?—I know Beinn-Bhreac, at all events.

49,024. May I take it you know little or nothing about those people who are entitled to grazing rights on Beinn-Bhreac?—No, I cannot be certain about it. [*Mr Macphee.*—You know that there were cattle summering there?—Yes, I saw the bothies there.—And you may not be able to state with precision what various townships contributed these cattle?—No.]

49,025. When did these rights of summering on Beinn-Bhreac, such as they were, cease?—I cannot tell you.

49,026. Is it a matter of fifty years ago?—I think so, somewhere thereabouts; it is upwards of forty.

John Macmaster.

JOHN MACMASTER, Dairyman, 17 Low Street, Fort-William (73).—*examined.*

49,027. *Mr Macphee, agent for the crofters.*—Where were you born?—At the top of Glen-Nevis, Lubailt.

49,028. Do you know Loch-Treig?—Yes.

49,029. Tell us what you know about Loch-Treig and the summering rights on it. Were you employed up about there?—I was employed at Creag-Uanach.

49,030. As a gamekeeper?—Yes.

49,031. How long were you there?—My father was there for thirty years, and I was there all the time. I was born up there, and spent all my life there till I was about fifty.

49,032. Do you know about the townships of Achintore and Onich and Blarmachfoldach sending quantities of stock to summer there?—Yes.

49,033. You have seen the people from there?—Yes.

49,034. Tell us what part of Beinn-Bhreac the Achintore people had?—They were not in Beinn-Bhreac, they were in Glasven, at Creag Ferenean in Coire-nan-eun.

49,035. Did any stock go to Beinn-Bhreac?—Yes, to Glasven.

49,036. What stock went there?—The Ballachulish cows went to Laganore on Beinn-Bhreac.

49,037. Had the Blarmachfoldach people any rights of summering there?—No, but they had rights at Loch-Eilt.

49,038. Who were the owners of the Ballachulish cows,—were they the cows from the township?—The yeld cows from the township of Ballachulish. All the cows except the milk cows went up there with a herd who lived in a bothy.

49,039. Did the cows from any township go there?—Yes; there were separate bits for every place.

49,040. Tell me some other place.—Lundavra sheep were going there: Camisky sheep went up to Coirean, and the father of John Macmillan in Tom-a'-Charaich used to go from Camisky with his sheep. Coirean was a sublet to Camisky by one of the townships.

49,041. Did the Fort-William people send their cattle there?—No, except those in Achintore.

49,042. Did the Drimarbin people?—Yes, I think so, to Coire-nan-eun.

49,043. You cannot speak of any others sending stock to Beinn Bhreac except the Ballachulish people; the

Fort-William. John Macmaster.

Lundavra people, and the Camisky people?—No, I don't remember any other stock going there.

49,044. How long is it since these cattle and sheep used to go there?—I should say perhaps thirty-eight years or so, but I cannot say with certainty; that is only a guess.

49,045. Do you know if they got any compensation for the loss of these rights of summering cattle?—No, I cannot say anything about that.

Donald Cameron.

DONALD CAMERON, Woodbine Cottage, Fort-William (76)—*examined.*

49,046. *Mr Macphee, Agent for crofters.*—Were you born at Clunes near Achnacarry, at the east end of Loch-Arkaig?—Yes.

49,047. And I think your grandmother's people belonged to Clunes for generations?—Yes.

49,048. Your father's people belonged to Camisky, on Lord Abinger's estate?—Yes.

49,049. Camisky was occupied by Camerons?—Yes, for generations.

49,050. You served your apprenticeship as a blacksmith at Glen-Loy?—Yes.

49,051. Just be good enough to describe where Glen-Loy is?—It is near Erracht, between that and Strone; between Strone farm and Moy farm.

49,052. When you were an apprentice how many men were employed in the blacksmith's shop at Glen-Loy?—There were two men constantly employed and an apprentice.

49,053. After being away from the country for some time, I think you eventually became the tenant of the smithy at Glen-Loy?—Yes.

49,054. When did you enter into the tenancy of the smithy?—About 1850.

49,055. Had you full employment for yourself when you went there?—No, except when Lochiel was making an improvement at Achnacarry, that was all the work I had that was keeping me going constant.

49,056. And now the smithy is given up and abandoned?—There is no work for a smith there; one man could do in a day all that is required in a month.

49,057. Do you attribute that to the depopulation of the surrounding country?—That must be the cause; the people are not there who were there when I was an apprentice.

49,058. Are there people at Barr?—None now.

49,059. But when you were an apprentice were there some there?—No, they were upon the south side of the river Loy, at Inverskillavullin and Achnahety and Achnanellan.

49,060. Are these places all in Glen-Loy?—Yes, on the one side of the River Loy.

49,061. Do you know Loch-Arkaig?—Yes.

49,062. Have you been up both sides?—I have.

49,063. And have you been at the glens, at the head;—Glen-Pean, Glen-Dessary, and Glen-Kingie?—I have not been in Glen-Kingie, but I have been in the others.

49,064. Now, speaking about Glen-Dessary, did you see traces there of the glen having been occupied by people at some former time?—Yes.

49,065. What did you see?—I have seen old ruins of houses where their holdings were.

49,066. How many such ruins did you see; did you count them, or could you give an idea of the number?—I could not count them all with certainty, for the shepherds took away a great many of the stones to build fanks.

49,067. What you saw were the remains of ruined houses after the shepherds had taken away a great number to build fanks and others enclosures for sheep?—It is hard to tell of some of them.

49,068. Could you reckon from what you saw, what number of people had occupied the glen, as nearly as you can?—I can tell all the ruins that I could mention that had plainly been houses built for the habitation of man.

49,069. Did you hear the evidence I gave as to the population of the locality?—Yes. Fort-William. Donald Cameron.

49,070. And in these glens of Glen-Dessary and Glen-Pean and the various hamlets, Caillich and Caoinich, and down Loch-Arkaig-side; do you concur in my evidence about these places?—Yes.

49,071. Was it correct as far as your knowledge goes?—Yes.

49,072. Do you think that place could be peopled again with small holders?—It is a place that could, very well.

49,073. Now, supposing you are making allotments to carry tenants with a stock of a horse, six cows, and two or three hundred sheep: how many such tenants would the place yield, roughly speaking?—It depends on the number each holding would have.

49,074. Take the number I mentioned, 300 sheep: would it hold fifty tenants?—I should think so.

49,075. You are quite clear that, on that ground, there could be formed a good many substantial holdings?—Yes.

49,076. Would Loch-Arkaig-side sustain thirty from the various hamlets alone?—Yes.

49,077. Glen-Dessary would sustain about twelve such?—Yes.

49,078. And Glen-Pean eight?—Well, Glen-Pean is less no doubt.

49,079. For Glen-Loy, both sides, may we say fifteen?—Glen-Loy is a fertile place, it would take quite that number.

49,080. And Moy and Strone, how many,—twelve?—Yes.

49,081. Do you mean by Moy the land above the canal, or do you think the land above the canal alone for both these places would carry twelve families?—I know it carried more.

49,082. Do you know also that there is splendid land between the canal and the river Lochy?—Yes.

49,083. How many would you set down for that,—twenty?—The most of the arable land is there; it would carry that number.

49,084. *Mr N. B. Mackenzie, Factor for Lochiel.*—When were you last in Glen-Dessary?—Twenty years ago.

49,085. How often have you been in Glen-Dessary altogether?—I was there only twice, and I remained for days betwixt Glen-Dessary and Glen-Pean.

49,086. When were you last in Glen-Pean?—Just at the time I was at Glen-Dessary, twenty years ago.

49,087. How often have you been in Glen-Pean?—Just twice.

49,088. What were you doing there, and how long were you there?—I went there to see friends of mine who were shepherds up there.

49,089. And how long did you stay with your friends, the shepherds?—I stayed two days and two nights, and these shepherds came round to let me see the ruins of houses that had at one time been flourishing in that place.

49,090. Did you count the ruins?—I did not count them all.

49,091. Is it the recollection of the ruins you saw twenty years ago that you were telling us about?—I think I have seen forty of them.

49,092. (*Question repeated*).—I had information about them before; I am only saying what I have seen; that is what I am telling you just now.

49,093. Are you quite clear that you saw the remains of as many as forty different dwelling-houses in Glen-Dessary?—I am certain I have seen forty ruins.

49,093A. And how many in Glen-Pean?—I mean between the two places.

49,094. What size of holding would you require to have?—It would need to be comfortable.

49,095. Can you give us any idea of the extent?—No.

49,096. What extent of stock do you think would be necessary?—Six cows, a horse, and about 300 sheep.

49,097. And, I suppose, we may take it that if you

Fort-William. Donald Cameron.

had that stock you would require arable land sufficient to supply you with the necessary wintering?—Yes.

49,098. I think you mentioned that the land below the canal and the river would support about twenty people?—Yes, and they would be better than the crofters.

49,099. Now, in saying that, do you mean to convey that you could put twenty times 300 sheep between the canal and the river? (*No answer.*)

49,100. Can you give any idea of the acreage on the farm of Moy between the canal and the river? (*No answer.*)

49,101. *Mr Sutherland.*—What do you say is your occupation?—A blacksmith.

49,102. And you were a blacksmith in Glen-Loy?—Yes.

49,103. When you were an apprentice there was plenty blacksmith work to be had at Glen-Loy?—Yes, for two smiths and an apprentice.

49,104. There were plenty people there at that time?—Well, in my own time a good many left for Australia; they went off with Dr Boiter.

49,105. How many families were there at the time when you were an apprentice blacksmith?—There were ten families that disappeared in one year.

49,106. How many are there now?—There are none at all but two shepherds.

49,107. Had these ten families land, do you know?—Yes.

49,108. Why has there been such a reduction in the population?—I suppose they saw that they could not be maintained in their own country properly; that is the only reason I can give. They were not emigrated; they went off of their own accord.

49,109. Had they much land at that time? Had they big farms?—No; only here and there, like small crofts.

49,110. And had they the grazing behind, away to the west?—All their places went to big farmers.

49,111. But the same people who were there before,—had they the grazing away up to the west, above where their arable land was, up the hill from Moy?—Lochiel had his factor there. Moy was formerly a township with black cattle.

49,112. Do you know whether they had the grazing behind?—He did not allow any to be there but the servants at Moy, after the small tenants left.

William Macphee.

WILLIAM MACPHEE, Crofter, North Ballachulish (58)—*examined.*

49,113. *The Chairman.*—What is your occupation?—I am a general labourer.

49,114. Are you a crofter?—Yes.

49,115. What rent do you pay?—£12.

49,116. Was your rent dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—I cannot say; the Report is not out.

49,117. But did you make an application to the Commission?—Yes.

49,118. And it is not yet disposed of?—No.

49,119. Where are you labouring at present?—In my crofts.

49,120. I thought you said you were a general labourer?—Sometimes I have to do that.

49,121. Now, what is it you have come here to tell us?—I have come here to ask that the land be given to the people.

49,122. What land do you refer to?—The land that was taken from the crofters at North Ballachulish.

49,123. Were there old townships there?—No, only one township.

49,124. What was the name?—North Ballachulish.

49,125. Do you remember when that land was taken, or was it before your time?—I remember well when the most of it was taken.

49,126. How many years ago?—About twenty-eight or twenty-nine or so.

49,127. What was done with the land?—It was put to the hotel. [*Mr Donald Macphee.*—It is now in the occupation of Bishop Chinnery-Haldane.]

49,128. Do you remember how many removals had to be effected in order to get this land for the hotel?—About twenty. Fort-William.

49,129. Was your holding one of them?—My aunt's holding. William Macphee.

49,130. What was the name of your aunt?—Christina Cameron.

49,131. Now, do you remember what size of holding she had?—About an acre and a half.

49,132. And had she some grazing?—Yes, cows' grazing.

49,133. When your aunt was put out of that holding, what became of her?—She died while resident in the holding.

49,134. Who succeeded her in the holding?—It was put to the hotel.

49,135. On the occasion of her death?—Yes.

49,136. There was a number of others who were put out of their holdings?—Yes.

49,137. Were some of them put out in order to form the hotel farm?—Yes.

49,138. How many?—Nineteen or so.

49,139. Crofters?—Yes.

49,140. And were the lands belonging to these crofters put into the hotel farm?—Yes.

49,141. Are you sure of that?—I am certain, for I know it.

49,142. You saw it yourself?—I know every one who was removed, and the crofts were added to the hotel.

49,143. What became of those who were removed?—There are some of them there still, in North Ballachulish.

49,144. They got other holdings there?—Yes.

49,145. And some of them, I daresay, went further away?—Yes, some of them went to Australia.

49,146. Were you living with your aunt at the time she died?—Yes.

49,147. You say her croft was then put into the farm; where did you go?—I could not get any place, though I was promised the first opening by Lochiel.

49,148. Did you get a place?—No.

49,149. Where did you go?—I went to Callart.

49,150. Did you get a holding there?—I got occupation as a ploughman in service.

49,151. Is the land from which these persons were removed, and which was turned into the hotel farm, suitable for occupation and cultivation by crofters now?—Yes, the whole of it connected with the crofts.

49,152. It forms a part of the hotel land?—Yes.

49,153. Is that land arable land, or grazing, or both?—Both.

49,154. Now, are there any other lands of which you have special knowledge?—Yes, the Loch-Leven side, Mrs Cameron-Campbell's property. [*Mr Donald Macphee.*—Nearly opposite the slate quarries, four or five miles up.]

49,155. Do you know of removals having been effected there?—I know of there being about twenty-four tenants, or I may say twenty-four families on the space.

49,156. Was that on the north side or the south side?—On the north side of Loch-Leven.

49,157. Do you know Callart House?—Yes.

49,158. Where are these holdings or the remains of them, from Callart House?—They are a good bit along; they are not far from Callart.

49,159. Which side of the water are they on?—The north side, the Callart side.

49,160. Is that land, in your opinion, suitable for cultivation and occupation now?—Yes.

49,161. Is there a demand for new holdings in that locality?—There is no doubt about that.

49,162. Do you remember the names of any of the old houses that you recollect seeing on the north side of Loch-Leven?—Yes.

49,163. Just give us them?—I begin at the upper part,—Pairc-an-Fhasaidh, about 2 miles above Kinlochmor, opposite the River Kinlochmor; Bun-Nathrach (Serpent they called it in English), it is a river; Leac, nearer Callart; Caolas-nan-Con; Camus-na-h-Eiridhe; Callart,—there were two Callarts at that time,—Callart Cruaidh and Callart-a'-Mhuilinn.

Fort-William. William Macphee.

49,164. In your recollection were all these places occupied?—Yes, all occupied.

49,165. Do you remember a place called Carnas?—Yes.

49,166. Give us the names of any places on this side of North Ballachulish?—Innse-Righ; Coire-Chaorachain; Coir'-uanan; to the east Blar-a'-Chaorainn; Gleann-Seilich and Blar-nan-Cleireach.

49,167. Any more?—I don't think I know any more.

49,168. In your recollection were all these places you have mentioned occupied by persons dwelling there?—Yes.

49,169. And is the land there suitable, in your opinion, for occupation again?—Yes.

49,170. Are there considerable patches or tracts of land capable of being made arable and cultivated now?—They are just patches, but some of them are good land.

49,171. And is there a demand for small holdings in that quarter up Loch-Linnhe, in these places mentioned last? (*No answer.*)

49,172. Suppose holdings were formed there, would there be people to come forward and take them?—I am sure there would.

49,173. Have you any doubt about it? I do not gather doubt from your words, but I gather a little from your manner. Are you clear about it?—Clear.

49,174. Can you tell us how many families could be accommodated comfortably on the lands you specified on that side of Loch-Linnhe? Take first Lochiel's estate; how many crofters could be accommodated on the lands you know on Lochiel's estate?—A good many.

49,175. And how many would you put upon the portion of Mrs Cameron-Campbell's estate that you know of?—Four could live there comfortably.

49,176. Where?—Two at Camus-na-h-Eiridhe, one at Leac, and one at Carnas

49,177. Would you put any more on Mrs Cameron-Campbell's estate?—Unless you would give them sheep and so on, the patches of cultivable ground on the rest are too small.

49,178. When you say that four could be accommodated on Mrs Cameron-Campbell's estate, what size of holdings have you in view?—I should say about ten acres arable land.

49,179. And what grazing land? Or what stock would each holding carry?—I would wish to have ten cows or so, 200 or 300 sheep, and a horse.

49,180. You are of opinion that, with such an extent of arable land and such a stock as that, a man might get along comfortably without having to seek outside labour?—That is my opinion.

49,181. Would you undertake a holding of that kind yourself?—Yes, I would, to-morrow.

49,182. And would you enter upon such a holding without any assistance?—No, I could not.

49,183. How much assistance would you require?—I cannot say; that would be great.

49,184. Would you require a considerable amount of assistance?—Oh no, I would not require a great deal; of course, a few hundred pounds.

49,185. That would be by way of loan, I suppose?—Yes.

49,186. Would you contemplate getting the money on loan and repaying it by instalments along with the rent?—Yes. I would say of my own conscience that I would like if Government would put up a fund that would help crofters for that same.

49,186A. You mean that crofters should get assistance from such a fund by way of loan?—Yes.

49,187. To be repaid over a long period of years?—Twenty or thirty.

49,188. And in the end they would stand free if they paid up?—Yes.

49,189. *Mr N. B. Mackenzie, Factor for Lochiel.*—Did you say that nineteen people were put out at North Ballachulish to make room for what you call the hotel farm?—I did not say that.

49,190. What did you say?—I said that there were twenty crofts added to the hotel, the Loch Leven Hotel; I did not say the people were put away.

Fort-William. William Macphee.

49,191. *The Chairman.*—Were nineteen or twenty crofters removed or got to go away from their holdings in order to their lands being put into the hotel farm?—There were some of them removed, some of them placed in other places.

49,192. How many were removed?—There were five or six removed.

49,193. You mean by removed, that they were sent away to a distance?—They were removed to other places.

49,194. But you say that others were put to other places: do you mean that they went away voluntarily?—Some of them went away abroad.

49,195. Voluntarily?—Yes.

49,196. How many chose to go away abroad when this state of matters arose?—There were two I knew who went away.

49,197. Any more?—No.

49,198. You say five or six were removed to other places and two went abroad voluntarily: that makes seven. Now, what about the rest?—They were shifted into other crofts.*

49,199. On the same estate?—Yes, on the same estate and on the same township.

49,200. But are you quite clear about this, that whatever became of them,—whether they went abroad, or got crofts on the same estate, there were about twenty of them altogether?—Yes.

49,201. *Mr N. B. Mackenzie.*—Who were the ten that were shifted to different parts of the township of North Ballachulish to make room for this alleged farm? Give us their names?—Catherine Maclachlan; she died before she was shifted; she died in her own residence.

49,202. What became of her holding?—It was added to the hotel.

49,203. *The Chairman.*—Give us the next one?—One Kennedy.

49,204. Where did he go to?—He died also.

49,205. And was his croft added to the hotel?—Yes.

49,206. Now go on to the third one?—John Rankine.

49,207. What became of him?—He was shifted.

49,208. To where?—To another croft in the same township, nearer Fort-William.

49,209. And was his croft added to the hotel farm?—Yes.

49,210. What is the next one?—John Mackenzie (John).

49,211. Were these changes gradual changes, or were they all done about the same time?—Gradual changes.

49,212. How many years would they extend over?—I cannot say; perhaps five years.

49,213. But during that time are you perfectly clear that no fewer than nineteen or twenty crofts were gradually consolidated into the hotel farm?—Well, I mean, my lord, of that number of twenty, that was like one cow for one croft, and some of these were two cows and common big crofts, but there were some of them on one cow's grass.

49,214. And some on more?—Some of them two. That is the way I count them, by the cow.

49,215. How many holdings altogether would you suppose fell into the hotel farm?—Ten of two cows.

49,216. That would make twenty of one cow?—Yes.

49,217. How many families were removed?—Twenty.

49,218. *Mr N. B. Mackenzie.*—You have spoken of the Bishop's farm: do you mean by that the farm in name of Patrick Vernon Chinnery-Haldane, who is the son of the Bishop, the Bishop himself having nothing to do with it?—I mean the hotel farm.

49,219. *Mr. D. Macphee, agent for the crofters.*—Who first took the farm from the proprietor: was it the son of the bishop?—It was in the name of the son.

* With reference to this answer, Macphee, on 24th October 1894, wrote:—"I should have said that seven families got notices to quit on the ground that they were only daughters or nephews of the late crofters, and I should also have said that there were two downright evictions."

Fort-William. — William Macphee.

49,220. From the first?—Yes.

49,221. Had the son any money of his own, do you think?—I cannot say.

49,222. How many families are on the part of North Ballachulish that remains as a crofting community?—There are nineteen at present.

49,223. So that about half the number were suppressed?—Yes.

49,224. What size of crofts have the nineteen?—They are different sizes.

49,225. Give me the size of the smallest, or the stock it carries, and the size of the largest, with the stock it carries?—The smallest can carry a cow and a follower, and the largest six cows and followers.

49,226. Do you know that one Duncan Macinnes occupied one of these small crofts?—Yes.

49,227. And on his death he bequeathed it to John Mackenzie, tailor?—Yes.

49,228. John was so anxious to get possession of this croft that he pursued Lochiel from the Sheriff Court right through all the Courts to the House of Lords?—Yes.

49,229. So there is a demand for crofts down there?—There is plenty demand.

49,230. *The Chairman.*—Can you give me the name of any crofter there who has six cows?—Duncan Mackenzie.

49,231. Anybody else?—John Bain Mackenzie.

49,232. *Mr Macphee.*—Had the township of Ballachulish at one time summer grazing rights on Beinn-Bhreac?—Yes.

49,233. Had the adjoining township of Onich the same rights?—Yes.

49,234. Do you know when they ceased to enjoy these rights,—how long is it since?—I daresay it will be twenty-three or twenty-four years ago.

49,235. Was that when Ewen Cameron was the ground officer?—Yes, it was not taken then, but shortly after.

49,236. Now, are you sure whether it was on Beinn-Bhreac or on Glasven that these grazings rights were?—They had Glasven altogether, and a part of Beinn-Bhreac.

49,237. When they were deprived of these rights, did they get any compensation in the form of a money payment or reduction of rent?—Some of them did.

49,238. Who did?—I cannot say; but the most of the crofters got some reduction, for I heard them say so; but some of them did not.

49,239. You lived with your aunt at that time?—Yes.

49,240. Did she get a reduction?—No, it was after her time.

49,241. What do you mean?—She was not alive then. I remember putting away the beast right to the top of the hill, and the place was not taken away then.

49,242. Do you know how much any other crofter who was deprived of the summer grazing got by way of abatement of rent?—I cannot say.

49,243. When did you become a crofter?—Sixteen or seventeen years ago.

49,244. I understand your croft is on the slope?—Very much.

49,245. And when the rain comes it washes away the substance?—All away to the sea.

49,246. After a season like this you require three times the manure to fertilise it?—Yes. I would make a swap for a level ground any day.

49,247. And you are eaten up with rabbits?—I cannot keep them down. That is all I am for; I have to say that there is plenty desire for land, and the land is yonder, and good land it is.

JOHN CAMPBELL, Murlagan, Achaluachrach (about 36)—*examined.*

John Campbell.

49,248. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—I am.

49,249. What rent do you pay?—We have a club farm.

49,250. Are you under the Crofters Act?—I don't know. [*Mr Macphee.*—He is a tenant on The Mackintosh's estate, and is one of the joint-tenants of the Gabhail-mhor farm.]

Fort-William. — John Campbell.

49,251. *Mr D. Macphee, Agent for crofters.*—Did you hear what I said?—Yes.

49,252. And do you agree with it?—Yes.

49,253. You are not satisfied with the place you have?—No.

49,254. There is no room for an energetic man extending or getting on in the world?—No.

49,255. And you know the country about?—I know it.

49,256. You have prospected Fersit and Inverlair?—Yes.

49,257. And you instructed me to make an application to the County Council to get you a holding there?—Yes.

49,258. You understand, or you believe, that I did my best, but failed?—I understand so.

49,259. Is the land up there good?—It is good.

49,260. And you are prepared to build and stock a place there?—Yes, a small place.

49,261. *The Chairman.*—What size of place did you wish when you applied to the County Council?—There were somewhere about 15 or 20 acres of arable land on the place I pointed out.

49,262. How many acres arable?—I would like not much less than 20 acres altogether.

49,263. And any grazing?—Some grazing.

49,264. What stock had you in view to keep if your application had been granted?—It would carry about six cows and followers and a horse.

49,265. And any sheep?—Very few sheep.

49,266. Suppose you got good land, which you were quite ready to enter upon, what rent are you willing to pay?—I don't know. I was going to leave the rent to a judge.

49,267. A fair rent?—A fair rent.

49,268. And would your present share of the stock in the Gabhail-mhor be more than sufficient to stock a place of that kind?—It would not be more, but it would be sufficient. I have a very small arable farm about 4½ acres.

49,269. What was your proportion of the profits of that club farm last year?—It was nothing.

49,270. Do you mean that it was a bad year?—I don't mean that the farm was dear, but there are too many of us.

49,271. How many are there of you?—We are 15 in the club farm.

49,272. What stock have you among the 15?—About 2000 sheep.

49,273. What kind of sheep?—Black-faced.

49,274. And how are they managed?—By managers; the proprietor, The Mackintosh, appoints managers himself.

49,275. How many managers are there?—Three.

49,276. Do the crofters appoint one of these?—No, they are all appointed by The Mackintosh.

49,277. Who keeps the accounts of the outgoings?—The managers.

49,278. And is there a meeting regularly with the crofters, twice or thrice a year?—Yes, there is a meeting once a year.

49,279. At which you are told the result of the year's proceedings, I suppose?—Yes.

49,280. Do you get payments made to you when the year turns out to be profitable?—Yes.

49,281. How long is it since you got a penny?—It is a good many years since there was much profit.

49,282. It is a club farm worked by managers appointed by the proprietor for the benefit of the crofters. Presumably, some years there is a profit from the stock?—There is.

49,283. How long is it since you got a payment?—There are three years since I got anything.

49,284. What did you get three years ago?—I forget.

49,285. I would like very much indeed to know. This is the first kind of club farm I have heard of managed in this particular way. How much were you

Fort-William. John Campbell.

supposed to get?—I forget, but the managers work the thing.

49,286. But do you not sometimes get some money?—I do.

49,287. Well, how much did you get last time you received any?—I forget at this moment.

49,288. How is the profit that is derived from this club farm adjusted with your rent?—It is divided between us by the managers: they divide it and give it to us.

49,289. Then you give them the rent when the rent falls due?—Yes, we give them the rent, and they pay the rent to the proprietor. Whatever is over the rent we get back.

49,290. They keep the rent from your share of the profit and pay you the difference?—Pay us the difference.

49,291. When they keep the rent, how much do they keep?—They keep the rent.

49,292. How much is it?—I cannot say exactly, but it is about £230.

49,293. For which the 15 crofters are held liable, the managers looking after the stock and deducting the rent from the profit of the concern?—Yes.

49,294. And, I presume, they pay you the difference in proportion to your holding?—Yes, they pay us the balance, whatever is over the rent.

49,295. Are you each paid equal sums or different sums?—Different sums, according to the share or half share.

49,296. You yourself have a half share?—I have a half share.

49,297. How long has this club farm gone on?—Since I remember, and before that.

49,298. And has it always been managed by the proprietors' managers, or did the crofters at any time have anything to do with that?—It has been managed since I remember by the proprietors' managers: of course, they have a share in the place.

49,299. They have a share in the club farm?—Yes.

49,300. What share have they?—A whole share each.

49,301. *Mr Harold Y. L. Smith, Factor for Lord Abinger.*—I understand you to say that you have, as your share, something like 60 sheep out of 2000: that would be your share?—Yes.

49,302. Have you any money besides? (*Question objected to*).

49,303. *The Chairman.*—Suppose you had got such a holding as you instructed Mr Macphee to ask for from the County Council, could you have put up the necessary buildings upon the holding and fenced the land if necessary at your own expense?—I would put buildings that would suit myself and the place.

49,304. And the necessary fencing?—As to the necessary fences, that would be between the proprietor and me.

49,305. You have the means that would enable you to do so, or you could get them?—I think so.

49,306. Are you a contractor?—I do small jobs at times.

49,307. What sort of contracts do you take?—Any job that comes in the way, roads and wire fencing and such like.

49,308. Do you do a good deal of work in that way?—I am always working at something of that kind.

49,309. *Mr Sutherland.*—You do not pay the rent out of the holding?—The rent is paid out of the holding.

49,310. You do not pay it?—I do not pay it.

49,311. It is paid for you?—The managers pay the rent: of course, if there is any deficiency to be made up, I have to give my share, and they will pay it if the farm does not pay.

49,312. If there is a loss?—Yes, if there is a loss.

49,313. Have you arable land besides the hill grazing?—Yes, I have 4½ acres.

49,314. Have all the partners in this club farm got arable land as well?—They have.

49,315. Do you think that if you had the appointment of the managers yourselves you would like it better?—I don't know.

49,316. You have never heard any opinion expressed by the people on that point?—No. Fort-William.

49,317. Did you ever see the books yourself?—No, I never saw them. John Campbell.

49,318. But, generally, are you satisfied with the management of the club farm?—I would prefer to manage my farm myself.

49,319. Does that apply to a club farm, or do you prefer a separate farm?—It cannot be done there with such as that.

49,320. You would like to have your farm separate?—Yes, all to myself.

49,321. Have you ever tried a club farm where you had the election of the managers yourselves?—No.

42,322. You don't know whether that might remove your difficulty?—I don't know.

49,323. You have not thought of it, have you?—No.

49,324. Do you consider that you are paying a very high rent for your sheep ground?—No, we do not consider the rent is high; but I consider that I have too little arable land.

49,325. And where is the arable land that you think would form suitable holdings,—what particular place have you in your mind?—I was thinking all over the river, just opposite us on Lord Abinger's estate; Fersit was the particular place I had in view when I made the application.

49,326. *The Chairman.*—I gather from what you say that you and the other crofters or small tenants who have this club farm have not at any time made any complaint against the managers for the way they have conducted the management?—No; they do always what they can.

49,327. Is there any charge made for the management?—No, only travelling expenses going to markets or the like.

49,328. Do they all go, or only one of them?—Two of them go.

49,329. *Mr Allan Macdonald, Factor for The Mackintosh.*—Do you know, or do you not know, that the managers were elected by mutual arrangement between the proprietors and the tenants, when they entered into the first lease in 1871?—No, I am not aware of that.

49,330. Your father was the tenant then?—Yes, my father was the tenant then.

49,331. You are not aware that, as a matter of fact, the names of the managers are entered in that lease which is signed by the proprietors and the tenants?—No.

49,332. *The Chairman.*—Could we see that lease? [*Mr Macdonald*].—I could give it to you when you come to Inverness. The managers were four of the most intelligent members of the club farm.

JOHN KENNEDY, Crofter, Garvan (46). John Kennedy.
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

49,333. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter at Garvan?—Yes.

49,334. Was your croft dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

49,335. What is it you are anxious to tell us?—That there is so much land in the country waste.

49,336. Do you want to get a holding?—Yes, I am on the worst piece of land.

49,337. You want to get another holding with better land?—Yes.

49,338. Could you take such a holding without assistance?—I could take as much as I have.

49,339. What is the extent you have got?—A little over two acres.

49,340. Of arable land?—Yes.

49,341. What stock have you got?—Two cows and a calf.

49,342. Have you any sheep?—No sheep.

49,343. Would you be satisfied if you got another holding similar in size to the holding you have, but with better soil?—Yes, or a little larger.

Fort-William. John Kennedy.

49,344. I see that, according to the Crofters Commission Report, you have 2 acres arable and 2 acres 1 rood 33 poles of outrun; also a share in the grazing of 29 cows and one pony on pasture, the landlord having the surplus grazing. There are apparently eight families in the township, and you have got two shares; your old rent was £2, 13s. 4d. and the fair rent is £2, 2s.; the arrears were £15, 16s. 6d., of which £4, 4s. were ordered to be paid and the remainder cancelled. Your main objection to the holding you are in is, I understand, the very poor quality of the soil?—We want ground, and we complained of the croft.

49,345. At present, I understand, you live partly by your holding and partly by labour?—We must do that.

49,346. If you got a new holding, do you desire a continuance of that system, or would you prefer a holding by which you could live?—Most certainly a holding by which I could live.

49,347. If you had the means to take it up?—Yes, if I had the means.

49,348. *Mr Donald Macphee, agent for crofters.*—Your father stayed at Creagaig at one time?—My grandfather.

49,349. And you and your people have been moving about between Blaich and Creagaig, and you know all about the people who were on it at one time?—They were going back and forward between Creagaig, Garvan, and Blaich.

49,350. When your grandfather was at Creagaig, did any other people live there besides himself?—There were other two put out of Creagaig at the same time.

49,351. Your grandfather was put out and other two at the same time?—Yes.

49,352. Were they crofters?—They had Creagaig between them.

49,353. Is Callop near Creagaig, but east of it a little?—Just on the other side of the river.

49,354. Do you remember when that was occupied as a farm?—I remember three living there on the one side, and a farmer on the other.

49,355. What became of them?—Three on the south side of the river were put out to make room for deer.

49,356. What became of the farm?—The farmer went away for the same purpose; he got no lease.

49,357. His lease was not renewed?—No.

49,358. Do you remember Drumfearn?—I do not remember more than one farmer.

49,359. Do you remember Garvan, where Boyd was?—Yes.

49,360. Which Garvan was that?—North Garvan.

49,361. Has that farm been cleared for deer?—That was cleared for deer.

49,362. Were there any other people on North Garvan besides Boyd?—He had two cottars along with himself.

49,363. Have you been up the glens in Conaglen?—Yes.

49,364. Have you seen the ruins of dwelling-houses there?—Yes.

49,365. Do you remember when Mitchell was at Inverscaddle?—I remember very well, but I forget how long since.

49,366. *Mr R. Robertson, of Messrs Dalgleish & Bell, W.S., Edinburgh, representing the Earl of Morton.*—Are you aware that there was an application for enlargement of holdings?—Yes.

49,367. Were you one of the applicants?—Yes.

49,368. And you know that an appeal was taken against the judgment of the Commissioners?—Yes.

Widow Ann Macmillan or Maclachlan.

WIDOW ANN MACMILLAN or MACLACHLAN, crofter, Garvan (75).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

49,369. *The Chairman.*—Are you the occupant of a croft at Garvan?—Yes.

49,370. What rent do you pay?—£1, 11s.

49,371. Do you share in the desire which prevails in the locality for getting more land for new holdings or extension of grazings?—Yes.

Fort-William. Widow Ann Macmillan or Maclachlan.

49,372. Have you any sons living with you?—I have a son living with me.

49,373. What is his age?—About 35.

49,374. Is he married?—No.

49,375. If you got a new holding would your son be with you and help you to carry it on?—I think he could.

49,376. *Mr Donald Macphee, agent for crofters.*—Were you at one time at Drumfearn?—I was at Drumfearn first.

49,377. How many tenants were on Drumfearn when you were there?—There were three crofters on the one farm.

49,378. Had you a croft, or had you the farm?—A croft on the farm.

49,379. What stock did that croft carry?—One cow and a calf.

49,380. Was that place better than your present holding?—Much better.

49,381. Had you young beasts along with the cow?—Just a cow and a stirk.

49,382. *The Chairman.*—How many crofters were under the farmer?—Six crofters.

49,383. And, I suppose, they all worked as labourers on the farm?—They were working on days' wages to the farmer.

49,384. *Mr Sutherland.*—How is the land of Drumfearn now occupied?—As a deer forest.

Donald Macmillan.

DONALD MACMILLAN, Duisky (30)—*examined.*

49,385. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter in your own right?—No, my mother is the crofter.

49,386. You live with your mother in a croft at Duisky?—Yes.

49,387. What rent does she pay?—£3, 16s.

49,388. Duisky is further east along the loch from South Garvan, and on the same side?—Yes.

49,389. Did your mother apply to the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

49,390. What is it you are anxious to tell us to-day?—I would like to get a croft the same way as any other, because there is plenty of waste land up Locheilside and up Conaglen and so forth.

49,391. Do you mean an extension of the holding your mother has got, or a new holding?—Either a new holding or an addition to this.

49,392. Are you not the eldest son?—Yes, I am the eldest.

49,393. The area of the croft seems to be 3 acres 1 rood 20 poles arable, 11 acres 3 roods 31 poles outrun, and the right to graze two cows; common pasture 619 acres in one place and 775 acres in another: the general grazing of the township has 29 cows and one pony upon it, the landlord having the surplus grazing and wintering. Additional pasture of 317 acres and 92½ acres arable have since been assigned with the consent of the landlord to the crofters of North Duisky and Garvan under an application for enlargement. The old rent of the croft was £3, 14s., and the fair rent is £2, 18s.; the arrears were £11, 4s. 6d., of which £7, 4s. 6d. were cancelled and £4 ordered to be paid. How many share in the grazing?—Thirteen, I think.

49,394. *Mr Donald Macphee, agent for crofters.*—And you have only the right to graze 29 cows altogether among 13 people?—Yes.

49,394A. That makes very small holdings necessarily, does it not?—Yes, very small.

49,395. Now is there abundance of land in your neighbourhood there that you could get for the purpose of enlarging holdings?—Yes, there is.

49,396. Where is there suitable land in the neighbourhood?—There is suitable land in Finlaton and Conaglen, but it is deer forest now.

49,397. Anywhere else near you?—In Duisky.

49,398. Drumfearn?—Yes.

49,399. Callop?—Well, Dalriach; Callop meets Dalriach.

ort-William. 49,400. One of the Duiskys is in Lord Morton's hands?—Yes.

onald acmillan. 49,401. And is Achaphobuill in his hands?—Yes.

49,402. Is there land there suitable for cultivation?—Yes, very good.

49,403. Was it formerly in cultivation?—Yes, it used to be.

49,404. Is it very long since it was put out of cultivation?—Between fifteen and twenty years ago.

49,405. Would it make a very good holding for any man who was able to stock it?—Yes, it would.

49,406. You would not be afraid to undertake to stock it?—No, I would not.

49,407. *Mr Sutherland.*—When was your case decided by the Crofters Commission?—About fifteen months ago.

49,408. I observe that the landlord has the surplus grazing rights and wintering on the pasture, outrun and arable land. I wish to know what is the meaning of that. When you were paying this old rent to the landlord, does this mean that he pastured cattle upon your outrun arable and grazing land at the same time? Did the landlord, as a matter of fact, do that,—pasture any stock upon your arable land, your outrun or your grazing?—No, but the deer were coming to our crofts before the agreement was entered into.

49,409. Did the landlord ever actually use this right?—Yes, he did.

49,410. And it was only before the Crofters Commission, as I understand it, that he gave over that right?—No, he has not given it over yet.

49,411. Yes, it is distinctly stated here 'the right to 'surplus grazing and wintering, together with additional 'pasture of 317 acres and 92½ acres arable, has since 'been assigned with the consent of the landlord to the 'crofters of North Duisky and Garvan under an en-'largement application by them.'—That is an Order that is appealed against.

49,412. This right of pasturing involved in the appeal is part of the enlargement?—Yes.

49,413. So you are perfectly correct in saying it still exists?—Yes.

49,414. *The Chairman.*—You say that the landlord still uses that right. In what way does he use it?—He is wintering hoggs on our ground the way he used to do.

49,415. He did this last winter?—Yes. [*Mr Robertson.*—I might say that there is a suspensive condition in the Order for enlargement with regard to the fences, so that really it does not come into operation till Martinmas next. The tenants are not paying the increased rents in the meantime and the rights of parties are *in statu quo.*]

49,416. *Mr Macphee.*—Did you hear the statement which I made in the meeting in my evidence about traces of ruins of houses in Conaglen?—Yes.

49,417. And on the River Conaglen?—Yes.

49,418. Do you know the remains there?—Yes.

ald eron. DONALD CAMERON, Middle Street, Fort-William (76)—*examined.*

49,419. *Mr Donald Macphee, Agent for crofters.*—Where was your father born?—At the head of Glen-Roy, Glen-Turret.

49,420. Where were you born?—At Lianachan.

49,421. You mean Highbridge?—Yes.

49,422. Do you know Glen-Turret yourself?—Yes.

49,423. Have you heard your father speak of those who occupied that Glen?—Yes.

49,424. How many were there?—I am sure there would be seven or eight families.

49,425. Do you know Leichroy and Annat there?—Yes.

49,426. Would that accommodate a few more families?—Yes.

49,427. Have you seen these places yourself?—Oh yes.

49,428. Have you seen the traces of ruins there?—Yes.

49,429. Can you form any idea of the number of people who dwelt there at one time,—I mean in Glen-Turret, Leichroy, and Annat?—I should think ten families. Fort-William. — Donald Cameron.

49,430. Among them all, do you mean?—Yes.

49,431. You know Lianachan and Dawnie and those places?—Yes.

49,432. Have you heard what the witnesses have said already about their capacity for carrying families?—Yes.

49,433. Do you agree with what they say?—Yes.

49,434. You have also heard what was said about Coire-Chuinnlidh and Kylliechonnet?—Yes.

49,435. And do you agree with what Donald, the old fox-hunter said?—Yes.

49,436. Did you know the thirteen families who were at one time on Monessie and Achnacochine?—Yes.

49,437. Do you know Beinn-Bhreac and Glas-Bheinn?—Yes.

49,438. Did you hear what Macmaster said about them?—I heard a good part of that talk among people before.

49,439. But were you up at Beinn-Bhreac yourself, and did you see cattle from Achintore and other places summering there?—No.

49,440. Did you meet any who were evicted from Loch-Arkaig at one time?—I heard people saying that they saw no fewer than fifty families sent from Loch-Arkaig.

49,441. Who said so?—Some of their relatives that did not go to America long ago.

49,442. Are the people who told you so now dead?—Yes, all dead.

49,443. Did they themselves form members of the families who were turned out of Loch-Arkaig?—Yes.

49,444. Do you know the Rathlies in Glen-Fintag?—Yes, I know the townships.

49,445. Do you know that the Camerons of Doch-an-Fhasaidh were evicted from there?—Yes.

49,446. Have you been up there and seen the bothies that they once occupied?—Yes.

49,447. For summer shielings or grazings?—Yes.

49,448. And the ruins of their houses are there yet?—Yes.

49,449. *Mr Sutherland.*—You said ten families were in Glen-Turret and the upper portions of Glen-Roy?—Well, I never heard what the number was, but judging from the appearance I would think so.

49,450. Are you including the farm of Crannachan in that estimate?—My forefathers were living at Glen-Turret, and I saw the place several times.

49,451. You have seen the farm of Crannachan as well, I have no doubt?—Yes.

49,452. Do you consider it a good place for new holdings to be made in?—Oh yes, it is a very good place.

49,453. Have you seen the marks of the old cultivation there?—There is not much agriculture in that farm now.

49,454. But what there is is good?—Oh yes, good enough.

49,455. And do you see the marks of the old ridges up to the hill?—Yes.

49,456. Is it good grazing, do you think?—I should think so.

49,457. Have you any idea how much stock is on the farm of Crannachan?—Well, no, but I think it would keep close on 2000 sheep.

49,458. Does it go up as far as Glen-Turret?—No.

49,459. What farm is Glen-Turret in now?—It is Sir John Ramsden who has it in his own hands.

49,460. What does he use it for?—He has sheep on it.

49,461. Do you know Ach-a'-Mhadaidh?—Yes, I knew it; it is the next farm to Bohuntine. It is just opposite Crannachan, on the north side of the river.

49,462. How much stock do you think was on the whole farm of Glen-Turret?—I do not know.

49,463. But there is a large extent of ground there at present in the possession of the proprietor himself?—Yes

Fort-William. Donald Cameron.

49,464. He is unable or unwilling to let it?—I did not hear which.

49,465. But he has it himself in his own hands?—Yes.

49,466. Supposing you were looking for a new holding, would you take a holding up in Glen-Turret yourself?—Yes, I would: I would like to live in it yet, although I was never living in it.

49,467. Is that because of the attachment you feel for your grandfather having been there, or because you would make it pay?—It is a good place, one of the best places in this country altogether.

49,468. *Mr Allan Macdonald, Factor for The Mackintosh.*—Do you know that Ach-a'-Mhadaidh is now added to the crofting township of Bohuntine?—Yes.

49,469. *Mr N. B. Mackenzie, Factor for Lochiel.*—Are you aware that the townships of Corpach, Upper and Lower Banavie, Caol, and Lochyside were formed for the accommodation of the people brought from Loch-Arkaig-side?—I believe some of them got homes there, but it was the people who made the homes for themselves.

49,470. These townships that I have mentioned were, you are aware, set out for these people?—I heard so. [*The Chairman.*—They reclaimed waste land and built houses for themselves?—Yes, that is what I mean.]

49,471. Are you aware that, for instance, the hill grazing of Banavie extends to upwards of 1000 acres of land? Is that consistent with your own knowledge?—I believe they got some places that were not bad.

49,472. Was the Caledonian Canal being formed through these lands about that time?—Yes, it was. I well believe that they were working at it at the time the people left Loch-Arkaig.

49,473. *The Chairman.*—They left the loch side and came to Corpach and Banavie: is that so?—Yes. Most of them went to America, but the remnant stayed about Corpach and were perhaps working at the canal.

49,474. So that what you say is this, that most of those who left or had to leave their holdings went to America?—Yes.

49,475. But some of them who settled in Corpach and Banavie got work at the Caledonian Canal?—Yes.

49,476. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Do you think then that they left Loch-Arkaig side in order to work at the Caledonian Canal?—Well, I never heard that.

49,477. You never heard that they left of their own accord?—No, they did not: I heard the reverse of that,—that they were sent away against their will.

49,478. You have spoken to members of the families who were removed, and you were led to understand that they all left much against their will; is not that so?—Yes. But I never saw the people who went away; it is a long time since they left. I saw some of their relatives, and I was well acquainted with the son and daughter of a man who went to America with all the rest of his family.

49,479. But some of them after their removal from Loch-Arkaig found work at the Caledonian Canal?—They did.

49,480. *Mr Sutherland.*—People have gone from Fort-William to work at the new West Highland Railway, have they not?—I well believe they did.

49,481. But they did not leave their homes to do so, did they?—Well, no.

49,482. Do you think it would be necessary for these people to give up their holdings if they went to work at the Caledonian Canal?—It depends on the homes that they have.

49,483. You have seen people going from home to work at railways and the like?—Yes.

49,484. Do you think it is likely that, if it were to obtain work at the Caledonian Canal when it was being made that they came down, they would like to go back again to their homes?—Yes.

49,485. You have seen people coming from home to work, remaining all week and going home on Saturday?—Yes.

Fort-William. Dona'd Cameron.

49,486. Loch-Arkaig is not very far from some parts of the Caledonian Canal, is it?—No, but there are not very many people at Loch-Arkaig now.

49,487. *Mr Macphee.*—Did you ever hear that before they left Loch-Arkaig side they got summonses of removal?—I will not say that.

49,488. Were they forced to remove?—I heard that they were forced to remove.

49,489. *The Chairman.*—When these people left Loch-Arkaig side, under whatever circumstances, was there work in the neighbourhood?—The only thing I heard about the people was that they were compelled to leave their place, and that they came to the market in Fort-William here with their cattle on one day and sold them here; and it was a sight to see so many people and cattle going together from their homes at Loch-Arkaig.

49,490. You did not know, I suppose, whether they had enough of work to keep them going when they left home?—No, I don't know about that.

49,491. When they came to Corpach and Banavie, those of them who settled there, was there a good deal of work going on there in connection with the Caledonian Canal?—What I heard people saying was that some were not able to go to America, but all the able people and the young people had to leave some of their old relatives about Banavie and Corpach there, and these were making with their own diligence a living at the Caledonian Canal.

49,492. *Mr Harold Y. L. Smith, Factor for Lord Abinger.*—You spoke about some people going away from Monessie. Do you remember those people being there?—Yes, I knew the whole of them.

49,493. Did they go away of their own accord?—There was some disagreement among themselves, I know.

49,494. Is that why they broke up?—Yes, they were not agreeing very well among themselves.

49,495. The disagreement among themselves led to their going away?—Yes, in the townships of Monessie and Achnacochine in Glen-Spean.

49,496. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you know when the Caledonian Canal was made?—It was finished about the year 1822.

49,497. And do you know when these people were removed from Glen-Arkaig? Was it before or after, can you tell us?—It was twenty years sooner than that.

49,498. The people were cleared out twenty years before the Caledonian Canal was made?—Was finished.

49,499. How many years did it take to finish it?—I ought to make that also.

49,500. Did it take twenty years?—More than that.

49,501. When were the works begun?—I cannot say exactly.

49,502. Then with regard to Monessie and the disagreement among the tenants, was it necessary for them to go to America because they disagreed up there?—Some of them went to Australia.

49,503. That is further away still. If you differ from any of your neighbours you would not feel yourself called upon to go to America or Australia on that account? Do you think that is the sole reason for the people leaving the place altogether?—(*No answer.*)

49,504. *The Chairman.*—Do you know if, at the time when this disagreement existed which led to some of them going away to another country, any proceedings had been taken by the landlord in the matter, or against the tenants themselves?—I cannot say how it was.

49,505. Did they go away of their own free will?—Oh yes, they did.

Harold York Lidderdale Smith.

HAROLD YORKE LIDDERDALE SMITH, Solicitor, Fort-William, Factor for Lord Abinger (35)—*examined.*

49,506. *The Chairman.*—Have you a statement to submit?—Yes.

49,506A. Read it, please?—My name is Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith, Factor and Solicitor, Fort-William. I am thirty-five years of age, and am now Factor on the estates of Inverlochy and Inverlair for the Right Honourable James Yorke Macgregor Scarlett,

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

Baron Abinger, proprietor of these estates. I wish to express on behalf of Lord Abinger his regret that he cannot be here in person to-day. He suffered from a very severe attack of typhoid fever in spring, and is only just recovering, but I hope he will be in the country shortly. I may say that I have been accustomed to come to Scotland at intervals all my life, and from 1882 to 1885 was in the office of Messrs Dundas and Wilson, C.S., Edinburgh, studying Scotch Law and Factory business with a view to becoming Land Agent for the late Lord Abinger and Mrs Nicholson of Arisaig and South Morar. In the autumn of 1885, I came to Fort-William to the office of Mr N. B. Mackenzie, factor and writer there. I joined Mr Mackenzie in partnership in 1886, and continued with him until the beginning of 1892. During this time I had special charge of the estates of Inverlochy and Arisaig, for the proprietors of which estates I have continued to act as agent, and when acting with Mr Mackenzie assisted in taking charge of several other estates in Argyll-shire and Inverness-shire. In the course of my work I have obtained considerable insight into the working of farms, deer forests, and other estate matters. The estate of Inverlochy extends approximately to about 40,000 acres. The ground cleared for deer is known as the Inverlochy Forest. The forest extends to about 22,500 acres. About 40 stags, besides hinds, are killed in the forest and it is improving. I think it highly probable that in course of time at least double that quantity will be got. There are about 8 acres in the forest now under cultivation, and of these 6 acres at Lianachan are fenced against deer. There are also about 30 acres of permanent pasture at Lianachan surrounded by a fence from which a crop of hay is taken at intervals. The arable land in cultivation is occupied by the stalkers. The highest ground in the forest is about 3990 feet and the lowest about 350 feet. By far the greater part is over the 800 feet contour line. In my opinion, if the remaining part of low-lying moor ground and rough pasture were withdrawn, there would be serious loss by death of deer even if the forest could be profitably continued at all. I consider that there is hardly any available land except what is occupied by the stalkers and watchers. If the land was taken from them there would be no servants to work the forest. On the other hand, if small pieces were taken from the forest it would injure it by diminishing the already too small area of low ground, and would create a disturbance by dogs and people passing to and fro which would be injurious to the forest; deer fencing would, of course, be required. Speaking generally, the remainder of the Inverlochy Estate comprises farms extending to about 15,000 acres of hill pasture and including about 600 acres of arable ground; crofters' holdings extending to about 2900 acres of pasture and 240 acres of arable ground; and allotment ground of about 80 acres in the neighbourhood of Fort-William. There is also about 800 acres of wood, of which about a third is larch and fir plantations, the rest natural wood. I must be kindly understood as giving these areas as approximate; I have endeavoured to verify them to the best of my knowledge, but in a large tract like this it is impossible to be quite accurate. There are two large hill farms let on lease carrying about 800 and 1000 sheep respectively, and a large number of dairy and other cattle. These farms are Inverlochy and Claggan and Achindaul and Camesky—rental being £248 and £135 respectively. The hill ground of the former rises to an altitude of over 3000 feet; the latter to about 750: it is the farm that lies on the north side of the Fort-William road. I may say that I have marked roughly on the Ordnance Sheet the boundaries of the farms for the benefit of the Commission. I intend to verify them if anything more is required.

49,507. You can show us estate plans, I suppose?—We have no regular estate plan.

49,508. Is there not an old estate plan showing the forest of Inverlochy?—I don't think so. There is a very old plan hanging up in the castle, but I don't think there is any plan showing the forest of Inverlochy. It has been formed since 1870 or the end of the 60's. Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,509. The whole of it?—I think so: it was all finished before I came here. I think the late Lord Abinger told me it was finished in 1883 and began to be formed in the late 60's. Of course, it was not all made at once. There is also a farm mainly arable let on lease to the tenant of the Spean-Bridge Hotel, and one let on long lease to Mr G. B. Davy, a gentleman residing at Spean Lodge.

The three principal farms in the proprietors' occupation consist of the Home Farm of Torlundy, the upper part of the farm of Achindaul, and the farm of Killichonate. The farms of Torlundy and Achindaul together carry a black-faced ewe stock of about 2000 sheep. The hill ground of these two farms rises to an altitude of about 4000 feet, and the farms are for the most part high ground. The farm of Killichonate is low ground. The meadow land surrounds the shooting lodge of Killichonate like a park, and is a most desirable adjunct to its amenity; I mean that none of it could be taken away or allotted without very seriously interfering with the amenity of the house. This land and the hill ground outside is used for summering of cattle and tups and wintering of young sheep from the farms of Achindaul and Torlundy.

It is of very great importance to the proprietor on this account and is only capable of wintering part of the sheep, others being wintered elsewhere on the estate. The arable land of the Home Farm forms for the most part the castle park surrounding the castle. I do not think any of the hill farms on the estate could be properly worked to profit if the low ground was taken away. One of the most serious considerations in this country is the question of wintering. If a farmer cannot winter his sheep at home he has in the first place to make a large immediate outlay for which he may get no proportionate return, and in any case there is a long delay in getting a return. The cost of wintering sheep away from home is about 6s. 6d., and at present prices this is above the value of the lamb itself. If the low ground was taken away, the rent of the high ground would be seriously diminished. Large sums have been expended by the proprietor in farm buildings, draining, fencing, &c., which would be to a great extent lost if the farms were divided up.

49,510. Had the forest of Inverlochy any other name? We cannot find it in the Parliamentary Return?—Perhaps it might have been called Coire-Chuinnlidh, it was part of the farm of Coire-Chuinnlidh. The last time the forest was let as a whole was in 1892. In this year the forest, castle, shootings, and certain fishings were let for £2925, which includes wages of gardeners, keepers, and stalkers and other servants but not tenant's taxes, which amounted I believe to about £90. The tenant's expenditure is not known, beyond that he employed nine ghillies at a cost of about £150 and six ponies at a cost of £80 for about three months. There would also be additional money for beaters and the like. [*Mr D. Macphee.*—Did you make inquiry, or is it a guess of your own?—I found out from the keepers how many ghillies were employed and I asked what wages they got, and reckoned according to the number of weeks. I have not got the particulars here, but I remember doing it very carefully to make it approximately correct.] The tenant hired all his horses and some of his carriages in the locality at a cost to him it is believed of about £250. The household expenses of a house of about forty rooms is necessarily large. All the money spent by the tenant on ponies, ghillies, hiring horses, &c. is circulated among people on the estate or in the immediate vicinity, at least that is my understanding and belief. The tenant it is understood gave away locally all rabbits not used by his household (he killed about 1000, and sold none) and all forequarters of venison, keeping the haunches himself.

49,510A. You do not in this general statement speak from a long experience?—I am able to speak from an experience of about ten years of this work. The figures given relate mainly to the year 1892, and are therefore within my own knowledge, the particulars having been

Fort-William.
Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

obtained by me from the different people who were able to give me the information. The expenses of transit of guests, servants, and goods is circulated in the district through the medium of coaches, steamers, &c. Speaking generally, the Mansion House of Inverlochy Castle as recently enlarged must have cost about £40,000. The great value of so large a house is in connection with a sporting estate. During the autumn months a large amount of accommodation is required for the guests and their servants, and the house was built with this intent; it was built and enlarged by the late Lord Abinger with the view of its being a house on a sporting estate. Should the sporting value of the estate be impaired, the main value of the house would be destroyed. The deer forest is one of the great attractions of the letting. Grouse shooting and salmon fishing, which are both available on this estate, let better I think in combination with a deer forest. The three kinds of sport taken together, afford continuous amusement during the summer and autumn. I may say, as reference has been made to my experience during the last ten years, that a great portion of my time has been taken up in arranging for lets of sporting subjects, both fishing and deer forests, and I am constantly brought into contact with the tenants and know very well what their feelings are on the matter, not only in my capacity as factor but also personally as a friend. The rent which is derived from grouse shooting is a very important factor, and I am of opinion, under careful management, this can be made to show better results when the ground forms part of a deer forest. The absence of dogs is a great matter, as they do damage, and sheep also when gathered may cause great damage. Leaving out of the question the interest which might be expected on £40,000 expended, the house alone, if let unfurnished, would not realise enough to do much more than pay expenses. The annual value as recently adjusted for valuation purposes is £215, and this is, I think, a full value. The cost of caretakers, insurance, coal, and repairs have amounted to something like £200 and will amount to much more as repairs are requisite. It would be very hard to let the house without sporting rights attached. I may say that under instructions from Lord Abinger, I have endeavoured to let it during the months of June and July, and had not a single inquiry, though the place was advertised. I do not think that the Western Highlands, looking to climate, &c., are suitable for permanent residence of persons of the wealthy classes without the adjunct of sporting occupation. The heavy rainfall debars people from enjoying the out-door amusements so popular in the south. Owing to agricultural depression and other causes the greater number of Highland proprietors in this district are obliged to let their sporting rights, and had it not been for the revenue arising from this source, most proprietors would have had to curtail their estate expenditure to a minimum. The sporting rents are always punctually paid and almost invariably paid forehand, so that a proprietor can count with certainty on this money to enable him to carry on the estate. The expenditure on repairs and estate improvements amounted in the year to January 1894 to over £1000. Farm rents are often considerably in arrear, and crofting rents have of late years been quite uncertain, and a proprietor naturally hesitates to spend money trusting to such sources to recoup him. I look on it as certain that if the sporting rents were diminished appreciably, almost all improvements on Highland Estates would cease, and the loss to the labouring classes would be very considerable. The net assessable income from forest (£800), shooting (£400), castle and policies (£225), is £1425. This is the letting value one year with another. Almost all the arable land on the estate has been protected by a deer fence, 6 feet high, which was begun and partly erected by the late proprietor at his own immediate expense, and partly by the West Highland Railway Company, by arrangement with the late proprietor. The main portion of this fence is about 9 miles. I think there is little land in the forest suitable for crofters and, in my opinion, it is doubtful if any could find enough money to start a fresh croft. It is necessary to allow at least £150 for a house, £75 for outbuildings, and £50 for fences, drains, &c., besides what is required for purchase of stock, implements, furniture, and a horse. One or two crofters on the estate have, I believe, saved a little money from occupations outside their crofts, but I do not think that any others have the necessary capital. Even if properly stocked and equipped and moderately rented, I am doubtful if such lands could be profitably occupied by crofters. I find crofters are always complaining that even at low rents the crofts do not pay; I have often heard that said by crofters. It seems evident that the lands could not be worked to a profit while paying the rent at present obtainable for it as a forest. Nor can I suggest any more profitable way in which they could be employed. I am doubtful whether a croft of the usual size pays of itself. It is no doubt useful as affording a home to the occupant where the house presently exists, but it is very doubtful if any crofter would or could agree to pay fair interest, say 5 per cent., on a house costing £150. Where a crofter gets plenty of work he may save something by employing his spare time on his croft, to supply himself with milk and potatoes, but it is by no means certain that the labourer in regular occupation without any cow or ground is not better off. The death of a cow is an accident which is not infrequent and soon destroys the little profit obtained.

Fort-William.
Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

It is found that even when potato ground is given to labourers they are very slow to avail themselves of it. I find crofters are anxious to get their houses and land near where they can get work: that is to say they attach more importance to being in the neighbourhood of work than to the prospect of what the croft will produce.

Since the West Highland Railway has been in course of construction, labour is scarcer, though I find most of the crofters prefer estate work to railway work, and I have had more applications from crofters on the estate, for estate work, than I have been able to satisfy. I do not mean to say that they have not found other work lately, but they seek estate work in preference to working at the railway or elsewhere.

Previous to the construction of the railway there was a sufficiency of labour for the wants of the district, and I think now the railway is finished there will be no need of any additional hands. An introduction of fresh labourers would diminish the work to be apportioned over the estate. I am of opinion that there is no need of an increased number of crofters on the estate.

49,511. How many crofters have you doing estate work at present?—They are generally employed by contract.

49,512. Have you a considerable number or a small number?—I have had a considerable number; I don't know that at this present moment I could say that more than one man is actually doing estate work,—well, two men have got contracts. But during the winter there were four that I recollect at this moment who had contracts,—big contracts for which they in turn employ other crofters.*

I consider that, so far as I am able to judge, the farming by crofters has, as a rule, a deteriorating effect on the land. It is seldom that artificial manure is applied except lime, and that in very few instances, and the produce is often insufficient to enable the crofter to winter his cattle properly. I know about lime because in this district Lord Abinger has a lime kiln from which he is prepared to offer lime at a rather lower rate to crofters and people on the estate than to other people, and I do not find that I have many applications. If fodder is bought as little is got as possible. This means the manure is poor and scanty. The crofters mainly keep milk cows and their manure is of inferior quality. Manure is seldom kept under cover and loses value from exposure to the heavy rainfall. Most crofters sow about a boll (6 bushels) to the

* I wish to amend this answer by stating that, since January 1893, I have given at least three contracts to crofters, varying from £28 to £44, and several others which would employ at least two men some time.

ort-William. — Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

acre of oats, and get a return of about 4 bolls as an average. They sow about 6½ barrels of potatoes to the acre and get about 45 barrels. [*Mr Sutherland.*—What do you think they ought to get?—I don't think they would get very much more in this country; I don't think farmers are doing very much better. But there is not a great growth of potatoes here; we only grow just about enough.]

One of the difficulties militating against successful husbandry in this district is the rainfall. Fort-William lies immediately to the south-west of the estate and Luibruairidh to the south-east.

Rainfall yearly average for Fort-William, 78·7 :—

Rainfall,	Fort-William, for 1892, .	79·91
„	Lub-Ruairidh, „ .	69·49
„	April 1891, for Fort-William,	0·80
„	September 1891, „ .	12·52
„	April 1892, „ .	2·37
„	September 1892, „ .	14·84

In April rain is specially required and in September fine weather. The Crofters Commission have visited the estate. The proprietor had arranged with all his tenants, except one, who applied to the Commissioners.

The fair rents fixed by the proprietor and one fixed by the Commissioners amounted to £164, 12s. for the year to Whitsunday 1893. The amount of these fair rents for the period from Whitsunday 1892 to Whitsunday 1894 is £329, 4s., and of this sum only £259, 15s. 9d. has been paid up to the latter date. The arrears of the crofters whose rents were so fixed amounted at Whitsunday 1892 to £522, 12s. 6d. Of this sum, £382, 16s. 6d. was cancelled and £139, 16s. agreed to be paid. Of the sum agreed on, £95, 11s. or about 68½ per cent. has been paid up to Whitsunday last. The rates payable by the proprietor for the estate of Inverlochy amounted in 1893–4 to £569 as proprietor, £95 as tenant, and the rates paid by larger tenants on the estate would amount to £26, 11s. 1d. These rates though paid direct by tenants, are, of course, really out of the landlord's pocket, as all farmers in reckoning their rent take into account the rates which must be paid. The crofters I do not here take into consideration, because they have their rent fixed statutorily. The smaller tenants who arranged their rents with Lord Abinger may have taken the rates into consideration, but certainly a large tenant who makes an offer for a farm considers what the rates in the locality amount to. I have been asked that myself. My point is this, that practically rates paid by tenants come out of the landlord's pocket or out of the land; if they did not have to pay so much in rates they would certainly be able to offer more rent. The poor and school rates paid by the proprietor as proprietor amounted to nearly £150, while the fair rents fixed for crofters by the proprietor including one case fixed by the Commission, amounted to £165. In the year 1893–4, the proprietor paid on the sporting rental £143 in rates. Without the rates accruing from this source the burden of taxation in the parish would be materially increased, because I question whether the land could be so profitably employed as it is. [*Mr Maccallum.*—But seeing it is the landlord who pays all taxes, the benefit of the low taxation must go to him, therefore the increased burden would also fall upon the landlord and not upon the ratepayers generally?—Yes, certainly. Q.—So that all the benefit of a reduced taxation goes to the landlord?—Yes.] The total valuation of the parish of Kilmonivaig is £22,500, and a penny in the £ brings in about £94.

I have hitherto been speaking of the Estates of Inverlochy but pass now to the Estate of Inverlair. The Estate of Inverlair was purchased at Whitsunday 1893 by the present Lord Abinger. It is all under sheep and cattle, there being no afforested ground at all. It extends to about 17,000 acres, of which 125 or thereby are arable or meadow. There is a considerable extent under natural growth of wood, oak, and plantations, and the remainder is hill grazings.

The farm of Inch and Loch-Treig is in the proprietor's hands; it carries a blackfaced ewe stock of about 2300 and cows and followers for shepherds and keepers and includes about 34 acres of arable land, the return in the Valuation Roll being £400 in 1893. The farm of Inverlair is also in proprietor's own hands and carries a blackfaced ewe stock of about 1800 sheep and cows and followers for shepherds and keepers. There are about 26 acres of arable ground at present in cultivation and about 26 acres more of meadow land. The Valuation Return is £270. The Mansion House of the estate is at Inverlair, and this land is very desirable if not necessary for the amenity of the house. The shooting rental of the estate is £400, which includes the house. The farm of Monessie is tenanted under lease by Miss Macdonald and Mrs Gillies, who succeeded their brother, who also succeeded the man who was spoken of as 'Donald Marsant.' It carries a sheep stock of about 800 to 1000 blackfaced ewes and 20 black cattle and includes about 40 acres of arable ground and meadow grounds. The Valuation Return is £135. This farm includes Achnacoichin, which was also referred to.

Fort-William. — Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

With the exception of a small fringe of low ground along the Spean Valley, the ground on this estate is all very high. The hills rise very abruptly from the Spean, so as to leave a small area between their base and the river. At present it is practicable to winter the ewe hoggs of the estate at home. This is a very important consideration in the farming of this estate, as the amount saved on the wintering is very considerable. For this purpose all the available low ground is essential, and any diminution of its area would most seriously prejudice the value of these farms. A good deal of the low ground both of Inverlair, Monessie, and Inch is liable to be flooded, and serious damage has been done by the River Spean in recent years. It is undesirable to crop this portion of the land, as the soil is more liable to be carried away, to say nothing of the crops themselves. This materially reduces the area capable of cultivation.

The proprietor pays in rates on this estate about £104 as proprietor, and £39 as tenant; £36 or more than the one-third is paid in respect of the sporting rental, and the shooting tenant pays besides about £22—so that the sporting rental of this estate means a contribution representing more than ½d. per £ on the rental of the parish. Putting it otherwise, if this sum were no longer available as a rateable subject, the remainder of the estate would have the whole rates increased by one-third.

In this connection I may point out that the sporting rental of Inverlochy amounts, roughly speaking, to nearly one-half of the whole rent, so that the loss of it would mean doubling the rates. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Why do you speak of the sporting rental as if it would disappear?—I consider that if the ground was divided up it would certainly affect the grouse shooting? *Q.*—Did you never see a crofter's holding with a grouse shooting on it?—I may say that I have found that a place where there are many dogs about is not very good for grouse. *Q.*—But you have seen that?—Yes, I have, but that is my opinion. *The Chairman.*—Are you not aware that some of the best shootings in Sutherland are in the district of Rogart, where there are a great many crofters?—Iam not aware of it; I have never been in Sutherland.] I was asked to give the numbers of sheep stock on some of the farms, and I tabulate the figures as follows :—

Farm.	Sheep stock.
Inverlochy and Claggan, . .	800 to 1000
Torlundy and part of Achindaul,	2000
Remainder of Achindaul & Camesky,	800 to 1000
Lianachan cleared for the forest, . . .	about 1300 to 1500
Coire-Chuinnlidh, . . .	about 6000
Inch and Loch Treig, . .	2300 to 2500
Monessie, ...	800 to 1000
Inverlair, ...	about 1800

Roughly speaking, a total of 16,000 sheep, of which 8500 are still there, so that only 7500 or so were cleared for the deer forest. I think my friend included other areas in making his estimate, but that is on what belongs to Lord Abinger. There are one or two points referred to by my friend on which I should like to say

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

a word or two. I must say that I have not observed in my intercourse with the people any signs of the deterioration which he seemed to ascribe to contact with shooting tenants and others. I have had a good deal to do with keepers and gillies and others both in my working capacity and also as going out on the hill, and I must say that I have not noticed anything of the kind. I should rather incline to the opinion that mixing with people of the better class has an improving effect upon them: I think it increases their civility.

49,513. How many crofters are on Lord Abinger's estate?—I think there are twenty-four.

49,513A. Twenty-four separate holdings?—Twenty-four separate holdings, I believe.

49,514. And how many cottars?—I cannot say off-hand; I should prefer to make out an exact return for you: but, of course, I can give you the number to the best of my recollection. [See after question 49,825, page 1218.]

49,515. Subject to correction from a Return, what do you say?—Not counting servants or paupers I should say about six people inhabiting cottages who are not labourers on the estate. Of course, there are people occupying houses on the Home Farm who are in one way cottars, but these get regular employment in the Home Farm.

49,516. And live by the wages they make?—Yes.

49,517. Have they small patches?—They have a small patch of potatoes, which I may inform you some of them do not take the trouble to cultivate.

49,518. How many of that class are there?—I think there are four of that class; of course, I speak from recollection only.

49,519. Can you tell me what is the average size of a crofter's holding on Lord Abinger's estate?—That I should rather prefer to ascertain and give you.*

49,520. At all events, there are, you say 2900 acres of crofters' pasture and 240 acres of crofters' arable on the Inverlochy Estate, making a total of 3140 acres?—I think that is about correct.

49,521. That is the total area of the land arable and pasture held by the twenty-four crofters?—Yes; I may say that there are some people who have also rights of grazing over the crofters' pasture.

49,522. Who are they?—One or two fishermen and a gamekeeper and shepherd; also the Inspector of Poor and the hotel-keeper at Spean-Bridge.

49,523. How many shares has the hotel?—It has the right of grazing, I think, ten shares.

49,524. And the crofters have one share or two shares each, as the case may be?—Yes, some of them. Almost all of them have certainly one share and some of them more.

49,525. Of course, if a man gets two holdings consolidated into one he has two shares?—Yes.

49,526. Has anybody else the right of grazing over these 2900 acres?—Not for cows, but over part of it Lord Abinger has the right of wintering sheep.

49,527. Over the whole ground?—Not over the whole ground but over one township.

49,528. What township?—The township of Unachan.

49,529. What is the extent of his right of wintering sheep over the township of Unachan?—It was estimated at one quarter of the rent previous to the recent adjustment by Lord Abinger and the Commission.

49,530. One quarter of the rent payable by the crofters?—Yes, that is to say, supposing a crofter paid £10, the wintering right was taken off and he only pays £7, 10s. now.

49,531. That right of wintering by Lord Abinger still remains?—Still remains.

49,532. What consideration is given for rent in respect of that?—When the rents were fixed by Lord Abinger and the Commission the right was treated as belonging to Lord Abinger, and the £7, 10s. was taken as the rent to be dealt with. I may take the example of this one case that is now under appeal. The original rent, including wintering, would have been £8: now Lord Abinger made the rent £6 when he resumed the wintering; and when the Crofters Commission came to deal with the rent, they dealt with the rent as £6.

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,533. Subject to the landlord's right of wintering?—Yes. They held that the rent which they were entitled to deal with was £6, and they reduced that rent, in the case to which I refer, to £5. Now in every case Lord Abinger, in considering the matter, dealt with the rents without taking into consideration the question of wintering; he held that the wintering was his.

49,534. Then when the matter of fair rent was dealt with by the Commissioner who had it under his jurisdiction, the fair rent was fixed subject to a right of wintering by Lord Abinger over the township of Unachan?—Yes.

49,535. So that we must take it that the fixed rent is a fair rent with the right of wintering to the landlord?—Yes, that is to say, the landlord has the right of wintering: and this rent was fixed as a fair rent without reference to it.

49,536. I presume I may take it that this right of wintering to Lord Abinger existed long prior to the passing of the Act?—Yes.

49,536A. When the crofters came under the Act on 25th June, 1886, they did so with their holdings subject to this right to Lord Abinger?—That is the view that Lord Abinger submitted to the Crofters Commission and they sustained his view. I may add that the case is still under appeal.

49,537. Besides these persons,—the fishermen and gamekeeper and this right of wintering,—has any one else, other than the crofters, a right of pasturing over the 2900 acres? Has any clergyman, for instance?—No, there is nobody else, so far as I understand.

49,538. Have the cottars any rights of grazing over that ground?—No.

49,539. Do they pay rent?—Yes.

49,540. What rent do they pay?—There are four cottagers who pay I think £10 or £11.

49,541. Are they cottars?—Well, they are people who inhabit houses,—new cottages which were put up,—I don't know whether you would call them cottars.

49,542. At all events they are not crofters?—Oh no.

49,543. Have they rights of grazing over this pasture?—No. One is the Inspector of Poor, whose house is taken for the Board.

49,544. Have these cottars land?—They have a small piece of garden ground.

49,545. But nothing else?—Nothing else.

49,546. Have they not the right each to keep a cow?—No.

49,547. What is the average rent of these cottars or whatever I ought to call them?—In those four cases the average is a little over £10.

49,548. Now, suppose that after a full inquiry we came to be of opinion that these crofters had a well-founded complaint of requiring additional land arable or grazing, or arable and grazing, in your opinion is there such land within the limits of Lord Abinger's estate? Observe my question: we have no opinion at all at present, and we have a great deal to do before we get that length, but suppose we came to be of opinion, after inquiry, that these crofters had a well-founded complaint of want of land, arable and grazing, or both, do you say there is the means of satisfying the want?—There is certainly both arable land and pasture on Lord Abinger's estate which are under farm now and which could, of course, be farmed by one man as well as another.

49,549. You frankly answer the question in that way?—That is how it would appear to me.

49,550. Now in saying so, your reference is, I understand, to grazing farm land and not to forest land, or is there land in the forest?—There is grazing land in the forest, no doubt.

49,551. Is some of that grazing land in the forest

* I have calculated that the average holding of Lord Abinger's crofters is approximately 9 acres of arable and private pasture, with an allowance of nearly 2 horses and rather more than 4 cows, with their followers; otherwise stated—about 8 cows and followers, reckoning one horse as equal to two cows. The average rent is rather under £8. Over the holdings of five crofters, Lord Abinger still holds the right of wintering sheep. I find the arable land held by the fishermen, shepherd, and Inspector of Poor is included in the 240 acres of arable.

capable of cultivation?—There are very small pieces, if at all: that is my opinion. I refer to profitable cultivation.

49,552. You mentioned a number of farms at the conclusion of your statement?—Yes.

49,553. Are these all existing farms?—No. The existing farms are Inverlochy and Claggan, Torlundy and part of Achindaul, the remainder of Achindaul and Camesky, and then those on the Inverlair estate.

49,554. What about Lianachan and Coire-Chuinnlidh?—These are now forest.

49,555. What about Inch?—Inch is a sheep farm.

49,556. And Monessie?—It is a sheep farm.

49,557. And Inverlair?—It is a sheep farm.

49,558. The only farms that have been afforested apparently are Lianachan and Coire-Chuinnlidh?—Yes.

49,559. Which have been added to the forest of Inverlochy?—Not exactly added to, but made into the forest of Inverlochy.

49,560. That is the process which began in the late 60's and concluded in 1870?—Oh no, some of it was finished in 1870, but other parts not until the year 1883.

49,560A. Then the whole of that forest of Inverlochy, as it now appears to be called, was within comparatively recent years farm grazing?—Certainly.

49,561. And I suppose that a considerable portion of the lower lands of Lianachan and Coire-Chuinnlidh could be divided into smaller holdings capable of profitable cultivation in fair years?—I must say that is not my opinion.

49,562. What is your opinion?—My opinion is that they are better as they are.

49,562A. That is hardly meeting my question. You observe that this is quite a peculiar case. I don't know that we have had it quite so sharply brought out as in your statement; this is a case of land which, up to a very recent date, was not forest at all but grazing farm land?—Yes.

49,563. My question is whether that land or a considerable portion of it which was so recently grazing land might not be sub-divided into holdings capable of profitable or advantageous occupation?—Well, I can only give my opinion that I do not think so. Of course, my judgment may not be sufficient.

49,564. But I should attach much more weight to your judgment if you would tell us precisely on what grounds you base it?—These two farms extend, as I have said, to over 22,000 acres. Now only a very small portion of that, comparatively speaking, is low ground.

49,564A. Keep in view for a moment that there was a separate farm of Lianachan and a separate farm of Coire-Chuinnlidh?—Yes.

49,565. These separate farms separately worked by separate tenants were no doubt at one time carried on to a profit in the better days of sheep farming?—I should think so.

49,566. In both farms there is high ground and low ground, wintering ground and summering ground, ewe ground and wedder ground, and so on. May not we take it that some tract of the lower ground in each of these farms is now capable, if divided under proper supervision, of profitable or advantageous occupation?—I think it might perfectly well be occupied as a sheep farm.

49,567. But not otherwise?—I think not.

49,567A. Why as a large farm? Why should not Lianachan or Coire-Chuinnlidh be divided (I am speaking theoretically), say, in the latter case, into three farms with 2000 sheep each, or six farms with 1000 sheep each, or twelve farms with 500 sheep each?—I don't think they could be worked so profitably.

49,568. But are you able to assign any reason why such a holding, say with a stock of 500 sheep, should not be carried on to a profit?—Look at the contour of the ground of the whole district, and the mountains of which it forms part. I don't mean to say that part of the low ground might not possibly be taken off from the high ground; that is a different thing; but if you take the whole of it together I do not see how it could be divided up with any sort of success. That is, as far as I can judge from the appearance of the ground both low and high; and I may say that I am familiar with the ground. I have not got the precise area of what may be called low ground as compared with high ground,—it could be easily taken from the Ordnance Map, but the proportion is, in my opinion, very insufficient.

49,569. Then you think the only possible way in which these two farms could be used is either as forest, as they are now, or large farms, as they were in recent years?—I do not say the only possible way, but I think that is the only convenient way.

49,570. I was not discussing the question of convenience; I was wishing you to address your mind to the question whether these farms might not be so dealt with as to afford reasonably sized holdings capable of profitable or advantageous occupation?—I can only say that I don't think so.

49,570A. There is no other forest of which you can speak except this recently formed one of Inverlochy?—No; I have also to do with Arisaig, of course, but that is not before you at present.

49,571. What do you say about Inverlair? You say it is not afforested, but there is a sheep and cattle stock upon it, and it extends to 17,000 acres pasture and 125 acres of arable or meadow land?—That is according to my rough estimate.

49,572. Then I understand you to say that the farms of Inch and Loch-Treig are in the proprietor's hands?—Yes.

49,573. Also the farm of Monessie?—No, it is tenanted.

49,574. How long have Inch and Loch-Treig been in the proprietor's hands?—It was a former proprietor, so I am not able to say; it has only been in Lord Abinger's hands for a year.

49,575. He was the purchaser?—He was the purchaser in 1893.

49,576. And when he purchased that, he purchased it without there being a tenant on it?—Yes.

49,577. And you think it has been without a tenant for some little time?—Yes, that is my belief.

49,578. Then I think some other farms on Inverlochy are in the proprietor's hands?—Torlundy and the upper part of Achindaul.

49,579. How long has that been in the proprietor's hands?—For a good many years, some fourteen or fifteen years.

49,580. And have any of the other farms been in the proprietor's hands?—The other part of the farm of Achindaul and Camesky was in the proprietor's own hands, but was let at Martinmas last to a tenant.

49,581. Are any of the other farms that you mentioned in the proprietor's hands at present?—Killichonate is.

49,582. Any other one?—No, I think these are all.

49,583. Are the others let on leases for terms of years?—Yes, on leases for terms of years.

49,584. Now, taking those farms that have fallen into the proprietor's hands, Inch and Loch-Treig,—well, these have been only a short time in hand,—Torlundy and Achindaul, how did the latter farm come into the proprietor's hands? Was it because the landlord and tenant could not agree about the rent?—I don't think so.

49,585. Well, I want you to tell me, if you happen to know, how that farm fell back into the hands of the proprietor?—I cannot tell you for certain.

49,586. But he has had it in his hands for a good many years?—Yes, it was in the time of the late Lord Abinger. [*Mr Macphee.*—Might I suggest that it was to make a Home Farm?—*Mr N. B. Mackenzie.*—Torlundy has always been in Lord Abinger's hands ever since I had to do with the estate, now going back twenty-seven years. Achindaul and the part above the road came into his hands when the tenant left and a satisfactory tenant could not be got. That is about fourteen or fifteen years ago.]

49,587. Don't you think, Mr Smith, that where a farm falls into his lordship's hands through the inability

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

to get a satisfactory tenant, it would be a very good thing to try the sub-division of that farm into smaller holdings, appealing to a larger number of possible tenants?—Well, I don't think the farm of Achindaul could be divided into suitable holdings or could be dealt with otherwise than as one farm. In Torlundy, of course, there are a lot of parks round the castle and some 16 acres of arable, detached; but the rest of the farm of Achindaul, which is at present in Lord Abinger's own hands, has little or no ground which is not absolutely hill ground.

49,588. I do not know about these large farms in particular, but you are no doubt aware, as a matter of history, in the formation of large farms in the Highlands, that they are made up partly of smaller farms and sometimes of crofters' holdings gradually incorporated?—Yes.

49,589. Apart from the incorporation of crofters' holdings, and taking the cases of large farms formed by the gradual absorption of smaller farms,—*e.g.*, a farm of £300 rent made up of several farms with rents varying from £50 to £150,—don't you think these farms might quite well be re-divided, as they did exist before the formation of the large holding?—Such might, but I don't think that would apply to Achindaul.

49,590. Is it the case in any of these farms?—In none of the farms on the Inverlochy estate, so far as I am able to ascertain.

49,591. And in the case of Inverlair estate you are only a recent acquirer?—Only a recent acquirer.

49,592. Have there been any applications to Lord Abinger, apart from the Commission, by his crofter tenants for more land?—I don't think there has been any definite application, so far as I recollect. There was an application from the man we spoke of, Duncan Macdonald, who said that he would like to get a place, who asked to go over to Lianachan, but Lord Abinger said he did not like that, as it was in the middle of the forest, so he offered him another place, which he has been put into. There certainly have been no formal applications.

49,593. I am now going to put a question to you which I put already, but with a different aspect. Suppose we came to be of opinion that the crofters on the Abinger estate had grave cause of complaint for want of land, and could make out a strong case for getting more land, arable or grazing, are you of opinion that such a request ought not to be granted by sub-dividing any of the existing farms, or by excising any land from the forest: is that your opinion?—That is my opinion.

49,594. How do you propose we should deal with the complaint, assuming it to be well founded?—I don't know that I have any other mode to suggest to you.

49,595. Then you would deal with the complaint by just letting it stand over?—Yes.

49,596. You see we are put here to meet a very serious question, and exhaust as far as we can an important public inquiry?—Yes.

49,597. And we must look the question in the face, and deal with it to the best of our humble ability. If you can give us any assistance we shall be obliged. How would you propose to deal with a case of that kind? You tell us there is no land on the farms, and there is no land in the forest, and you concede, in compliance with my request, the justness of the demand. As a matter of argument you have the whole thing there; the occupation of vast tracts of land, high and low, good and bad, by a comparatively small number of people?—Yes.

49,598. You have the occupation of a small area of land by a comparatively large number of people; and the large number of people complain that they are very much in need of land. If, after inquiry, we come to the conclusion that that is a well-founded complaint, how is it to be dealt with?—Of course, if you have to obtain land for the people it must come from somewhere.

49,599. Must it not most naturally come from the estate where there is land?—There is no doubt that, if you must have land, and you must take it from the same estate, you must take it from the estate where they are on: but it does not follow that the landlord would not be a sufferer from that, or that the thing would be advisable either from the landlord's point of view or the public point of view.

49,600. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—What do you get for the forest a year: £2925 is it not?—That is what we got in 1892.

49,601. And the castle is included in that?—It is.

49,602. The castle cost £40,000 you said?—That is as near as I can estimate it. I know that the half of it cost about £20,000.

49,603. Then I suppose there was other expenditure besides that?—There is, of course, this 9 miles of fencing.

49,604. What outlay would the proprietor have on the forest altogether?—I think I could hardly speak to that.

49,605. I would like to get it in round numbers?—It would not be easy to tell from the mode in which the late Lord Abinger's accounts were kept: he used to sign most of his cheques himself, and his estate books were not branched particularly under different headings, so that it would be very difficult for me to pick out the individual items you wish.

49,606. But may we take it that he spent many thousands of pounds on fencing, &c.?—I do not like to suggest an opinion when really I am unable to base it on anything definite. You ask what sort of sum the late Lord Abinger would have expended on the forest itself?

49,607. For which he is getting this income of £2925?—Of course, you will understand that a good deal of that is reckoned as outlay for up-keep of gardens, and so forth, and for wages: these are deductions from that sum, so that the nett sum, which I think we would be safe to deal in as the free return, is about £1400. The nett sum entered in the Valuation Roll which the thing is worth year by year is £1425.

49,608. Is that all the return he gets for an outlay in the first instance of £40,000 and of another indefinite sum of large amount?—That is all he gets as a return; there is no doubt of that.

49,609. What do you think would be a fair return,—first of all on £40,000?—Take it at 5 per cent. if you like.

49,610. That comes to £2000 a year?—Yes.

49,611. That is to say he does not get an adequate return for even the outlay on the house alone?—No.

49,612. How do you make out that deer foresting pays, seeing that after adding to it this valuable adjunct, it only brings in £1400 odds? How, in the light of that, do you bring out that deer foresting is a profitable thing to the proprietor?—The house by itself involved an enormous outlay; but as regards the land, I think more is got out of it as a deer forest than in any other way.

49,613. But we put these two things together; the house goes with the forest?—Yes.

49,614. In that way they are one subject, and the conclusion surely that you must come to is that the thing does not pay, and that he has expended on that deer forest far more than he gets any adequate return for?—I certainly admit that he does not get out of the deer forest a return for the house.

49,615. We are comparing what the proprietor gets from crofters and what he gets from sporting tenants. Don't you see that, instead of getting a greater return from the sporting tenants, he gets a much greater return from the crofter?—I should not put it in the way that you do in looking at the matter, because the rent of the forest must be looked upon separately from the house.

49,616. But was it let separately from the house?—No.

49,617. And the deer forest and house belonging to it have been put up at a great loss to the proprietor?—The house may have been put up at a great loss to the proprietor, but not the deer forest, I think.

49,618. Well, but when you put it along with the

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

house you find that it does not get one half per cent. This house you say is returned in the Valuation Roll for how much?—£215.

49,619. Now, do you think there is any house in Fort-William, or any feuars' house at all, that is valued at so low a rate as that, when you compare the cost?—I think not: but what is stated in the Valuation Roll is the rent which it would fetch one year with another if let unfurnished.

49,620. I know that is the system and the law; I do not doubt that at all; but you admit that that house has cost a very large sum, and yet on account of the state of the law at present it is put down in the Valuation Roll at a very small sum?—It is put down at the full amount it would fetch in the market.

49,621. How do you know what it would fetch in the market?—Because if more could be got for it, more would be.

49,622. But it was never for sale?—For letting. It has been tried to be let separately, and it has not been able to be let separately.

49,623. If this house were rated at some reasonable calculation on the expenditure it would be a great relief to taxation, would it not? If we got the benefit of this £40,000, at some reasonable rate, that would relieve the taxation very much, would it not?—Of course, the more you increase the valuation of the country you relieve the taxes.

49,624. Do you know what was got for the land before it was afforested?—Yes, I think it was £1045 that was got for these two farms together.

49,625. Is that the pastoral rent?—The pastoral rent.

49,626. And yet with this big house it only fetches £1425?—But other things were included in the £1045, *e.g.*, other houses which are entered separately in the Valuation Roll.

49,627. What is the valuation of these?—£140, or so. Practically there is not a very great difference. I have looked into the matter carefully, and certainly, looking at the reduction of rents which has come through the country the rent has been maintained.

49,628. You got £1045 first, but you say that there were some houses included there that are not included in the forest?—They are a part of the forest; stalker's houses, &c. which are either part of the forest or entered otherwise in the Valuation Roll: so that you may take the rent prior to afforestment as £900 for purposes of comparison.

49,629. What was the shooting rental at that time?—That I cannot say without looking up; but the shooting goes on just the same now.

49,630. It is included in the £1425?—Yes.

49,631. We add £400 to the £900, which would make £1300 that was got for the land without a house at all,—without the £40,000 house; and without all the other outlays that have been made to improve this forest?—I do not think that the £400 would have been got without a house: that was a shooting rent.

49,632. You have it down here separately as £400; was there a house with it?—The castle is what was let, if it was let with the grouse shooting.

49,633. But I want to find out what you consider the sporting value of it was then over and above the grazing?—I cannot divide up the sporting value.

49,634. We will take it at something like £300; that would make £1200 as compared with your present rent of £1425, which leaves £225 for the castle; so that it cannot possibly be that deer foresting has been profitable to the landlords. Then, I have been very much struck with your theory of taxation. You say, speaking of rates paid by tenants, that 'these rates, 'though paid direct by the tenants, are, of course, really 'out of the landlord's pocket'?—Yes.

49,635. Very well. Several things must follow from that, as, for instance, that all grants-in-aid of local taxation must go to the landlord's pocket too?—Well, yes.

49,636. Then, all the assistance that has been given in that way to the Highlands in aid of taxation has gone to the landlords' pockets?—Yes, I suppose it has

49,637. People were under the impression that it was to relieve the crofter population and to help them?—Remember I do not take into consideration the crofter population at all.

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,638. No, but the Government were supposed to have that in consideration in giving these Grants-in-aid?—There is no doubt they did have the effect of lightening the crofters' burdens.

49,639. What help were these grants to the crofters if they went to the landlords' pockets?—But I did not take into consideration the crofters, because they are a different class of people altogether. Their rents are fixed by the Government, not by the landlord,—there is no adjustment between crofter and landlord.

49,640. You make out that the crofter has to pay a little, but all other tenants pay nothing?—I say that when a man makes his offer for a farm, if he offers £100 for a farm he would have offered a little more, if he had not to pay rates in addition to the £100. Hence the rates in his case really come from the landlord.

49,641. And it follows therefore that all Grants-in-aid of rates go into the pocket of the proprietor; and very large grants have been made under the impression that they benefitted the tenants, but you make out that they benefit not the tenants but the proprietor?—There is an exception of course in cases where previous leases exist, and there is an increase of taxation during the currency of the lease.

49,642. But you do not make even that exception in your paper?—Well, I was not pressed in the matter, but I should like to make that statement, that if during existing leases the amount of taxation is increased—and there, no doubt, have been lately increases of taxation on account of County Council and so forth—there is no doubt this increase comes out of the tenant's pocket, because he did not contemplate that when he made his bargain.

49,643. But that applies only to the end of the lease?—Yes.

49,644. And the ultimate benefit is to the benefit of the proprietor? The grant-in-aid of police-rates and everything else go to the pocket of the proprietor?—Yes: I look on it that everything goes out of the pocket of the proprietor, so the other must follow.

49,645. Then, there is another thing that must be inferred from this. You were saying that if you diminish the assessable rent, the rates would have to be increased, and that the burden of taxation in the parish would be materially increased?—Yes.

49,646. Now, do you think you are quite logical there?—I do not at this moment see wherein I am wrong.

49,647. You say that the taxation falls altogether on the proprietor. Then whether you increase or decrease the amount on which you levy rates, surely the burden cannot be altered. What does it matter what sum you put against his name, if he pays the whole?—I am not quite sure that I follow you.

49,648. You say the burden of taxation in the parish will be materially increased. I fail to see how, if it is the proprietor that has to pay the whole, his burden can be increased whatever you put in the Valuation Roll,—the sum to be raised does not vary, though the valuation might?—Of course, a good deal of difference would be made supposing rents are fixed without reference to the proprietor, if these new holdings be created.

49,649. You did not fully consider this matter, or else you could not have made this statement, on which so much of your argument is based. Then you told us about the extent of land held by crofters; it seems very small as compared with the extent in the deer forest?—Yes.

49,650. A very small proportion of the whole estate of Inverlochy is held by the great mass of the population,—one deer forest includes more than half the area—and you still think that that is the most satisfactory distribution of the land?—I think it works best.

49,651. Then even the 3140 acres they do have is held partly under a claim of grazing by the proprietor?—Partly

Fort-William. — Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,652. And, I suppose, you know there is a great desire on the part of the people to extend their holdings?—I don't know that there is that great desire.

49,653. You differ, I suppose, from the witnesses that were here to-day?—Yes. I don't mean to say that people have never said anything in a general way; but there has been no formal application that I have been aware of to Lord Abinger for extension of holdings. There certainly was none to the Crofters Commission.*

49,654. Did they wish to get this right of grazing that is now in the hands of Lord Abinger?—Some of them may; this particular man of whom we are speaking wished to get it, but the others arranged with Lord Abinger, and I don't think they are dissatisfied.

49,655. You don't think they want that privilege?—I think they would be perfectly satisfied to leave things as they are.

49,656. Have you reason to think that they do not want the right of grazing the whole of that property?—Yes, that is my understanding; I don't think they want it.

49,657. Is there any limit to the number of sheep the proprietor may put on this grazing?—I don't think there is any specific limit, but there has never been any complaint.

49,658. And still the Crofters Commission have fixed the fair rent, and you say that the landlord has the right of putting an unlimited number of stock upon it?—No, I don't say that; there has not been a precise limit, but there has always been an understood limit.

49,659. But understood things are never satisfying?—Well, there has never been any complaint so far as I know of the number of sheep put upon it.

49,660. Is there any limit as to the time when they must be removed?—Yes.

49,661. And when they may be put on?—Yes.

49,662. You spoke of Lord Abinger's resuming the wintering. Why did he resume?—He wanted it for wintering in connection with his hill farms.

49,663. It was not for their benefit that he resumed?—No, I should think probably not; at least I don't know that it was so.

49,664. Is it not rather an unsatisfactory thing to find the proprietor, after having so much in his own hands, making an incursion upon the small extent held by the crofters?—I think you would not consider it so unsatisfactory if you were to understand that in this country the very large amount of hill ground necessitates low ground, and that it is impossible to winter the young sheep on the high ground, and that the low ground is absolutely necessary in connection with it, and that if those sheep could not be wintered on the estate they would have to be sent away to a considerable distance.

49,665. But, why would he not deal with these crofters freely, without coming and saying I will take this and I will put on what I think right: would it not have been a much more satisfactory thing for them to have full control of their own holdings?—Well, the arrangement was made at the time; the bargain was that a certain deduction should be made from their rent, and they were satisfied with that.

49,666. They had to be satisfied with it, I suppose; they did not wish to make the arrangements, I presume?—Well, I was not here at the time when the resumption was made.

49,667. But can you conceive of a more unsatisfactory arrangement than that?—I thought it was a very satisfactory arrangement.

49,668. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did it never occur to the proprietor that the crofters might require that land for wintering their sheep?—The crofters had no sheep.

Fort-William. — Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,669. That is a new element. Now, the distribution of people on the estate is that there are twenty to thirty families with 100 acres each; and how many occupy the 22,000 acres in deer forest?—There is only one tenant in the deer forest.

49,670. And in the other case there are upwards of twenty with 3140 acres between them?—Yes.

49,671. Is that a state of distribution of the population on the land that you now justify?—I confess that I have always looked upon the land as belonging to the person who purchased it, and that he was justified in making that distribution.

49,672. Are you prepared to push that to its logical conclusion? Have you Lord Abinger's authority for making that statement?—No.

49,673. I am glad to hear it.—I am only giving my personal opinion; I do not say what Lord Abinger would do or would not do if he were applied to. You understand that the present Lord Abinger is a young man who has only recently succeeded to the estate.

49,674. What is his age?—He is twenty-three years of age, and anything that ought to be submitted to him I submit to him and take his instructions upon.

49,675. Do you see any objection to the district of Lochaber being cleared altogether of people?—Certainly I do not wish to see the district of Lochaber cleared of people.

49,676. I do not wish to press the point, but it arose as a logical sequence to the opinion you expressed. Then you said you have no experience as a farmer?—I have experience.

49,677. Have you ever been a farmer?—I have had the management of farms.

49,678. But you have never farmed?—I have never farmed for my own benefit.

49,679. Have you ever been tenant of a farm?—Not where I have gained any benefit. [*The Chairman.*—Have you farmed land to your own loss?—No, I have not conducted a farm.]

49,680. Have you ever been a crofter?—No.

49,681. Have you ever been a sporting tenant?—No.

49,682. I take your statement to be an attempted justification of the existence of deer forests, and you attempted to show that they were beneficial to the individual and beneficial to the community?—I think that is what I meant.

49,683. And with regard to our inquiry, you thought in the first place that we could not get any land such as we were asked to look for in the deer forest, because it would diminish the letting value of the remainder?—That is rather the line I took.

49,684. You seemed to contend in the case of sheep farms that no part of it could be taken away without being prejudicial to the sheep farm?—I certainly think not.

49,685. That is a truism, I presume; you cannot take away any land from any man without doing him a loss, if more land is better than less land?—Yes.

49,686. As to your statement about rates, I need not ask many questions after the answers you have given to Mr Maccallum. Does Lord Abinger or any other proprietor pay any rate that he is not compelled by Statute to pay?—He pays rates for his servants,—I don't think he is compelled by Statute to pay these.

49,687. But I wish to know if these landlords who take credit for paying so much in the shape of rates pay more than the tenant *pro rata*?—I am afraid I do not quite follow you.

49,688. I will try to make it plain. By the law of Scotland a proprietor is compelled to pay half the rate and the tenant is compelled to pay the other half: it matters not how much land he holds?—But there are other burdens of course falling on the proprietor.

49,689. If a crofter has a holding, be it only £2 of rent, he pays rates upon £2, does he not?—Certainly he does.

49,690. If the crofter paid £100 of rent instead of £2, he would pay rates on the £100?—He would

* I could not recollect any applications when under examination, and there have been, as I stated, no 'formal applications' (*i.e.*, to Crofters Commissioners or County Council), except Duncan Macdonald; but I have since recollected two cases, in one of which additional grazing was given by the proprietor, and another where the subject was mooted but left over for consideration. Nor did I advert to several cases where crofters have asked to be moved from one holding to another,—not to get larger holdings, but almost invariably to be nearer where they were getting work,—nor to several cases where crofts have fallen vacant and been offered to or applied for by neighbours.

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,691. Any comparison then between the rates paid by the landlord and those paid by the tenant is simply a measure of the land the one has and the other has not?—There are several public burdens payable by proprietors which are not payable by the tenant. There is the county rate, minister's stipend, heritor's assessment, land tax, &c.

49,692. But you will admit, I am sure, that the comparison of the rates paid by the landlord with those paid by the tenant—the large holder and the small holder—is merely another way of showing the unequal distribution of the land; is not that so?—I am afraid I am not quite understanding the drift of your question.

49,693. You pointed out that the shooting tenant pays a large proportion of the rates. But he simply does so because he holds a large proportion of the land; is not that so?—Of course, it is in proportion to what he holds.

49,694. So that the comparison of the rates paid by one who pays only a small sum with the rates paid by one who pays a large sum is simply another way of showing the gross inequality of the distribution of the land?—There is no doubt that the people who have larger holdings, whatever they may be, pay larger rates.

49,695. And I think it is the most graphic way in which the inequality of the distribution of the land may be shown. You do not claim that any of these people pay rates that would not be paid by other people if they had land?—I do not think there would be so much.

49,696. Well, suppose a town like Fort-William were to be built on Inverlochy Forest, and compare the area of Fort-William with the area of Inverlochy Forest and see which pays the larger sum per acre: you see how striking the comparison would become?—Quite so.

49,697. I am obliged to you for bringing that before us. Then you stated in answer, I think, to a question by Mr Macphee, that you saw no deterioration in the people who act as gillies from their intercourse with sportsmen and others,—I rather think you said it was just the opposite?—That is my experience.

49,698. Now, I am going to read a short extract to you on this point from the Report of the Royal Commission of 1883; I do not say that I am adopting it, but the authority is the parish minister of Kintail in Ross-shire, not very far from here. The Rev. Roderick Morrison, minister of the Established Church there, says:—'Now, this land that is let in deer forest is wholly 'withdrawn from contributing to the supply of any of 'the needs of the human race except the need of High-'land lairds for cash. The venison produced is not worth 'speaking of, and though no doubt wages are paid to 'keepers, gillies, watchers, &c., none of these men are 'productive labourers, and they are as completely with-'drawn from the industrial population as the land on 'which they live from the food-producing resources of 'the country. Further, it is well-known that the life 'these men lead is demoralising in the extreme, and 'soon renders the majority of them useless for any pur-'pose except that for which they are trained, so that 'when thrown out of employment they become an 'incubus on society.' I do not ask you to agree with that opinion?—I do not agree with it.

49,699. But as you see it is the expression of opinion of a man who was in a very responsible position, a man who was a Highlander, and whose father and grandfather, I understand, were ministers of Kintail before him. I have no personal knowledge of my own to back it up, but I take Mr Morrison's statement with regard to it. Now, would you kindly tell me what is the lowest altitude that is embraced in the forest of Inverlochy?—350 feet, I think.

49,700. Are you aware of the recommendations made by the Royal Commission of 1883 with regard to deer forests?—I think I may have read them, but I am not familiar with them.

49,701. Are you aware that the Commissioners recommended that no land under the altitude of 1000 feet should be made into deer forest?—I do not remember their saying so.

49,702. You had not that in your mind?—No.

49,703. I may read a sentence or two on the subject from the Report. 'The appropriation of lands to the 'purposes of deer forest might be prohibited below a pre-'scribed contour line of elevation, so drawn as to mark 'in a general but effective way the limit of profitable root 'and cereal cultivation, of artificial pasture, and of 'pasture adapted for wintering live-stock, a line which 'on the east side of Scotland, in a high latitude, might 'be approximately fixed at an altitude of 1000 feet above 'the sea-level, and on the western sea-board at a lower 'level than 1000 feet, making allowance locally for the 'convenience of the march' (p. 94). That Report, as I have said already to-day, is signed by gentlemen concerning whom it cannot be said that they had no practical knowledge of deer forests?—What I have said is that there was very little of this forest which was below 800 feet: indeed, I might say there is really very little below 1000 feet, as far as my recollection goes. (*Shown portion coloured green on map.*)

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,704. What proportion of that is green?—It is rather hard to say, but I should think only a very small proportion, perhaps a tenth.

49,705. I am glad you say a tenth, because ten to one is supposed by experts to be the proper proportion between high land and low land on a grazing farm. Do you dispute the statement that was made by a witness to-day, that deer cannot survive a storm that sheep can survive?—I should not like to say as a general fact that a deer would always survive or a sheep would always survive: I look upon it that they both need low ground. Possibly in winters that had continuous wet weather the deer might suffer more; in exceptional winters.

49,706. But it is a question, as I understand, of which would longer survive without food?—I should not like to say that I have formed a special opinion as to which would survive the longer.

49,707. Taking it for granted that they are somewhat alike, is it not the natural conclusion that the best way is to allow them to graze together?—I hardly think it would be possible to work a deer forest and sheep grazing together.

49,708. The deer forest is not a necessity of society or of existence. However, would there not be as good sport to be got on a sheep farm as on a deer forest?—I don't think there would be; it could not keep the same stock.

49,709. Did you never see deer shooting on a sheep run?—Certainly, deer are shot on sheep runs, but they are very seldom got on sheep runs till quite the end of the season, when they are not in a condition to be shot.

49,710. Why?—Because they are not good for food. They come down to the sheep runs when they want to be among the hinds. In the grounds that I am acquainted with, where there are deer and sheep together, the deer do not come to the sheep ground until they are obliged in the course of nature to do so,—their wish to go to the hinds is stronger than their fear of man.

49,711. You stated just now that deer are not got upon sheep runs. Where were the deer got when there was no deer forest?—I did not say that they are not got upon sheep runs.

49,712. But they are not got so plentifully as they used to be; do you know why?—I don't know that they are not so plentiful upon sheep runs.

49,713. But it is your own statement?—As they were formerly, you asked me a question why deer are not got upon sheep runs now as plentifully as formerly.

49,714. *The Chairman.*—Are you not aware that before the days of conducting deer stalking in the drawing-room style, deer were killed when found among sheep?—I have no doubt they were.

49,715. That the deer and the sheep herded together?—I can quite understand that the deer and the sheep might be together.

49,716. And the old sportsman in former days was content with a few stags, whereas now a man is not satisfied unless he has twenty or thirty or forty in the

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

course of the season; and one sportsman, I think last year, shot as many as 110?—I think it is possible.

49,717. *Mr Sutherland.*—But do you know why they are not found in sheep runs to such an extent? Is it not because they run to the deer forests?—My opinion is that very likely the same number of deer are on sheep runs that used to be.

49,718. Plus the number now in the deer forests?—I have no doubt there is a great increase of deer in the deer forests.

49,719. But have you any personal experience of deer being upon sheep runs?—I know cases where deer are upon sheep runs.

49,720. Do you know a place now, a deer forest that was a sheep run within your memory?—No.

49,721. Do you know the principle upon which deer forests are generally made?—The principle?

49,722. Have you never heard of the process of tapping a deer forest?—I do not know: I may have heard of what you mean, but I do not understand it yet.

49,723. Suppose there is a sheep run low down and a deer forest high up, and by forming the low-lying grazing into a deer forest the top is tapped and the man below gets the deer before the man up above; have you never heard of that?—No, I never heard of it.

49,724. Have you noticed how all the deer forests in Scotland are in a continuous run?—I do not know that they are in a continuous run. (*Shown map appended to Lord Napier's Report.*) If that is a correct representation, that would seem to be the case.

49,725. Do you know that all these gaps are now filled up?—I will take it from you if you say so.

49,726. You have not noticed the growth and development of deer forests recently; evidently you have not been paying attention to it. Then, you stated several other things against the country you live in; you said it had a rainfall?—It has a rainfall.

49,727. Is it an excessive rainfall?—It depends upon what you compare it with; it seems to me to be excessive.

49,728. I am comparing it with all Scotland?—I should consider that about 80 inches is a pretty heavy rainfall.

49,729. What is the average for Scotland?—I should not like to say off-hand.

49,730. You do not say anything about frost; have you nothing to say about it?—*A propos* of what?

49,731. In the same connection, we have heard a great deal about King Frost you know, and his effect upon new holdings?—I had nothing special to say about frost; there is no doubt it is very severe here, especially on the high ground.

49,732. You also stated that farming by crofters does not improve the land?—I do not think it does, so far as I can see.

49,733. Does deer foresting improve the land; you do not maintain that, do you?—Well, I have not noticed in my experience a deterioration of the grazing grounds.

49,734. You said his manure was poor and scanty?—So far as he keeps only milk cows, it is poorer than yeld cattle.

49,735. I thought you also stated as a general objection that his processes of agriculture were not scientific,—it amounted to that, did it not?—I did not say that, but there is no doubt that is the case.

49,736. That is not an unfair way of putting it, is it? If it is, I won't insist on it?—I certainly do not know that his processes are scientific; I should be inclined to say that a crofter is not scientific, but he may be for all that.

49,737. Scientific occupation of the land, is, I suppose, redeeming it from a state of nature and improving it, is it not?—Well, I consider that in so far as an attempt has been made, I have not seen it very successful,—I don't think it can be done to pay.

49,738. But don't you think it is a little ungenerous, to say the least of it, that after putting a man in a place where he could not improve his position, you turn round and say he is not scientific? Have you ever tried scientific farming upon 2 acres of land, and making your living off it at the same time?—No, but I did not say it was any grievance against him that he was not scientific.

49,739. Why did you think it proper to mention it?—I stated it simply as a fact.

49,740. Is crofting less scientific then than allowing land to run to waste as in a deer forest? Is there much science required for that?—It is used as grazing land; the deer forests are grazings.

49,741. You call the deer forest a grazing?—It is grazed.

49,742. Then, how do you say that the rich could not live in the West Highlands without deer forests?—Without sport, I say.

49,743. Yes, sport?—That is my experience of this country; I do not think people would come to reside here permanently, making a home here except for the sake of the sport.

49,744. May I put it without offence, are you a sportsman yourself?—Yes.

49,745. Do you come here as a sportsman?—No, I am here as a working man.

49,746. Useful to the community? Could not other people do what you do?—Oh, certainly, they might do what I do, but they would not find much to amuse them.

49,747. Could they not cultivate a croft?—Oh, but I have no croft.

49,748. They might?—Then they would not be doing what I do.

49,749. I am not referring to you at all.—I thought you asked me if other people could not do as I do.

49,750. Why should not people come here without sport? How many people come by the new railway,—how many citizens of Glasgow have come here already,—do they find it necessary to have sport?—These are not people who reside here permanently.

49,751. But they do come here, and it is my belief that they circulate more money than a sportsman. [*Mr Maccallum.*—Would you say that the sportsman is a permanent resident,—how long does he stay?—About three or four months.]

49,752. His lordship already put the question to you whether you could assist us beyond the statement you have made, and you have stated already that you cannot. Then it is your opinion that there is no land within the area for which you are responsible which could be more profitably used in any other way than the present?—That is what I consider.

49,753. *The Chairman.*—At what date did Lord Abinger acquire this estate?—The date of entry was at Martinmas 1840.

49,754. That was in the time of the great Lord Abinger?—The great Lord Abinger bought it for his son, I think. The first Lord Abinger was once here.

49,755. Was the property formerly in the hands of the Dukes of Gordon?—Originally.

49,756. After Lord Abinger got this estate in 1840, were there any clearances made?—Not so far as I am aware. I think I may say with certainty that there has been no wholesale sweeping away of crofters.

49,757. Can you tell me whether there is any, and if so what difference between the number of crofters on the estate in 1840 and the number in 1894?—I cannot tell you that without looking up, but I can tell you that the number of crofts is certainly much greater than the number of crofters,—that is to say there has been a very considerable consolidation of crofts.

49,758. By clearances, I suppose?—So far as my recollection goes, I don't think any crofter in Lord Abinger's time has ever been forced out, except, I believe, one man who would not pay his rent.

49,759. At any rate, from whatever process,—I am not suggesting a process of forcible removal, but from whatever process, has there been a considerable reduction in the number of separate holdings, and a consolidation of these either with large farms or with other holdings?—Yes, there has.

49,760. Can you tell me to what extent since 1840?—

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

I could very easily find out and tell you, and I should be very glad to do so. [See after question 49,825, page 1218.]

49,761. I should be very much obliged if you would send in a note to the Secretary stating that?—I should be very pleased to do so.

49,762. We heard a great deal before in the earlier part of your examination about Unachan, and the right of wintering possessed there by the landlord. He has a number of other townships on his estate?—Yes.

49,763. Are any of these subject to a similar right on the part of the landlord?—Not now.

49,764. When did these rights, whatever they were, cease?—In the cases of Brackletter and Kilmonivaig it ceased within the last year, we may say.

49,765. What were these rights in the cases of Brackletter and Kilmonivaig?—There were the same rights of wintering.

49,766. What were the circumstances under which these two townships got the wintering?—They wanted to get the wintering, and by arrangement it was given to them. [*Mr Macphee, Agent for crofters.*—They were interdicted,—there was an action in the Court of Session: they would not allow his lordship's sheep to graze there.]

49,767. Was there an action in the Court of Session about that right of wintering?—Yes, there was.

49,768. To what townships did that action relate?—To the townships of Kilmonivaig and Brackletter.

49,769. At whose instance was the action raised?—The action was at the instance of Lord Abinger and a Colonel Willson.

49,770. A tenant?—A tenant.

49,771. To interdict the crofters from what?—From preventing the sheep going on to the hills.

49,772. Was that action litigated by the crofters?—It was.

49,773. And what was the result of it?—The result was a settlement by which Lord Abinger gave them the wintering for a sum of money to be paid.

49,774. He renounced his right of wintering over the holdings for a sum to be paid by them?—Yes.

49,775. What was that sum?—They paid £1 a croft.

49,776. And are they doing that still?—The arrangement is depending; they have not yet made the first payment.

49,777. When was the action raised?—It is about a year ago, or rather more; it was settled last summer, I think.

49,778. Are there any other townships on the estate subject to such a right?—No.

49,779. Were they under such a right at any previous date?—Not so far as my knowledge goes.

49,780. Is not this the way of it, that at one time Lord Abinger exercised a right of wintering over the whole of the townships?—I don't think he did over the other townships; I never heard of it.

49,781. How does it happen then that when these townships of Kilmonivaig and Brackletter got quit of this right of wintering in terms of the arrangement you mention, Unachan was not included in it?—Those people wanted it: an arrangement was made with the Unachan people fixing the rents, with the exception of this man Macgillevantick, and these people were satisfied.

49,782. You mean under the Crofters Commission?—No, between Lord Abinger and them, and no question was raised about the wintering.

49,783. Now, the present rental of the estate you say is £2925 for the year 1892?—That was the sporting rent, the let of the forest and other subjects mentioned in my statement.

49,784. What was the let of the same land when it was exclusively grazing farm?—The land that is now under forest, when it was exclusively a grazing farm, I think I already said brought £1045.

49,785. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—As there was a resumption of the right of grazing by Lord Abinger, there must, of course, have been an abandonment of the right before then. Now, can you tell us why Lord Abinger at one time gave up his right to the grazing?—The circumstances existed of the crofters having the wintering, and then Lord Abinger took them into his own hands, but what happened prior to that I cannot say; I think, in point of fact, it is only in comparatively recent times that wintering has been of importance.

Fort-William. Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,786. He resumed a right that he must have had and given up before. Can you tell me why at one time he gave up that right to them?—No, I cannot tell you.

49,787. When he gave them that right were the rents raised?—That I cannot tell you; it is not within my knowledge. I know that when he resumed the rights the rents were reduced.

49,788. Had he hoggs to winter when he gave up the right?—So far as my knowledge goes he never gave it up.

49,789. How could he resume a thing he never gave up?—I suppose he was letting it to them before he resumed it; and if I, as a proprietor, have a thing and let it to a tenant, and afterwards I take it away from him again I may be said to resume it, that is to say, I no longer let it to him.

49,790. But when he gave the right of wintering to them, had he any sheep of his own to winter?—No.

49,791. Are you quite sure of that?—Perfectly certain. It was when he had to take these big farms into his own hands that he wanted this wintering.

49,792. You are quite sure that when he gave them this right of wintering, he had no hoggs to winter?—He had no hoggs that he required to winter.

49,793. You are quite sure that his hoggs were not wintered after all at Unachan?—That is my information.

49,794. But after he gave them that right of wintering, did he not take that wintering from them, send his hoggs and agree with them as to the price which they were to pay,—is that not the case?—I am afraid I am not following you.

49,795. He gave them the right of wintering, to do what they liked with it. Did he not then come and ask them to winter his at a certain price?—He agreed with them that he should take back the wintering right,—that is to say, he should no longer let them have it, and that their rents should be reduced by one quarter. That is my explanation of it; of course, I was not here at the time.

49,796. So you think that he resumed the wintering because he had sheep to winter, and gave them the wintering when he had no sheep to winter?—Yes, that is my understanding.

49,797. *Mr Donald Macphee, Agent for crofters.*—Is not wintering a device resorted to for enabling a farm to carry a larger stock than it would otherwise do?—I should not say that, as far as my knowledge goes.

49,798. Would you accept the authority of so eminent a man as Mr George Malcolm, Invergarry, on the subject?—If Mr Malcolm says so.

49,799. I am unable to quote the exact words; but I ask you simply if it is not a means resorted to for increasing the carrying capacity of a farm?—I should not have put it in that way at all.

49,800. I put it in that way, and you will be good enough to answer it?—I will answer it to the best of my ability. I should rather call wintering a device for preventing or limiting the death-rate upon a farm.

49,801. Now, about this wintering upon Unachan and Brackletter and Kilmonivaig, is it not a fact, though I daresay it occurred before your time, that some years Lord Abinger for electioneering purposes put in the old rent, the full rent, including the wintering?—There may have been times when he gave them other rights.

49,802. Are you aware that they were first induced to part with their wintering on the plea that they might save taxes seeing that as he was tenant no money passed between them, and that instead of entering the crofts at the full rent they should enter them at the nett rent, *minus* the wintering?—That is not within my knowledge.

49,803. But it is within your knowledge that he raised the rent again for electioneering purposes to the old level?—I don't know exactly for what purpose,—there may have been a change in the rentals.

Fort-William. — Harold Yorke Lidderdale Smith.

49,804. But they were increased to a sum sufficient to confer the franchise?—There may have been changes in the rental.

49,805. His lordship asked you about the rental of the sporting deer forest being £2900, and I think you stated that of that only £1400 was entered in the Valuation Roll. Will you kindly explain why you should enter so little seeing you receive so much?—There were certain deductions allowed for purposes of assessment. I have confined myself as far as I could in this inquiry to the sporting rental of land, as distinct from fishings, and I said in my statement that that £2900 included certain fishings.

49,806. Is the £2900 entered in the Valuation Roll?—Not in so many words, but what I have stated as regards the sporting does.

49,807. I understood you to say the forest rent is £2900?—No, I said the castle, forest, shootings, and certain fishings.

49,808. Will you distinguish between the amounts derived from the castle and forest, and shooting rent, and the amount derived from fishing rent?—There was £250 derived from fishing, and there was a deduction of £400 made in respect of keepers; also for gardeners, £400.

49,809. You have not gardeners who take away £400 worth of the rental?—There were four gardeners, and then there was the upkeep of gardens; manuring, glasshouse, and expenses of various kinds.

49,810. But do you really mean to say that the gardens attached to a deer forest cost as much as the wages of keepers? I could understand they would amount to a considerable sum, but do you say that gardeners cost £400?—Not gardeners, but gardens, including upkeep. The calculation was very carefully made at the time.

49,811. You said that the landlord paid £569 of taxes?—Yes.

49,812. Was he entered in the Valuation Roll as tenant of the shootings as well as the fishings at the time the Roll was made up, as he had not then let it?—Yes.

49,813. And in fixing your rent, I suppose you took into account that the tenant should bear his proper share of the burdens; or did you lose sight of that?—The tenant did pay his share that year, certainly.

49,814. Then it is not correct to say that the landlord paid all the taxes?—You are going beyond my depth. The rental was fixed before the assessment was made up.

49,815. You say that the landlord paid £569 as against £95 paid by some other person?—That was paid by the tenant.

49,816. Now, you said that the £569 represented the landlord's share of taxes as *tenant* of the shootings and the fishings as well as *proprietor* of these?—No, I don't think I did; at least I do not wish to be understood as saying so.

49,817. Well, it seems an extraordinary amount of taxes, £569 of taxes on £1400 of rent?—It is not that at all; it is on the estate.

49,818. I ask whether you mean us to understand that this £569 was paid by the landlord in connection with the deer forest or the shooting?—No, nothing to do with it; that was the taxation on the estate.

49,819. *The Chairman.*—The house and land is entered in the Valuation Roll at £176?—That is the Home Farm, I think.

49,820. No; the household farm and woodlands are entered at £225?—Yes.

49,821. That includes Inverlochy Castle, offices, gardens, and policies, 15 acres: the deer forest is entered at £800, the shootings at £400, and some parks at Dalnabea are entered at £31?—Yes.

49,822. That seems to be the whole rental as entered in the Valuation Roll for 1893–94?—There are some other figures, *e.g.*, stalker's houses are let separately: I could give your lordship a special note of these.

49,823. You had better do that, I think. The Secretary has been good enough to turn up the sentence in Mr Malcolm's paper of 1883, in which he uses these 'words:—'Further prosperity to sheep-farming in the 'Highlands was attained when the system of turnip-'hogging,—or the practice of sending the hoggs or year-'ling sheep to be wintered in the Lowland districts, '—was introduced. This system is now almost uni-'versally followed; and until the charge imposed by the 'Lowland farmers for the wintering of these young sheep 'became excessive, it materially added to the gains of 'the hill farmers, enabling them, as it practically did, to 'increase their flocks by about one-third at a compara-'tively small cost.' I suppose you agree that that is historically correct?—Well, if Mr Malcolm has stated it so, I certainly should not like to differ from him; but at the same time I am sure there is a great deal in what I say, that it is not merely to increase but to save the lives of those that would otherwise die on the farm. It may be true that wintering is resorted to for increasing the carry, but it is also employed to preserve the lives of the young sheep. [*Mr Sutherland.*—It is practically the same thing.]

49,824. *Mr Macphee.*—If you reduced the stock on the farm by one-third, you would not require wintering, of which you have made a good deal?—But you would have a much heavier mortality.

49,825. Other results might follow; but if you reduced the farm stock by one-third, then wintering would be unnecessary?—I am not prepared to say that.

[The information promised in questions 49,514, 49,760, &c., was as follows:—

'William Mackenzie, Esq.,
Secretary, Royal Commission,
6 Parliament Square, Edinburgh.

'Fort William, 3*rd Sept.* 1894.

'Sir,—I have the honour to forward the information 'I promised to give to the Commission regarding the 'Inverlochy Estate.

'So far as I can ascertain, there were sixty-one hold-'ings on this estate about the year 1840, when the 'first Lord Abinger bought the property—four of these 'seem to have been divided into two. From a comparison 'of the numbering of the holdings, it appears that 'about three-quarters of these holdings are now occupied 'by twenty-nine persons cultivating small areas of 'ground, including twenty-two "crofters" and seven 'occupants of other descriptions. The remainder of the 'ground has partly been united to other ground to form 'two farms under £100 rental, partly been utilised for 'building and garden ground for cottages of the better 'class, partly been taken by the railway, and partly 'is still occupied by the proprietor.

'I mentioned, I think, in my evidence, twenty-four '"crofters." There is one other crofter whose holding 'has been formed since 1840, making twenty-three in 'all. The other one arose from my including, by mistake, 'a small tenant who is not a "crofter."

'Not including servants or paupers, there are on the 'estate two persons occupying a house and house and 'garden respectively, on a yearly tenure, paying under '£6 of rent, one on a lease occupying a house and 'garden, also paying under £6, and four persons oc-'cupying houses and gardens on a yearly tenure, pay-'ing £10 and over.

'As far as I can ascertain, the ground now under 'forest was rented in the 60's, prior to afforesting, at '£1045. This now appears in the Valuation Roll as:—

'House, Lianachan, . . .	£20	
'Parks, „ . . .	31	
'Parks and Garden, Coire-Chuinnlidh,	25	
'Parks, Dalnabea, . . .	31	
'House and Land, Dalnabea, .	15	
'House and Land, Craiguanach, .	14	
'House and Land, Meananeach, .	4	
	£140	
'Deer Forest Grazings, . . .	800	940
	Difference,	£105

'I have the honour to remain
Your obedient servant,
'H. Y. L. Smith.'

[Adjourned.]

FIFTY-EIGHTH SITTING.

ARISAIG, August 21st, 1894.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission—*Chairman.*
MICHAEL HUGH SHAW STEWART, Esq., M.P.
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

ALLAN MACEACHAN, Crofter, Kinsadel, South Morar (64).

(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

49,826. *The Chairman.*—Your croft at Kinsadel, according to the Crofters Commission Report, has only one acre arable and the right to graze one cow on the farm of Cross. The old rent was £4, and the fair rent is £2, 16s.; the arrears were £10, 17s. 6d., whereof £5, 17s. 6d. were cancelled, and £5 ordered to be paid. Who is the tenant of the farm of Cross?—One Donald Mackenzie is the tenant.

49,827. When did he enter upon the occupation of it?—Last Whitsunday. [*Mr Harold Y. L. Smith, Factor for Arisaig estate.*—I may explain that the tenancy is a joint one, in name of Donald Mackenzie and Duncan Kennedy; the rent, according to the present Valuation Roll, is £75, but the actual rent is about £65.]

49,828. Can you tell me the extent of the farm?—I cannot tell.

49,829. Do you know what stock it carries?—I asked the former tenant in the course of last year what stock the farm carried, and he replied that there were between 400 and 500 sheep at that time.

49,830. Did he say anything about cattle?—There are not many cattle; the present tenant has not many cattle.

49,831. Has any one else a right of grazing one cow on this farm similarly to yourself?—One other has,—Alexander Maceachan, Toigeal.

49,832. Are there any more?—There are four of us who have the right of a cow and a stirk each.

49,833. You are desirous of obtaining more land, I suppose?—Yes.

49,834. In what direction do you ask us to look for land suitable for an extension of your holding or for a new holding?—I would like to get a new croft; if the railway comes along, as we hope it will come, it will come through the centre of my present croft.

49,835. Where do you say a new croft could be got?—I don't know; you yourself will know what kind of land you look for.

49,836. But sometimes we get valuable information from those dwelling in the locality who know the land already?—The people in the district are not looking for any one particular place: they wish to see what the Commission will do.

49,837. Is there a desire in the locality for new crofts?—Yes.

49,838. For new crofts, or for extension of grazing, or both?—There are a great many who want crofts who have no crofts at all; it is new crofts these require.

49,839. And among those who have crofts, what is the general desire?—Every one who complains of the croft he has, or who is not satisfied with it, desires to get a new croft.

49,840. Are there many in that position?—I don't think there are.

49,841. Now, you say there are a large number of persons who have no crofts; how many would you say?—There are about thirty who want to get new crofts.

49,842. Upon what estate are these thirty situated at present?—Between the River Morar and Kinlochailort. There are more than thirty who want land; there are altogether about forty-eight landless people in that tract of country, and there are about thirty who want new holdings.

49,843. Were you delegated to speak for these persons as well as for yourself?—Yes.

49,844. You were appointed at a meeting?—Yes.

49,845. You have told us about the farm of Cross; is there any other farm on the Arisaig estate that you ask us to consider?—I do not care to mention any particular place.

49,846. Are you quite clear that there are places suitable for a number of new holdings to meet the wants of those whom you represent?—I think there are.

49,847. Land suitable for cultivation and for grazing?—Yes, for both.

49,848. I observe you have only one acre of land and a cow's grass; how do you earn your livelihood?—By labouring: my family and myself labour throughout the country. If I do not get a living in that way, I cannot live on the croft by itself.

49,849. Do you mean that you do not get labour on the estate, but away from home?—I get very little labour on the estate.

49,850. What family have you?—Five sons.

49,851. And how many of these sons live with you when they are at home?—At present they are all at home except one. They get odd day's labour about, which keeps them going at present.

49,852. I suppose neither you nor any of your sons earns anything by fishing?—Not at present.

49,853. But do you sometimes go to the fishing?—It was at the fishing I used to be regularly.

49,854. You say you have a cow's grass on the farm of Cross. Do you keep any stock elsewhere?—No.

49,855. Did you or any of those whom you represent make any application to the landlord for additional land within the last few years?—We did not; we did not see that there was any suitable land, supposing we did apply.

49,856. When did you come into the holding?—So far as I remember it was twenty-three or twenty-four years ago.

49,857. And have you increased the arable land to any extent?—I got the land reclaimed as it is, when I entered.

49,858. And did you get a house?—Yes, the house was there.

49,859. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did I understand you correctly to say in answer to the Chairman, that you did not suppose there was any suitable land even if you did apply to the proprietor?—I think there is suitable land throughout the country.

49,860. But did you not say just now that you did not think there would be any suitable land on the Arisaig estate; or what was the meaning of your former answer?—I said so; I did not see any land about that was not presently in the occupation of farmers or others.

49,861. Then, can you tell us more clearly where the land is which you think would be suitable for crofters to farm?—There have been papers issued some time ago, calling attention to sheep farms or forests; and both kinds of land are in our country.

49,862. That is a general statement; I am asking for particular information, and I would like if you would point me to some particular land?—There is Rudha-Arisaig down here, suitable for new holdings: there were tenants there before. It maintained a considerable number of people in former times.

49,863. Any other place?—Yes, there are plenty of places in the district, but they are now in the occupation of farmers. There is Kinloid in the vicinty here; that is a place that was full of people formerly.

49,864. Any other farm?—There are other places suitable for small holdings, but I think that Kinloid and Rudh'-Arisaig would be sufficient for all the people in this district who want new holdings.

49,865. Including the thirty you spoke of between Loch-Morar and Kinlochailort?—I think the two

Arisaig.

Allan Maceachan.

places I mentioned, Kinloid and Rudha-Arisaig, would suffice for the thirty applicants I refer to.

49,866. How are those men chiefly employed? What do they work at?—Every man works for himself as well as he can; most of them are day labourers.

49,867. Do you think, supposing there were crofts laid out in these farms, men could live on such crofts entirely, without seeking labour at all?—They do not mean that at all; a poor man cannot take as much land as will suffice to maintain him.

49,868. Then, how much land would each man require?—It is not the same extent that every one would require.

49,869. How much would you require yourself?—I have a large family, and I think I would require what would keep four cows.

49,870. *Mr Sutherland.*—How is the farm of Rudha occupied at present?—It is a deer forest at present.

49,871. And how is Kinloid occupied?—It is let to a tenant.

49,872. *Mr Gordon.*—Is there not a small farm at present at Rudha?—Yes, at the outer end of Rudha.

49,873. Where is the other arable land upon the Rudha point except at that farm?—There is plenty land that was formerly in cultivation.

49,874. Is it upon the north shore or the south shore?—There is some on both sides,—some on the west side, but more on this side.

49,875. Facing the north?—On the east side.

49,876. Does the township of Back-of-Keppoch not extend up to Kinloid?—Yes, it marches with Kinloid.

49,877. What is the size of Kinloid farm?—I cannot tell the present boundaries, but when it was tenanted by small tenants, the march was not far out.

49,878. Can you tell us what stock the farm keeps?—No, I cannot.

49,879. Do the crofters of Back-of-Keppoch have any pasture in addition to their small holdings? Have they any sheep?—No.

49,880. Can you give us any idea of the size of the grazings of Kinloid?—No, I cannot; I do not know the present marches. [*The Secretary.*—The common pasture of Back-of-Keppoch is 108 acres, of which 48 acres were added in 1891.]

49,881. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is it on either of these two places you mentioned that you would like to get a croft for yourself?—Yes.

49,882. On which of the two places would you prefer a holding?—I would prefer Rudha-Arisaig; it is more convenient for the sea.

49,883. Have you got a fishing boat just now?—Not at present.

49,884. Are your sons accustomed to the fishing?—They never did much at the fishing; they are young as yet.

49,885. What is the age of the eldest?—About 21.

49,886. And the youngest?—Thirteen years.

49,887. Rudha-Arisaig would be suitable for fishing crofts, would it?—Yes.

49,888. I think you said that there were crofts there before; do you know whether these crofters followed the fishing?—They were at the fishing, and at anything that came in the way.

49,889. Do you know when they were removed from Rudha?—There is another delegate who will speak as to that.

49,890. But you are clearly of opinion that it is a very suitable place for fishermen's holdings?—Yes.

49,891. Then, would Kinloid suit for fishermen?—Kinloid is far from the shore for any man to work at the sea.

49,892. Do the crofting townships in the neighbourhood of Kinloid require an extension of pasture?—I think so; those townships marching with Kinloid have no sheep.

49,893. And an extension of holding could only be got from Kinloid, is that so?—I am sure they would take it.

49,894. Is there any other farm from which an extension of grazing could be got for the townships along the shore there?—Kinloid itself is the most convenient place for the crofters at Keppoch and Buna-caimb.

Arisaig.

Allan Mace achan.

49,895. There is a farm of Keppoch?—Yes, on the south side.

49,896. Is it a large farm?—Not very big. [*The Secretary.*—The rent is £55.]

49,897. And do you think it would be for the benefit of the large population of Back-of-Keppoch to get some of the grazings upon Keppoch farm?—I am sure they would be the better for it; I don't know whether they want it or not.

49,898. Was Kinloid ever held by crofters?—Yes.

49,899. When did it come to be made one farm?—The first batch of tenants were removed from Kinloid in 1843. There were ten crofters in Kinloid at that time.

49,900. And were the ten removed at that time?—Yes, and not one of them was a penny in arrear.

49,901. Do you know why the tenantry were cleared?—Yes. The factor that came there, one Rose, wanted them to reclaim moss at the road-side at their own expense; the tenants would not agree to do that, and on that account they were warned out that same year.

49,902. And when they were removed, what was done with the farm?—A minister of the name of Maccallum who was in the district at the time took it; he had been tenant of Craigmore before that, and he took Kinloid along with it.

49,903. That was just immediately on the removal of the people?—When the tenants were removed the minister took Kinloid.

49,904. And did he reclaim the moss?—He reclaimed a little of the moss, but he did not put any crop in it. He got people from the north and trenched a piece of this ground; after that it was cropped, but not by him.

49,905. How long did he hold the place?—I think about five years.

49,906. Has that reclamation been a success? And what has been the extent of it?—There are not many acres of it altogether.

49,907. Is it cropped now?—It is under crop now, but Mr Astley retrenched it and put it into a proper state of cultivation.

49,908. Who succeeded Mr Maccallum?—After Mr Maccallum, the minister, left, the place was let to sixteen small tenants.

49,909. Who was the proprietor at that time?—One Mackay.

49,910. Where did the sixteen come from?—Through the country here.

49,911. How long was this Mackay proprietor?—Not very long: I do not remember how many years.

49,912. How long did the sixteen continue in Kinloid?—They were there for about six years.

49,913. Were they getting on well in Kinloid?—Yes, they were getting on well enough.

49,914. Did they build houses for themselves when they were put there?—I am not certain whether they got help or not for the building of the houses.

49,915. The houses were built for the tenantry who went there at that time?—Yes, they all had houses.

49,916. How are these houses occupied now, or are they standing?—They are not standing.

49,917. Were these sixteen removed at one time?—They were removed at the same time. A tacksman's house was erected at that time, and Kinloid has been held as a tack ever since.

49,918. Who was the proprietor when they were removed?—Mr Astley.

49,919. What provision was made for these sixteen on their removal?—Some of them went to Australia, some to other districts, and some to Arisaig. Some are in Arisaig still.

49,920. What stock would each of these sixteen have when they occupied Kinloid?—I am not sure how many acres each of these had.

49,921. Were they better or worse off than the crofters in Arisaig to-day?—The crofts were good enough; they were somewhat like the others.

49,922. Had they sheep?—No sheep.

Arisaig. Allan Maceachan.

49,923. There is a large sheep pasture attached to Kinloid: had they that?—No.

49,924. Then, who had the grazing that is now in Kinloid along with the arable?—It was attached to Borrodale at that time, and the rest was attached to Craigmore: it was let to the minister, Mr Maccallum.

49,925. Then if Kinloid were made into small holdings, would you think it right that they should have the present sheep grazing along with the arable?—Undoubtedly, if the place was divided into small crofts they would require to have outrun into the hill.

49,926. What became of the ten that originally held it?—Mrs Macdonell of Morar, the mother of Mr Æneas Macdonell, pleaded with the proprietor to allow them to remain for another year, and she herself became security for their rent for that year. They were allowed to remain, but there was an increase of £20 put on them in respect of that year. Then Mrs Macdonell sold out her own stock on the farm of Traigh and let the farm of Traigh to them.

49,927. Then, when factor Rose did that, who was the proprietor?—Lord Cranstoun.

49,928. How long did Lord Cranstoun have the property?—That was before I remember. They were desirous of converting it into a tack again.

49,929. But were the small tenants paying their rents?—I never heard that they were not.

49,930. *Mr A. W. Nicholson of Arisaig.*—You referred to a desire for extension of your holding. Have you ever applied to me for an extension?—No.

49,931. Are you aware that your neighbour got an extension in 1888?—Yes.

49,932. Did you apply to me at the same time?—I spoke to your manager at the time, one Mackay.

49,933. Did you ever apply to me?—No, but I spoke to your factor, Mr Mackenzie.

49,934. You also mentioned Kinloid. Do you include in the land which you consider available for crofters the arable land of Kinloid?—Undoubtedly, it is the arable land that would do good to a poor man.

49,935. Do you mean by arable land, land presently under rotation of crop?—Yes, but there is plenty of land there that is not in cultivation now, but that would yield crop as well as the land now tilled.

49,936. Would you point out on the map or tell the Commissioners where that land is to be found? Is it in the ground at present grazed by sheep?—Any one who traverses the ground can see that for himself.

49,937. Will you say one spot on Kinloid hill which you consider suitable for cultivation?—I do not compare arable land, but hill land.

49,938. What I wanted to get from you is whether you could point out one spot outside the present arable land which is cropped, which you consider suitable for cultivation?—I know pieces of land both in Kinloid and in the hill which were formerly cropped, but before my recollection. [*The Chairman.*—Will you show us the particular places you mean when we go over the ground?—Yes, and I will show you the rigs still.]

49,939. Lazy-beds, I presume?—Yes.

49,940. You referred to the grazing of Keppoch Farm. Do you know the stock which Keppoch Farm as at present held grazes?—I do not know.

49,941. Are you aware that it is not much more than a hundred sheep at the outside?—I cannot say what stock he has.

49,942. Are you aware that part of that farm was taken off for the Keppoch crofters three years ago?—Yes.

49,943. At what time did these ten removals from Kinloid take place?—In 1843.

49,944. How old were you then?—About 14 years old.

49,945. Were you living on Kinloid?—Yes, I was in Kinloid myself at the time.

49,946. Were you living there?—My father was one of the ten who were removed from Kinloid.

49,947. These crofters who were removed and went to Traigh, what became of them eventually?—After the expiry of the five years' lease we had at Traigh, two of the tenants were allowed to return to Kinloid, —John Cameron and Alexander Maceachan.

Arisaig. Allan Maceachan.

49,948. And what about the other eight?—The others after the lapse of some years got small holdings.

49,949. Were they removed from Traigh again?—They were not removed from Traigh, but they were deprived of their land.

49,950. Are they there now?—Some of them are there still, and plenty of them are in Eternity.

49,951. *The Chairman.*—Do you know of any lands having been recently afforested?—No.

49,952. How long ago is it since, to your knowledge, land formerly held as grazing was put under deer?—Rudha is the last place; I cannot give you the exact date, but I think it is about forty years ago. [*Mr Nicholson.*—It is about forty years ago.]

49,953. You have called our attention particularly to Rudha-Arisaig and to Kinloid; and you said there was land there sufficient for the desires of those who wish more land or new holdings. I want to ask you if there are any other farms which you commend to our notice?—There is not a place in the occupancy of a tacksman in Arisaig that is not suitable for small tenants.

49,954. And how many tacksmen are in Arisaig?—I think there are twelve between Upper Arisaig and the River Morar.

49,955. Then you ask our attention to the whole of these?—I leave that to the Commissioners' pleasure.

49,956. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—In reply to Mr Nicholson, you said that there was an extension given to the Keppoch crofters about three years ago?—Yes.

49,957. Was that an extension granted by the proprietor, or had they to come before the Crofters Commission for it?—It is my belief that the landlord gave it to them. [*The Secretary.*—The land was assigned by the landlord, and the valuation of it was left to the Crofters Commission.]

49,958. The report of the Crofters Commission shows that it was 48 acres divided into 11 shares. [*Mr Nicholson.*—But among six crofters.] Are these all the crofters in Back-of-Keppoch?—Yes, six tenants.

49,959. Are there any cottars there?—There is another delegate, James Macdonald, who will explain better about it.

JOHN MACMILLAN, Crofter, Morach, Arisaig (65). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

John Macmillan.

49,960. *The Chairman.*—Was your croft valued by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The extent is 1 acre arable, 3 acres outrun; right of grazing one cow on the farm of Mains of Arisaig: old rent £5, 10s., fair rent £5, 10s.; arrears £21, 7s. 6d., ordered to be paid.]

49,961. Are you anxious to get a new holding?—I am anxious to get more than I have; I have but little arable land.

49,962. Is it extension of grazings or extension of arable that you want?—I am in need of a little of both.

49,963. Could you stock additional land at your own expense?—Yes. My family is growing up and I could stock it.

49,964. What family have you?—Eight.

49,965. How many sons?—Three sons.

49,966. What is the age of the youngest?—The youngest is at school, about five years of age; and the eldest is twenty-two years of age.

49,967. Is there land near your present holding suitable, in your opinion?—Yes, there is land near me which was formerly in the hands of the crofters; they were removed from there in 1823.

49,968. What land is that?—Aird-nam-fuaran is the old name of the place: it is now called The Square.

49,969. How many crofters were in that township of Aird-nam-fuaran?—There were fifteen tenants in it, and five others along with them.

49,970. And you say they were removed in the year 1823?—Yes. There were four townships altogether;

Arisaig. John Macmillan.

the place was completely cleared in 1823, but they had begun to clear before then.

49,971. What were the names of the four townships?—Larach-mhor, Seananais, Torr-dubh, and Aird-nam-fuaran.

49,972. Who was then the proprietor?—Clanranald.

49,973. What became of those who were removed?—Twelve of them went to America.

49,974. And what became of the remainder?—They were scattered as objects of charity throughout the country.

49,975. How is that land occupied now?—One piece of Aird-nam-fuaran is now part of the tack of Kinloid.

49,976. And the other portion?—The other portion is now down at what we call the Square, at Arisaig Mains; and there is also a place called Gaoideal at the end of the forest.

49,977. Are you appearing here as a delegate?—Yes, I was appointed at a meeting, and I agreed to come.

49,978. Were you appointed at the same meeting as Maceachan?—Yes, but I was selected before.

49,979. How many are there without land and desirous of obtaining land in this quarter whom you represent?—I did not consider that; I did not inquire the number, and I am not in a position to answer that question.

49,980. Are there persons desiring land, both those who have no land, and those whose holdings are too small?—That is what I understand; those that have no land would like to get a little.

49,981. And those who have land would like a little more?—Yes, that is so.

49,982. Do those persons whom you represent, people without land and those who have small crofts, live partly by their crofts and partly by labour?—That is how they all maintain themselves; it is from the day's pay that they make their living.

49,983. Do most of them for a day's pay have to go a considerable distance from home?—The youth of the district are all away from home, and they send home their earnings to their parents.

49,984. You spoke particularly of a clearance having taken place in 1823; do you remember, or do you know of any other clearances in this locality?—Yes, many a removal since then.

49,985. Do you remember how many there have been since then?—I remember that quite well.

49,986. How many?—People were removed from Gaoideal after that,—it is the nearest place to those I have mentioned. They were removed from there in 1829.

49,987. Any other removals?—At that time there were ten removed from Gaoideal and one from Sandaig. Gaoideal now takes in the march to The Square or Mains Farm.

49,988. Do you know of any other removals besides these two?—There is another place on the other side of Gaoideal that was also cleared.

49,989. What place is that?—That is Rudha itself.

49,990. When did that occur?—In the year 1842.

49,991. What was the next removal after that?—Kinloid was cleared the next year, 1843: the estate was at that time sold to Mr Mackay of Bighouse.

49,992. After the removal from Kinloid in 1843, were there any removals?—In that same year there were people removed from other parts of the districts,—from the Braes of Arisaig, and also from Keppoch, now called Face-of-Keppoch. That was from 1841 to 1843.

49,993. Were there any removals from this estate after that?—Yes, after 1850.

49,994. What removals took place after 1850?—The sixteen that were re-settled in Kinloid were removed in 1850. They were also removed from Camus-a'-Rudha.

49,995. In what year?—I think about 1854.

49,996. Do you know of any after that date?—At that same time there were thirty-one removed from Achcraig, Kinloid, and Moss.

49,997. What was the date of the last removal?—The matter was stopped then,—it was done through a misunderstanding on the part of Mr Astley. The matter was referred to Mrs Astley, and it was stopped.

49,998. What was the date of that?—I think it was either 1853 or 1854.

49,999. The previous witness, Mr Maceachan, told us that all the lands under tack in this locality were suitable for our consideration. Do you agree with that view?—Yes, I agree with it: I do not see any place here but what was under tenants.

50,000. And are you of opinion that land that was under small tenants before, might profitably and advantageously be put under small tenants again?—I am sure of that, and I am sure it would be more profitable to the landlord, for I am certain that the rents paid by the tacksmen are lower than the rents that were fixed for the crofters lately.

50,001. Do you mean the rents fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Mr Nicholson charges 12s. an acre to the tacksman for arable and for pasture accompanying it; I pay £5, 10s. for about an acre of land.

50,002. Was your house put up by your landlord?—No, it was not; it was built before the Reformation; but it was re-roofed. It was the landlord who slated it about thirty-eight years ago.

50,003. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You told us there was some land on the Mains of Arisaig suitable for crofters. Has any part of that land you refer to been under rotation of crops for some years?—Some of it is under crop, but some has not been cropped for a number of years, I don't know how many. Anyone with eyes can see that.

50,004. Do you know that this Commission has nothing to do with cultivated land?—It is land capable of cultivation that is in pasture.

50,005. But I am speaking of land under rotation?—That is another matter.

50,006. Then you are only speaking of land that is under sheep?—I am speaking of land under pasture; land under sheep; and land under cattle; also land under water.

50,007. That would not be very suitable for crofters' occupation, would it?—There are lots of land under water, which could be drained.

50,008. Would not that cost the tenant a great deal?—I am referring to the crofter who may get that land.

50,009. So am I. Would it not cost him money to clear the water off?—Yes, but it is better for him to have that than to be without any land.

50,010. Even although it should cost him a good deal of money to drain it?—There is a great difference between money and a man's labour.

50,011. How long would it take the tenant to clear the water off the land you refer to as being under water?—There are lots of places that are suitable, which would require to be drained; the places are running waste.

50,012. How long would it take to drain the land before you could get a good crop out of it?—There is plenty of land that would give a crop the first year.

50,013. Land that is now under water?—Yes, land that will require to be drained.

50,014. Could it all be drained in one year and made ready for cropping the next?—I am not responsible for that question, and I am not in a position to answer it.

50,015. I should like to have your opinion as to the houses which would require to be put up for these new tenants. Who would put them up?—They might build their own houses if they were to get land,—houses which would suit them at first, and which they could improve afterwards.

50,016. Do you think the tenants would be prepared to undertake, without any help, the cost of putting up houses, draining the land, fencing and stocking?—I don't think that: I think some of them would require a little help; but the less help the better for them.

50,017. Where do you expect the help would come from; from Government?—I think so.

50,018. May I ask what is your own occupation?—I am a wire fencer, but I used to be a shepherd.

50,019. *Rev. Mr Maccalbum.*—I think you stated that, in your opinion there would be no loss to the pro-

prietor if the land were occupied as small holdings?—As far as I can see, there would be no loss; as far as I know the rents.

50,020. You think the rent paid by the larger tenants is not higher than the rent paid by the smaller tenants?—I am sure of that. When Kinloid was under crofters, they paid £105.

50,021. And what is the present rent?—Kinloid is now a tack, and takes in Aird-nam-fuaran and Borrodale, but I don't know what the rent is.

50,022. The Valuation Roll shows it to be £100, but this tack that is called Kinloid is, you say, much larger than what was held by the crofters for £105?—Yes, by a long way.

50,023. Do you think it is twice as valuable?—Yes, three times as valuable as what the Kinloid crofters have.

50,024. So that at that rate, the crofters paid more for a third than is now paid for the whole of Kinloid?—They paid £105; Kinloid of to-day has different boundaries.

50,025. But you stated that the part held by the crofters is not more than a third of the tack?—Yes, that is so.

50,026. The crofters of Kinloid paid £105, and Kinloid then meant a third of the present farm?—It is not even so much.

50,027. And was the present steading of Kinloid put up by the proprietor?—Yes, Mr Astley, the proprietor, put it up.

50,028. Is there an extensive steading there?—Yes. It was dear enough to Mr Astley.

50,029. Can you give us any idea of the cost of it?—He would not know that himself, supposing he were alive.

50,030. Why do you think so?—There was a piece added every now and again, and changes made at the instigation of different people.

50,031. Do you know about the sixteen people who were settled in Kinloid,—whether they got houses built for them?—No. My mother and I were among those tenants, and we built our house. There were four townships.

50,032. Can you tell us whether, on their removal, the people got compensation for these houses that they built?—No, they were just pulled down.

50,033. I think you stated that these removals took place through a misunderstanding?—I heard that language from his own mouth, in the presence of a hundred persons.

50,034. How do you account for such a misunderstanding as that, which would lead to the removal of these people?—I have nothing to do with that.

50,035. But you said the thing was put a stop to when it was rightly understood. If it was only through a misunderstanding that these removals took place, how is it that the people were not replaced in Kinloid after the misunderstanding was cleared up?—Most of them were off to Australia, and scattered by that time.

50,036. And was no attempt made to get the place re-occupied by small tenants?—He did not live long after that.

50,037. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you know the deer forest of Rudha-Arisaig?—Yes, every yard of it.

50,038. Is that land, in your opinion, fitted for new holdings?—I saw them there formerly.

50,039. How many holdings do you think could be made in that forest?—I do not know; there were ten in Gaoideal and one in Sandaig and there would be about thirty in the remaining part of Rudha.

50,040. Do you think if new holdings were to be made it would be desirable to have so many as that now?—No.

50,041. Could the tenants in such new holdings have pasture as well as arable land?—Yes, they would have more hill ground, and they would have arable land also.

50,042. But do both kinds of land exist in suitable proportion?—Yes, and it is in ports and bays at the shore.

50,043. Is the forest surrounded by the sea on most sides?—Yes, except the upper end of it, the eastern end.

50,044. Do you know much about deer forests?—For ten years I have been employed protecting forests.

50,045. Are deer forests, as a rule, down at the sea-level?—I never saw a forest at the sea-side except this one and some in the island of Skye.

50,046. And in the island of Skye it would not be easy to have them far from the sea?—I don't think you can go more than five miles from the sea in any part of Skye.

50,047. You spoke about land under water; do you mean by that, land that is allowed to fall back into a state of nature through want of occupation?—It is land that was formerly under crop, which has been allowed to go to decay through neglect.

50,048. And do you think that if the land were given back to the possession of small holders, that state of matters would cease?—They would bring the land to usefulness.

50,049. Do you think that people who can pay £1, 10s. per acre for land, could pay as much as a big tacksman for more land?—There is not such a thing as 30s. an acre in the west of Scotland at all.

50,050. Is not that your rent?—I pay £5, 10s., and I have a little over four acres.

50,051. *Mr Gordon.*—When you say that crofters can pay bigger rents than tacksmen, do you mean small crofts the occupants of which would be engaged in labouring throughout the country or in fishing?—There is no small tenant who would not require to be at work as a labourer or a fisherman.

50,052. Is that the class of men you have in your mind when you speak of them paying bigger rents than the tacksmen?—Yes. The rents we pay presently are higher than the rents paid by the tacksmen.

50,053. But these rents you earn, not out of the croft, but by the labour or fishing?—I earn the rent and what I eat not from the croft.

50,054. And is that the class of croft you have in your mind when you say the crofters can pay more rent than the tacksmen?—Yes; but I hope that the new croft will be more profitable to the new tenants than mine is to me.

50,055. But you said specifically that crofters could pay and were paying bigger rents than the tacksmen. Do you mean that these rents should be earned by fishing or labouring otherwise than on the croft?—I am sure of that.

50,056. *The Chairman.*—How many rooms are there in your house?—Two rooms and kitchen, and a garret above.

50,057. Is there sleeping accommodation in the garret?—Yes, there are beds in the garret.

50,058. How many?—Two beds.

50,059. Are there two apartments, then, in the garret flat?—Yes.

50,060. You say that your house has existed since the Reformation; you got the house, I suppose, when you got the holding?—Yes.

50,061. And occasionally, since you got the house and the holding, you have had assistance from the landlord in repairing it?—That was all taken up before the Crofters Commission; those who gave that information were not put on oath.

50,062. When you say there is a desire for new holdings, do you mean holdings by which the occupants are to live entirely, or holdings where they would live partly by their holdings and partly by labour?—The kind of croft they want is a croft that would be a home, but where they would earn their livelihood at labour or at fishing.

50,063. Then, is there no desire for holdings by which the crofters could live entirely?—There may be one or two of that class.

50,064. *Mr A. W. Nicholson of Arisaig.*—You say that all the land in the hands of the larger tenants is suitable for small crofts. You are a fencer and an old shepherd; have you ever farmed a bigger piece of land than your present croft?—Yes, at Craigmore.

Arisaig. John Macmillan.

50,065. How much did you farm there?—I had the fourth of the township.

50,066. How much does that mean?—The township would maintain 12 cows and 8 score of sheep.

50,067. You had a plough, I suppose, and worked the land yourself?—No, we did not have time for that; we were removed shortly after we got it.

50,068. Then, you have never farmed any piece of land that you had to plough with a horse?—No.

50,069. You have referred to the Mains as suitable for the extension of crofts?—Yes.

50,070. I suppose you mean the land that is at present under cultivation, which was reclaimed by the landlord?—I mean all the land that is here; it was all formerly in the occupation of crofters.

50,071. Was it not all reclaimed by the landlord? Were not the present canal and all the drains made by the landlord?—Clanranald improved it first of all.

50,072. I said 'the landlord'?—He removed the water out of it and made the canal, which Mr Astley afterwards deepened.

50,073. Are you aware how much it cost?—No.

50,074. Are you aware that Mr Astley spent upwards of £1000 on that canal alone?—I do not know.

50,075. You have referred to possible new holdings in Rudha forest?—Yes, every man of sense would say that.

50,076. Have you considered the cost of a new croft in Rudha?—No.

50,077. Do you think it would cost £300 to start a man with a proper sized croft?—If I were aware that such a question as that would be asked of me, I would have prepared myself to answer it.

50,078. Don't you think that if you come here to give evidence, you ought to be prepared?—But I did not know all the kinds of questions that might be put.

50,079. Could you find £100 to put into a new croft at Rudha?—No, and I would not require £100 for a croft in Rudha.

50,080. How much would you require?—I do not know. I have cattle, and I have a croft of my own: I don't seek a croft in Rudha.

50,081. But, do you know any parties who could put £100 towards making a new croft in Rudha, or in any one of these farms that you say are suitable?—I do not know what any man may have.

50,082. It was rather difficult to follow the apportionment of rent between the crofters of Kinloid in the old days and the grazing, but I would like to ask you whether the crofters at the present time would pay the rent which they paid when they paid £105,—would they pay in the same way a rate which the landlord wanted, or would they apply to the Crofters Commission and get their rents fixed?—It is the Commission themselves that do that.

50,083. You say that the crofters would pay higher rents than the bigger tenants?—Yes, I repeat that, and I can prove it.

50,084. But they would expect to have their rents fixed by the Commission and not fixed by competition in the market?—I don't know as to that.

50,085. When they paid £105, there was no Commission to fix the rent?—No; the rent was fixed for them.

50,086. *The Chairman.*—Suppose that new holdings were established, would you be in favour of the rents being fixed by private agreement, or by a tribunal acting under statute?—We were longer accustomed to the landlord, and we would consider it more natural to deal with the landlord; but when it is a matter of fighting, we must take the best weapon (or the best channel) for fighting.

50,087. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did you ever in your experience know of a new holding having been formed?—I saw sixteen crofts made and sixteen houses built at the same time, with their own effort. I saw sixteen crofts also made between Munlochy and the Kessock Ferry, and there was nothing there but wood.

50,088. Had these people to satisfy authorities that they had £300 each?—No, but some of those in Munlochy got £12 each.

Arisaig. John Macmillan.

50,089. Are you of opinion that what was done before could be done again?—In this place in Ross-shire that I refer to the land was under wood; but the places I speak of here were all under cultivation before.

50,090. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Was all the land that is in the Mains Farm reclaimed by some proprietor or other?—No; when the water was taken off the Mains, the landlord immediately put it under plough.

50,091. When was the canal made?—First of all it was begun in 1816, or 1817, and it was afterwards deepened by Mr Astley.

50,092. Crofters held some of the land that is now in the Mains of Arisaig, did they not?—It was crofters who were on both sides of the Mains altogether,—in Gaoideal and in Aird-nam-Fuaran.

50,093. *The Secretary.*—According to the Particulars of the Clanranald estates when offered for sale in 1826, there were six tenants paying £6 each in Gaoideal and one in Diulaid. Rhudha, Dubh-Chamus, &c. were let to Archibald Macdonald; and Borrodale, &c. to John Macdonald. Craigmore, Drumdarroch, Sandaig, Aird-nam-fuaran, and Point-of-Keppoch were small farms.

James Macdonald.

JAMES MACDONALD, Mason, Strath, Arisaig (36) —*examined.*

50,094. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

50,095. Were you appointed as a delegate?—My father was appointed as a delegate, and I appear in his place. I have a statement.

50,095A. Why is he not here himself?—He is old and ill.

50,096. What is his age?—Seventy-five or seventy-seven.

50,097. Is the statement written by you or by him?—By me, through what I have heard from him.

'I have been duly appointed a delegate to appear 'before your Royal Commission at a public meeting 'held at Arisaig for the purpose. There are a great 'many of the cottar class in Arisaig who are landless. 'And the most of the holdings of such as are of the 'crofter class are far too small to maintain them. The 'former require new holdings and the latter class 'require an extension of their present holdings. There 'is also in the district a sufficiency of suitable and 'available land at present under deer and used for 'grazing purposes, to meet the requirement of the 'whole country-sides.

'1. *Aird-nam-fuaran.*—This township contained six-'teen tenants up till about 1823 when they were evicted. 'Several of those who were born there are still living 'among us. They were all in good circumstances. 'They held the Strath lands, the hill grazing, and a 'heavy stock. Each of the sixteen had a horse. This 'township was divided between two farmers. The one 'portion of it was added to the grazing farm of Kinloid 'and the other portion was added to what is now called 'the Mains of Arisaig which is let to a tacksman.

'2. *The Deer Forest of Arisaig.*—The following town-'ship were cleared, and since made into deer forest:—

'(1.) Gaoideal, which contained ten tenants, was 'cleared in 1829, and a portion was added to the 'Mains, and the remainder let to a tacksman.

'(2.) Sandaig contained one tenant, and was 'cleared in 1829 and added to a neighbouring 'tack.

'(3.) Doire-na-drise, cleared of five tenants about '1843.

'(4.) Dubh-chamus, cleared of three tenants about '1843.

'(5.) Rumach, cleared of twenty tenants about '1843.

'(6.) Ardghasaraic, cleared of two tenants about '1843.

'(7.) Ach-a'-gharbh-uilt, cleared of three tenants 'about 1843.

'(8.) Drimindarrach, cleared of three tenants about '1857.

Arisaig. James Macdonald.

'(9.) Na Puirt, cleared of three tenants about '1854.

'These fifty well-doing tenants, exclusive of twenty-'nine cottar families, once lived in comparative comfort 'on the lands now embraced in the deer forest of 'Arisaig. They were all summarily evicted without a 'penny of compensation for the buildings or other 'permanent improvements made by them.

'The mill in the district above described is now 'used as a byre by the gamekeeper. To-day there 'are in the area only two gamekeepers, one tenant, two 'cottars, and two paupers, where, within living memory, 'seventy-nine families lived in comfort.

'3. *Polnish.*—About the year 1838 this township 'was cleared of three tenants. It is now a part of the 'large farm of Glenmamie. This farm embraces Camus-'a'-fhraoich, from which three tenants were evicted in '1851; Earna-poll, from which three tenants were 'evicted; Ceann-loch-nan-Uamh, from which three 'tenants were evicted.

'4. *Keppoch.*—From this township five tenants were 'evicted in the year 1836, Poll-Throundainn had three 'of these.

'5. *Kinloid Farm* (Cean-a'-leathaid).—In 1843 there 'were ten tenants evicted from these lands, their 'holdings consolidated and given to the Established 'Church minister, who held them for only five years, 'when it was again let to sixteen crofters. Again six 'years after this, these sixteen crofters were evicted, 'and the land given to a tacksman. Every one of the 'sixteen crofters who held the land for the six years had 'built the house and steadings, but got no compensation 'on their compulsory removals.'

(Signed) JAMES MACDONALD.

50,098. You referred particularly to a cottar class. How many are there belonging to that class desirous of getting more land?—About thirty.

50,098A. Have the cottars any land at present?—I would rather speak in Gaelic.

50,099. You have been working in the south?—Yes.

50,100. And you speak English when you are in the south?—Yes, but that is a different case.

50,101. Do these thirty cottars pay any rent?—Yes.

50,102. What average rent do they pay?—They have different rents.

50,103. What is the general run of the rents paid by the cottars?—£5.

50,104. And have they any land?—Small lots, potato ground.

50,105. And some of them have gardens, I suppose?—Yes.

50,106. Have any of them no land?—There are a good few who are landless.

50,107. Now, as I understand you, the whole of these are desirous of getting new holdings?—Yes.

50,108. What kind of holdings have they in their minds?—Small holdings.

50,109. That is to say, holdings where they would live partly by the holdings and partly by labour or fishing?—Yes.

50,110. They do not wish holdings large enough to maintain them?—Very few.

50,111. But there are a few who do?—Two or three.

50,112. Would these persons desirous of new holdings undertake such holdings without assistance?—Some would need help, and some could do without it.

50,113. What as to the majority?—The minority would not seek much; very few of them could do without assistance. The majority of them would need assistance.

50,114. The greater number would require some assistance?—Yes.

50,115. Do you mean by assistance, money borrowed which would be repaid over a term of years?—Yes.

50,116. Have any of these cottars stock at present?—None.

50,117. Do they live by labour mainly?—Mainly by labour.

50,118. Such work as they can get in the neighbourhood, or going further from home?—Wherever they can procure work. Arisaig. James Macdonald.

50,119. They pay their rents out of their labour and not out of the land?—Out of their labour.

50,120. Were the houses which these cottars occupy put up by the landlord or by themselves?—By the landlord.

50,121. In every case?—In every case; all the cottars' houses.

50,122. Are the houses repaired by the landlord from time to time?—Yes.

50,123. You mentioned particularly land that is under deer. Do you refer to the Rudha forest?—Partly.

50,124. And partly to what other forest?—And partly to what is outside the forest and to two other tacks.

50,125. And you ask our attention both to land in the forest and to land which is presently part of grazing farms?—Yes.

50,126. The forest you refer to is the Rudha forest, I suppose?—Yes, that is the most suitable for us hereabout.

50,127. It is near at hand?—Yes, and near the sea.

50,128. Is there a good deal of land there that we should consider?—There is a good deal, only it is scattered here and there.

50,129. Suitable for cultivation and suitable also on the higher reaches for grazing?—Yes, for both.

50,130. Then, I suppose, such new holdings as are in view would be holdings consisting partly of arable land and partly of hill grazing?—Yes; mostly hill grazing.

50,131. Their idea is to pay the rent mainly out of the stock of sheep and cattle they might have?—Yes.

50,132. Now, is there any desire in this quarter for fishermen's holdings,—that is to say, small patches along the sea-shore with houses, and to live by the sea entirely?—Yes.

50,133. There is a desire of that kind?—Yes, a great desire amongst them for fishermen's holdings.

50,134. They would have a house and a small patch of land for potatoes, and would live entirely by the sea?—Just so.

50,135. And is there a class of that kind in this locality?—There is.

50,136. Who live by the sea at present?—Partly by sea and partly by their croft.

50,137. Where are they mainly situated?—In a township of the name of Bun-na-Caimb.

50,138. But is there a desire for small holdings by the sea-shore where the fishermen would live by the sea altogether?—I cannot say.

50,139. Do you carry on your trade as a mason mostly in this quarter?—I have been more away, till lately.

50,140. Where do you work?—Away south, and out in the Western Isles sometimes.

50,141. But lately you have been getting labour here?—Yes.

50,142. And have you got regular employment?—No.

50,143. It comes and goes?—Comes and goes.

50,144. What sort of wage do you make?—I make 5s. a day when I am employed; sometimes more, sometimes less.

50,145. Is there a general complaint among the crofters that their holdings are too small?—Yes.

50,146. Among the whole of them?—Most of them.

50,147. And if their holdings were enlarged, either the arable or the grazing, or both, would they still desire to live partly by their holdings and partly by labour, or entirely by the holdings?—I cannot say.

50,148. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do the people in this locality expect that there will be better opportunities for carrying on the fishing after the railway is made to Mallaig?—Yes.

50,149. And is that, in your opinion, a reason why such holdings as you have spoken of should be made with a prospect of success?—Yes, because they get a ready market for the fish, and a better price; and they don't want to be engaged with their crofts altogether.

50,150. Have the people north of this always been

Arisaig.

James Macdonald.

engaged more or less in fishing?—I cannot go further than the River Morar.

50,151. Well, up to the River Morar, at anyrate, is that the case?—Yes.

50,152. How do they get their fish disposed of at present?—By steamboats.

50,153. And do you expect that when the railway is made, there will be a better price and a steadier market for fish?—It is the rumour amongst people.

50,154. It is the belief?—It is their belief, in general.

50,155. Have you heard the evidence that has been given by the other gentlemen who have given us information?—Yes.

50,156. Do you agree with what they said?—Yes, for the most part.

50,157. These places that you mentioned from which people were put away before, are places that, in your opinion, could be peopled again; is not that the reason why you mentioned them?—Most likely.

50,158. And you think these are places that we ought to go and see when we are in this locality?—Yes.

50,159. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—What fishing is it chiefly that they get round this coast, the herring or the white-fishing?—Herring and white-fishing, both.

50,160. You told us that two or three of those you speak for are looking for holdings that they could live by entirely?—Yes.

50,161. Can you tell us of any land in this neighbourhood where a man could really support himself on the croft, without getting anything from labour or from fishing?—I believe I could, but it is not my own wish that I should live by a croft, because I am a mason to trade, and would be glad to have a home.

50,162. But speaking for others, can you point us to any land on which, in your belief, or in the belief of your neighbours, a man could support himself and his family, pay rent, and not fall into debt, by living entirely on his croft?—Yes, he could.

50,163. Whereabouts is that land?—In the district of Arisaig, in a good few places.

50,164. Where?—But there must be more land given in that case to each new holder, to give him an independent croft. He should have from 8 to 10 cows; he cannot do with less.

50,165. And how many sheep?—Two or three hundred sheep.

50,166. Any arable land?—Certainly.

50,167. How many acres would you put down to the arable land?—From 10 to 12.

50,168. Can you show us any suitable place where such crofts could be made?—There are farms in the district of Arisaig with 70 acres of arable land.

50,169. Are there crofters in this district who would be able to occupy such land without help?—I cannot say.

50,170. They would have first to build the house, would they not?—They would require a house.

50,171. And something in the shape of a steading?—Yes.

50,172. And then they would require to stock the land and work the farm?—Yes.

50,173. Do you believe that there would be sufficient profit from land farmed in that way in this climate to maintain a man and his wife and family, and provide the rent, without his running into debt?—Yes.

50,174. You think that could be done?—Yes.

50,175. Have you any practical experience of farming yourself?—No, but I have seen that done, and people in that position keeping themselves clear of debt.

50,176. In this neighbourhood?—No, not here.

50,177. Where?—There are none here.

50,178. Where have you seen it?—In the Island of Coll and the Island of Tiree, and in a good few islands away west.

50,179. But you have never seen such a small farm in this neighbourhood?—No.

50,180. I suppose it would be a considerable benefit to you, as a mason, if there were a number of new houses to be built in this district?—According if I would get the work to build them.

Arisaig.

James Macdonald.

50,181. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You stated that there are about thirty cottars, I think, and that these have all comfortable houses?—Some of them.

50,182. The majority of them?—Yes, the majority.

50,183. Houses built by the proprietor?—Yes.

50,184. Who also gives work, I suppose?—Not to the half of them.

50,185. But when these houses were built for them, were they mostly in the employment of the landlord?—Yes.

50,186. Was there more work when they were built than there is now?—Twenty times the work that there is now.

50,187. So that their condition now is not so favourable as it was when these houses were first built?—No.

50,188. Do you represent that these people are all of the opinion that they would be more comfortable if they were settled on the land?—Yes.

50,189. And that the comfortable houses which they have do not at all compensate them for the want of land?—No.

50,190. Are there many of these cottars who held land at some time?—Yes, a few.

50,191. And these would like to go back to the old condition and have the land again?—Yes.

50,192. They have had experience of both, and they prefer having the land?—Yes.

50,193. The proprietor, you say, was at the expense of building these houses when they became cottars?—Yes.

50,194. So that the turning of crofters into cottars was a transaction that cost the proprietor money?—He built the houses for them.

50,195. But when they became crofters, they built the houses for themselves?—Yes.

50,196. For instance, do you know about the sixteen people who were settled in Kinloid?—No, I cannot say I do.

50,197. We heard to-day that these people built their own houses, and that they paid a much higher rent for a portion of that farm than is now paid for the whole. They did that when there was no security of tenure, did they not?—Yes.

50,198. And, as a matter of fact, they were removed very soon after they settled?—Yes.

50,199. Now, if people were replaced there, with security of tenure, and the rent fixed not by the proprietor but by some impartial tribunal, do you think they would much more readily, much more easily, build the houses than they did under the former condition of things?—Yes, they would be more willing to do it, in my opinion.

50,200. And do you think that the putting of them back there might be done without any help from the proprietor, except that they would get an opportunity of settling upon the land?—I cannot say.

50,201. Can you say whether there are a certain proportion of them who would be able to find means to do it, on condition of a fair rent and security of tenure?—Yes.

50,202. You say that there is a strong desire for holdings where the tenant would prosecute the fishing. Can you tell me whether the land in the deer forest is suitable for such holdings?—Very suitable.

50,203. Is that the most suitable place round here for such fishermen's holdings?—Yes.

50,204. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Can you show us any houses near here which have been put up entirely by the crofters themselves?—No, I cannot, but there are plenty people in the house who can and who are well acquainted: old people can.

50,205. I don't mean ruins, but can anybody show me in this neighbourhood a house that has been put up by a crofter himself in which he now lives?—I believe that could be done.

50,206. Can you show us such a house yourself?—I cannot go into that question. I know some such houses, but they might be paid for partly by the proprietor and partly by the crofter.

Arisaig. James Macdonald.

50,207. Nearly all the houses, you may say all the houses, here have been built by the proprietor, or else the tenants have received assistance to build?—Some are built partly by the proprietor and partly by the crofter.

50,208. And the others?—By the proprietor.

50,209. *Mr A. W. Nicholson of Arisaig.*—You said there were twenty tenants at Rhuemach. Do you know what land they had?—Yes.

50,210. How much had they?—I cannot say.

50,211. How much was there between them?—I cannot say, but the land is there still, and you can see how much there is for the eight.

50,212. You said there were twenty tenants living there?—When I say twenty, I include both Rhuemach and the surrounding small townships.

50,213. Would you name the townships you mean, because I should like to know them?—Achnadrisheig and some of the places in my statement.

50,214. I should like to know how much land these twenty tenants at Rhuemach had?—Well, I cannot say how much they would have.

50,215. Did they have three quarters of an acre?—I believe they had.

50,216. And how many sheep?—I cannot say: I did not hear.

50,217. And how many cows?—Three or four each.

50,218. And horses?—I don't think there are horses mentioned in my statement.

50,219. But do you know whether they had horses? I want to get at the facts?—I did not mention horses at all.

50,220. How do you know they were comfortable if you don't know the amount of their holdings or what stock they had?—They had not a very great deal of land, but they were depending on fishing.

50,221. And how did they get their fish away in those days?—By boats.

50,222. By steamers?—No, but they had steamers too.

50,223. Where did they take them to?—To Glasgow with small boats.

50,224. Do they take them there now?—There is none there now.

50,225. But why did they lose their boats?—The crofters at that time had boats.

50,226. And have they got boats now?—There are no crofters in Rhuemach now.

50,227. No, but the people about the place. Do they take their fish to Glasgow now?—No, because there is a steamer calling.

50,228. And they are better off now than when they had to take their fishing boats to Glasgow?—Something about the same.

50,229. Would you be surprised to hear that there are about 15 acres in the enclosed space at Rhuemach?—Yes.

50,230. You referred to cottars; whom do you mean?—The landless people.

50,231. Where are they?—Hereabouts, a good few of them.

50,232. Where do they live?—There are a good many in Arisaig without land.

50,233. Do you mean the people in the Strath?—They have not got much land.

50,234. Are you referring to the tenants of the houses in the village?—Yes.

50,235. What cottar pays £5 of rent?—Macpherson, new building, and Mackinnon, new building.

50,236. I produce a rental showing that these two pay £4, 10s. Only one pays £6, and all the others pay much less?—Well, I beg your pardon for being wrong to the extent of 10s.

50,237. The average rent is nothing like £4, 10s. for these houses. Then, have not these people plots of potato ground?—Yes, for which they pay £3 an acre.

50,238. That is what might be called accommodation land, just above the village, is it not?—Yes.

50,239. You said that there was a desire for fishermen's holdings?—Yes.

50,240. How is that desire shown?—By their coming to the meetings and asking what they were wanting.

50,241. Have any of these cottars boats or nets, or both?—Not at present.

50,242. Not one of them?—Not one that I am aware of.

50,243. Then they would have to learn their trade of fishing as well as get their boats?—They were fishermen once.

50,244. How long ago? You say that these people were removed forty years ago; do the cottars to whom you are referring understand the fishing?—Yes, some of them; they go away with others as hired men.

50,245. Are there half a dozen such?—There cannot be a great many, for there are not a great many cottars altogether, only forty-eight or forty-nine in the whole district.

50,246. You have referred to arable lands on farms, and you say there are some farms with 70 acres?—62 to 70.

50,247. The lands you are referring to are at the present time under cultivation by the farmers?—Yes.

50,248. You are not then referring to any other lands outside these?—I do.

50,249. Would you mind saying where?—In the hill, and under heather and brackens.

50,250. You think those would be suitable places?—Yes.

50,251. And the size of holding you think for a man to live by should be 8 to 10 cows, and 200 or 300 sheep and 10 to 12 acres arable?—Yes.

50,252. Have you considered what capital it would take for a man to have a holding of that kind?—A good deal.

50,253. Two or three hundred pounds?—It would be more than that; I think I said there are only two or three who want that size of holdings.

50,254. You gave us some interesting information about Coll and Tiree: is the land here as good as the land in Coll and Tiree?—Some of it is better.

50,255. Are not the dairy farms in Coll and Tiree about the best on the west coast?—Yes, but it is mostly all sandy soil.

50,256. But whether it is sand or rock, the cheese and butter made there is about the best made on the west coast?—Yes, it is called the Dunlop cheese. [*The Chairman.*—The cow's milk here is as good as the cow's milk in Coll and Tiree?—And better.—Therefore, the butter will be better?—Better too. There is more heather here, and more mixed grass.]

50,257. You say also that there was more work when the houses were built?—Yes.

50,258. I think I understood that there are fewer people now?—Yes.

50,259. And there is less work?—Yes.

50,260. So that it is about the same as it was then?—No.

50,261. You mean that there is still less work in proportion to the number of people?—There were scores of men working at that time, and women also; and now there are only twenty working, and there is more than the fifth part of the people in the country yet.

50,262. You said that some would be able to build the houses, &c. for themselves?—Yes.

50,263. How many, do you think, in Arisaig, of these thirty cottars?—I cannot say how many; very few.

50,264. *The Chairman.*—This paper which you have read proceeds, I understand, on information got from your father?—Yes.

50,265. It is not based on information of your own, but got from your father?—Yes.

50,266. You come forward to give your father's statement in writing because of his age and infirmity?—Yes.

50,267. Who wrote this out for you? Was it written by a friend, or by yourself?—By a friend.

50,268. And you signed it for your father?—Yes. [*Mr Nicholson.*—You have been working for us for the last two or three months?—Yes.]

50,269. In the time of the late Mr Astley, was there

Arisaig.

James Macdonald.

a good deal more work given to small tenants on the estate than now?—Yes.

50,270. There was a good deal of estate expenditure and wages paid to people in the locality for doing work upon the estate?—Yes.

50,271. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the farms round about here, would you consider that they are all pastoral farms?—Yes.

50,272. They are all mainly pastoral?—Yes.

50,273. And do you say that a good deal that was formerly cultivated in these farms is now pastured?—It is now pastured.

50,274. You say there are fewer people now than when the houses were built. Does that apply to the whole of Arisaig,—that the population is decreasing?—Yes.

50,275. What became of the population?—They went away to all parts of the world for want of work and for want of land.

50,276. But Arisaig is as wide now as it was then?—Yes, and wider, for the estate of Morar has been put to it.

50,277. These people were not put back upon the land?—No.

50,278. They all had to go away?—Yes.

50,279. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you know why these cottars have no boats or nets now?—Because they are just going to other places, to other work.

50,280. Do they do that of their own choice?—Some do.

50,281. And do they all live near the sea, where they could fish?—It would pay them better, because there is no great demand for fish hereabout; they have to send it away a long distance.

50,282. Where do most of these people live?—Just about Arisaig here.

50,283. Round this bay?—Yes; there are a few in the village here, at the head of the bay.

50,284. And do they fish there now?—Not much at the herring fishing.

50,285. Where is the fish that is to be landed at Mallaig?—From all the lochs,—Loch Hourn, Loch Nevis, and a good few on the west side of Skye, and others too numerous for me to tell you, for I am not a fisherman.

50,286. Do many people go from here to the fishing in other places?—Yes.

50,287. Have they boats of their own?—They have not got boats big enough to go very far.

50,288. Do they go then as hired men?—Yes.

50,289. Do many go from this place?—Not a great many.

50,290. Do a dozen go altogether?—I would say about half a dozen.

50,291. Are these men good sailors?—They are that.

50,292. And have a knowledge of the sea?—They ought to have.

50,293. They would not require much training as fishermen, would they?—No.

50,294. Then about the land at Rhuemach; is all that land that was before occupied enclosed?—No.

50,295. There is both land that was under cultivation before, and land that could be now brought into cultivation?—Yes.

Æneas Ronald Macdonell.

ÆNEAS RONALD MACDONELL of Camusdarroch, Arisaig (72)—*examined.*

50,296. *The Chairman.*—You are a member of the Scottish Bar?—Yes.

50,297. And you were the proprietor of the estate of Morar?—I was.

50,298. You are now of Camusdarroch, Arisaig?—Yes.

50,299. Have you a statement to make to us?—Well, I am able to speak generally as to the population there used to be in my young days,—in fact, the whole tract of country seemed to be populated and to have numerous houses on all parts of it; but I want to confine my evidence almost entirely to that portion of the district which is now under deer forest. It is now called Rhu-Arisaig, but 100 years ago it was called Dubh-chamus. Although I am only seventy-two years of age, I am able to speak of thirty years beyond that, from 1794. My grandfather occupied the various places or townships in Dubh-chamus or Rudha. These were Dubh-chamus; Rhu, Tirnadrish, Torbae, Rhubrec, Tormor, Rhuemoch, Claggan, Portavullin, Bal-ur, Ardgaserie, and Achagarrailt. The witness, James Macdonald, spoke to most of these places, but he included also Sandaig, which I do not, because at the time I speak of Sandaig was not a portion of the farm of Rhu. I am able to speak concerning that period from an old account-book belonging to my grandfather, to which I had access a good many years ago, and it was in connection with a very melancholy occasion in which I was unfortunately implicated, viz., an emigration from the estate of Loch Sheil in Moidart. In that account-book I found thirty-seven names of individuals in the various families who were paying rent, as subtenants to my grandfather.

Arisaig.

Æneas Ronald Macdonell.

50,300. What was your grandfather's name?—Archibald Macdonald, Rudha, Arisaig.

50,301. When did he die?—I think in 1828 or 1829.

50,302. Where is that account-book now?—I don't know; at that time it was in the possession of my uncle Macdonald of Loch Sheil; and I may as well mention that it was in connection with Rudha that I came to examine the book. First I should mention that these people occupied Rhu as cottars, and they had land for which apparently they paid no rent, but worked the land, of which Mr Macdonald of Rudha cropped a portion. They paid rent for grazing,—a small nominal sum, and he himself paid a very small rent also to the then proprietor, Macdonald of Clanranald. In fact, he, as well as Macdonald of Borrodale and Macdonald of Glen Alladale, came into possession of the various lands as being sons of the then Macdonald of Clanranald. They took these lands with the population on them, and occupied them.

50,303. And were the rents paid to them directly?—The rents were paid to the tenants, to these Macdonalds, at a very small rate, because they themselves were not highly charged. But it so came to pass that in Lord Cranston's time my uncle, Gregor Macdonald, who then occupied Rudha, had to give a large increase of rent, or be quit of it. Well, he could not under the old system on which he held it afford to give more rent; the consequence was that the farm was taken over him; and the cruel thing was, that he was obliged to remove all the subtenants upon it who had been there generations before him or his ancestors. The only thing that he could do was to get his brother Macdonald of Loch Sheil to take the people over to Loch Sheil in Moidart. Times grew black, and the potato famine occurred, and the consequence was that there was a redundant population, for Moidart had previously been well inhabitated, and the addition of so many families from Rudha, Arisaig, quite overwhelmed them when the potato famine occurred. I was then puzzled to know how many came from Rhu, Arisaig, and I got access in that way to the old books from which I took an extract, and I have here a list of the names of the various people and the portions of Rudha that they occupied. In *Ardgaserich* there were 12, viz., Lachlan Mackinnon, Donald Roy Macinnes, John Macintyre, John Mackinnon, Patrick Maccormack, Neil Mackinnon, Ronald Macdonald, Mrs Macdonald, Donald Macvarish, Duncan Macinnes, John Macdonald, and Allan Mackinnon. In *Torbea* there were 4, viz., Angus Smith, L. Mackinnon, J. Macdonald, John Macisaac. In *Dubh-chamus*, ten, viz., John Kinnaird, John Macisaac, Finlay Mackellaig, Archibald Macfarlane, James Macdonald, Widow Maceachan, Patrick Grant, Allan Mackinnon, Dugald Macpherson, and Widow Maclean. In *Rudha*, eleven, viz., Mrs Donald Macdonald, Donald Macinnes, Roderick Mackinnon, John Maccormack, Rory Smith, Angus Bain Macdonald, Ewan Mackinnon, Peter Macfarlane, Dugald Gillies, Alexander Macleod, Angus Roy Maceachan. These are in all 37, and they are evidently of different families;

the rents were given and the payments made and everything in connection with their holdings.

50,304–5. The date of this is 1794?—Yes, but I was going on to explain that these people, or rather the descendants of some of them, had to be removed to Moidart, and in the congested state of the estate it had to be considered what was best to be done. I was then a young man; I had just passed at the Bar, and I and the late respected James Macgregor of Fort-William were appointed trustees to do what was best. We could see nothing for it,—it was impossible for the people to subsist,—but to assist them to emigrate, and we were assisted very materially in carrying out the emigration by the resident Catholic clergyman of that time, Rev. Ronald Rankine, who indeed followed them. So many of them went to Australia and a few of them to America. But never shall I forget until my dying day,—it is a source of grief to me that I had anything whatsoever to do with that emigration, although, at the same time, God knows I cannot understand how it could have been averted. Many of the people have succeeded well and are well-to-do, but if they had remained, they would have been impoverished themselves, and they would have impoverished the few that are still on the estate.

That is my principal evidence; but I may also state as a general fact, connected not merely with that part of Arisaig, but I think your own observations, gentlemen, as Commissioners going through the Highlands will bear it out, that the pasturage is very much deteriorated compared with what it used to be. It certainly is in that portion of Arisaig to which I refer, in my own observation. Of course, I believe that the climate has very much changed and affected the pasture; but more, much more, has the want of cropping done so. The spade husbandry, which was then in vogue, was employed so that every inch of cultivable ground at that time was manured and put into good heart. Even now it is apparent that the land that is cultivated by the crofters in every place has better pasture and is improved by them so that it is superior to what is under either sheep or deer. At the same time even the crofters' pasture is not so good as it was, in consequence of the wetter weather that prevails as compared with what there was in my young days. We used to have deep snow that lay for weeks, perhaps even months, when roads were impassable to any vehicle; but when the sun melted away, the grass sprouted up in abundance, and there was plenty for all the cattle to consume during the winter. I am not going to maintain that the old system of husbandry was the best, or in accordance with our modern ideas; but, I believe, it originated from the necessity of the times to support a very large population, and for that purpose no system was better than the old spade husbandry that then prevailed.

50,306. Are you aware whether there is a demand for land by crofters or cottars in this locality?—If there was land opened to them, I believe that if the whole of Rhu was open to them it would be taken and occupied. I believe that the feeling is so strong that it would be a desirable home for them and a means of livelihood, that they would take it.

50,307. Is there land in Rudha suitable for the purpose?—Without doubt there is, on the old system of working it. I don't say there is under the present system of cultivation; in fact, suppose that a large population were at once now transplanted there, I believe they would suffer very nearly as much as they have to do when they go to the prairies in America at first until they have time to cultivate the ground again. But if they adopted the old system, and cultivated every inch of the good land that is fit for cultivation, there is a great extent suitable for a large population.

50,308. Just tell us what kind of holding you would form if you had the doing of it?—Well, it would be very much on the same system as the old one,—that they should have their cattle ranging over the outpasture, and probably now it would be proper that each should have his own part to himself instead of the runrig system of old. But I think that a very large number of people could be accommodated, and have probably seven or more acres of land to cultivate.

50,309. Do you mean a holding where the man would live partly by his holding and partly by labour?—By his personal labour and that of his family.

50,310. Is there land on Rudha suitable for fishermen's holdings?—Very suitable, because it is surrounded on all sides, the south side and the west side and the north side by the sea; and there used to be very abundant fishing there of the kind that was required for the supply of families,—cod and lythe, and what they call cuddies and saith.

50,311. Now, suppose such holdings established,—crofters' holdings and fishermen's holdings, would these pay the landlord as well as he is paid at present?—That is putting a question to me that I am not able to answer, because I do not know what he is paid at present. Then, of course, you and the Crofter Commissioners have had something to do also with the payment of crofters' rents.

50,312. Might these holdings be expected to yield a reasonable rent to the landlord?—Well, of course, all holdings must be more or less valuable, but to what extent is a point I cannot condescend upon. Probably, the holdings would vary in size and in situation, and in many other respects that would affect the rent.

50,313. How many families do you think Rhu would accommodate just now?—I cannot say that I have given that a thought.

50,314. Would you be in favour of the formation of any holdings of a self-sustaining kind, by which it is to be expected that the crofter would live without having recourse to labour or fishing?—Well, of course, in that case there would not be so many: the crofts would have to be larger. But I should certainly think that on a rough estimate a dozen or more, perhaps fifteen, crofters might be comfortable in Rudha and be almost independent,—certainly independent of spending their time in earning by fishing, because they would always get plenty at their door for their own consumption.

50,315. We heard to-day that there were a large number of cottars?—I have not given note of that; I believe there were, but I have only given exactly those who were paying rent to my grandfather. I know that there were a number of others.

50,316. With regard to the cottars who are to be found here at present, would you be in favour of facilities being afforded for their obtaining holdings?—Without doubt. There are many cottars throughout the country who are quite able to take crofts.

50,317. And carry on the holdings without assistance?—Well, there are individuals who would do that, but I don't know that I should say that was the general case.

50,318. Now, are there any more lands you wish to mention, besides Rudha?—There are others as good as Rudha every bit, in Knoydart. I believe the Commissioners have seen that district; it is one in which there was a very large population at one time. In fact, within the last two or three days I was reading an account in MSS. writing by Macdonell of Lochgarry, who had commanded the Mac-Mhic-Alastair and Glengarry portion of that clan, and who commanded 1200 men at Culloden, Clanranald having 500 and Keppoch 300. Where would you get that number of men now-a-days, or anything like it? Glengarry's men came from between Knoydart, Morar, and Invergarry, 1200 fighting men.

50,319. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did you hear the evidence given this morning about Rudha?—No, I did not catch a word of it; I am rather deaf.

50,320. We were told this morning that a good many small tenants used to live there comfortably, but you now tell us from documents in your grandfather's possession that they paid no rent for their houses, giving their labour instead, and only a small nominal rent for the grazing?—I believe that was the case; I believe so, although I cannot speak positively about the matter.

50,321. And you further stated that the pasture has since deteriorated?—Yes.

50,322. Therefore, if you were to replace small tenants

Arisaig.
Æneas Ronald Macdonell.

there now on deteriorated pasture and exact a rent from them, they would not be occupying that land under the same conditions as formerly, when they were said to live comfortably?—I have stated that that would be so at first,—it would be like going to America or the prairie.

50,323. *Mr Sutherland.*—But you propose now to put only ten or fifteen on land that was formerly occupied by 37?—Quite so; that is to say, to cultivate it according to the present mode of cultivation: but if they were to go back to the old mode I would not be afraid of putting as many on as there were.

50,324. *The Chairman.*—Are you in favour generally of considerable additions being made to the land held by crofters and cottars in this district at the present moment?—There is no doubt that it would be very desirable indeed that such should be the case, but at the same time one would have to consider the possibility of doing so in some of the townships. The only way I could conceive of its being done would be by, as it were, thinning the townships and placing some of them in other advantageous situations.

50,325. Then, suppose you thinned the townships, would you add the land from which certain crofters came to the remaining holdings?—Certainly.

50,326. Then, are you in favour both of the extension of existing holdings and the formation of new holdings?—I am in favour of the extension of the present holdings, and the formation of new holdings.

50,327. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Upon whom would you put the expense of building the houses, and draining and fencing the land?—I would leave that to you, sir, and to Mr Sutherland.

50,328. *Mr A. W. Nicholson of Arisaig.*—Suppose there were ten or fifteen crofters established in Rudha, in holdings of sufficient size, what rent would you propose they should pay?—That is just a repetition of the question that was put to me, and which any practical man knows will depend upon the size of the croft and its capacity for cultivation, and the amount of pasture that would be attached to it.

50,329. But you have two classes of holding; one class, which I will call self-sustaining, and another where the man lives partly by his holding and partly by his labour. What or about what rent would you propose for a self-sustaining holding; and what or about what rent would you propose for a holding of the other description?—If I were told how many head of cattle he was to keep, and what extent of ground he would have for the best holding, I would tell you at once what I think would be a fair rent.

50,330. I quite understand you with reference to an individual holding; but if the whole of Rhu were divided between these ten or fifteen crofters, as I understand you say it might be, what rent would it produce?—I would have to calculate what quantity of stock it would carry just now, and that is very difficult to do in its present deteriorated condition. I held Rudha myself for some years, after the death of Mr Astley, and I had a large stock of cattle and sheep there; but it would hold nothing like the same number to-day, so much it has deteriorated since then. Of the deer itself I don't believe there is anything like the old number.

50,331. What rent had you in the Valuation Roll at that time?—I cannot tell you.

50,332. On what do you base the proposal for settling ten or fifteen,—is that a number based on any calculation, or is it just a general estimate?—It is a general estimate; of course, in my mind's eye I ran through the various portions of land and I made rough divisions, but without being minute,—it is impossible to be that offhand in this way.

50,333. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to the rents that might be paid, would you be willing that the fixing of such rents should be left to the hand of an independent tribunal?—Certainly, that would be the proper way of satisfying all parties of what would be fair.

50,334. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Your calculation of ten or fifteen crofters is founded on an intimate knowledge of Rhu,—you held it yourself?—Yes, I held it myself.

50,335. So that we could not have a better authority than yourself upon the point?—As far as my practical experience goes.

Arisaig.
Æneas Ronald Macdonell.

James Macdonald Peanmeanach, Ardnish, Arisaig (64).

James Macdonald.

(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

50,336. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you a crofter?—No, I have not had land for twenty years: I reside in another man's house.

50,337. Had you land twenty years ago?—My brother and I had land; it was the grazing of three cows. My brother married before I did, and the place was too small for the two of us: his family was young, so I left.

50,338. You did not sub-divide the holding, then?—No, it would be no use for the two.

50,339. Rather than sub-divide it, you left?—I preferred to leave it to himself, as his family was so weak.

50,340. Are there many people in Ardnish?—Yes, a considerable number of tenants; it is all under crofters altogether.

50,341. How many families are in Peanmeanach?—Seven families.

50,342. And are there families without land?—There are none of them altogether without land; some have the grazing of a cow, but those who have land would take more.

50,343. Is the whole of Ardnish land in the possession of the crofters there?—Yes.

50,344. Is there a small farm at Laggan?—Yes; it is small enough for the tenant.

50,345. Can you tell us how much stock the farmer there has?—About 400 sheep, and ten or twelve cows.

50,346. Do you consider that that is the size of farm that should prevail?—That is small enough for himself; indeed it is too small for him.

50,347. Besides the farm of Laggan, how many families share in the remainder of the pasture of Ardnish?—All the rest of the crofters. There are seven in Peanmeanach, two in Glasnacardoch, two in Slochd, and three in Mullochbuie; and all the land in Ardnish is too little for these crofters.

50,348. What is Polnish?—Polnish is a place that was formerly occupied by crofters, but it is not in Ardnish; it is near Kinlochailort.

50,349. Then, do you consider that the promontory of Ardnish is sufficiently well occupied at present?—Yes, and those who have only two cows consider their holdings too small. The land is poor, and will not maintain the stock. They do not take one-half of their livelihood out of the soil.

50,350. Then, where is the land that you think could be obtained?—If Ruhda-Arisaig were allocated, that is the place. My family are scattered all over the ground, because I have no place to keep them at home.

50,351. Do the people in Ardnish do any fishing?—Yes, it is from the fishing they make their livelihood, not on the land.

50,352. What fishing do they follow?—The herring fishing.

50,353. Do the herring come into that loch?—Yes, into Loch-nan-Uamh.

50,354. At what time of the year?—About this time, the autumn.

50,355. How long do they remain?—They may remain there for a fortnight, three weeks, a month, and sometimes five or six weeks each year.

50,356. Is it about the same time each year that they come?—Yes, at the beginning of autumn, as a rule.

50,357. How are they disposed of?—They use some themselves, and they sell the rest.

50,358. Do they sell them fresh, or cured?—They send them both ways, some fresh and some salt. They send them through the district. There are some old men in Ardnish who cannot do any fishing.

50,359. Are there others besides yourself in that

district who would be willing to take new holdings if they got them?—Yes.

50,360. How many do you know of?—I know four who would take new crofts there, in addition to myself.

50,361. Is there any other locality you know of which would be suitable for new holdings except Rudha?—No. I have to earn my bread by working between this and the Lowlands, but I am now getting too old, and if I get a place to maintain myself at home it would be better.

50,362. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You said four people in Ardnish want land. Did you hear Mr Macdonell say that if Rudha was divided into small holdings the best division would be into ten or twelve?—Yes, and each holding would be small enough at that rate.

50,363. Therefore, Rudha would not accommodate more than one-third of those seeking land in Arisaig?—No.—I am needful of land seeing that I have not any: I have not even the site of a house.

50,364. We were told this morning that there were at least thirty wanting land, and if Rudha would only accommodate ten, what is to become of the rest?—If only ten could be accommodated in Rudha, the others would be landless.

50,365. Is there good land within 50 miles of this, which could accommodate all those who want land?—There is not much land except the high land; there is very little near the shore except Rudha.

50,366. Therefore, whatever may be done, a considerable portion must still be disappointed in their wish to obtain more land in this neighbourhood?—I don't understand the question.

50,367. Is it possible to find enough land in this district to satisfy all those who want it?—No doubt there is land in the district, but the land is let to farmers.

50,368. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Do you agree with other witnesses that the land in the occupation of farmers is suitable for crofter holdings?—Yes, part of the farms are suitable.

50,369. And there are several large farms in the district of Arisaig?—Yes, there is the farm of Kinloid, and Keppoch, and the farm at Loch-nan-Uamh.

50,370. Would Keppoch be a suitable place for crofters?—Very suitable.

50,371. Do you know how many crofters were there before?—I do not.

50,372. Have the crofters of Ardnish got sheep?—Yes, a few.

50,373. How many have they got among them?—They have from twenty to thirty sheep each; and the crofters have five or six cows each.

50,374. Crofters have been in Ardnish for a long time, have they not?—There were tenants in Ardnish a hundred years before I was born.

50,375. Are there more tenants there than there used to be?—No.

50,376. Do you know of Ardnish ever having been let as one holding?—I never heard of its being a tack; I thought it was always under crofters.

50,377. Were crofters settled there from any other place in Arisaig?—The tenants who were removed from Gaoideal were sent to Ardnish, four in number. Some of them are no longer living, but their descendants are there.

50,378. Were they sent there for their benefit?—I don't know; I don't remember.

50,379. You know Ardnish, and you know Gaoideal?—Yes, I know them very well.

50,380. Which place would you prefer yourself?—I would prefer Gaoideal.

50,381. Can you understand their being put from Gaoideal to Ardnish for their benefit?—I cannot say: I do not know why they were shifted.

50,382. But they were shifted to a worse place than they were in?—I cannot say that, either.

50,383. But you said so already?—There were more tenants: they have more stock now than they had in Gaoideal. They had no sheep in Gaoideal but they have in Ardnish.

50,384. There is more room in Ardnish, but the land was better in Gaoideal?—Yes, better in every way.

Arisaig. — James Macdonald.

50,385. And is Gaoideal now in the Home Farm?—I cannot tell you; I was born in the braes of Arisaig, and I don't know about that.

50,386. But have you not seen Gaoideal?—Yes, I am acquainted with it.

50,387. Don't you know how it is held?—Mr Nicholson has it; it is under deer.

50,388. *The Chairman.*—Are there crofters' holdings in Ardnish very old and others of more recent formation?—Yes, lands that Macdonald had; his croft is divided among five of the Ardnish crofters, and in consequence of this they got the grazing of a cow each.

50,389. Are there a number of very old holdings in Ardnish and others much more recently formed?—There have been crofters in Ardnish in all my recollection.

50,390. Do you know if there are any crofters in Ardnish transferred from Rudha?—I am not aware of any except those sent from Gaoideal.

50,391. Is it your view that there is available land in this district which would greatly relieve any existing congestion?—There is plenty land in the district.

50,392. And would the occupation of such land by crofters and cottars relieve those who are left in their present holdings?—Yes.

50,393. Do you pay any rent at present?—No, I have nothing for which to pay rent. I have no land.

50,394. But you have a house?—I have not a house of my own: I live in my father-in-law's house.

50,395. Then, how do you earn your livelihood?—By labouring over the world.

50,396. What is your father-in-law's name?—Donald Macdonald.

50,397. How does he earn his livelihood?—He has land.

50,398. Do you know what rent he pays?—About £8 at present, since he got this addition. [*The Secretary.*—The old rent was £8, 4s. 2d. and the fair rent £4, 12s., but since then they have got the land that Angus Macdonald, Feorlin, had. The fair rent of £11, 10s. on that croft was divided into five shares, I believe. Peanmeanach consists of 20 acres arable, 5 acres 3 roods outrun, and 525 acres of common, divided into eight shares, whereof Donald Macdonald has 1⅛ shares. Since then he got a part of Angus Macdonald's holding.—*Mr Nicholson.*—His total rent is £4, 12s., plus £1, 1s.].

50,399. *Mr A. W. Nicholson of Arisaig.*—Your father-in-law is Donald Macdonald?—Yes.

50,400. Who was his father?—Alexander Macdonald.

50,401. What holding had he got at Peanmeanach; was it the same as Donald's?—Alexander Macdonald had the land first, and there were four brothers of them; the land was divided, and each got the grazing of three cows.

50,402. Is it not the case that Alexander Macdonald, the father of these four sons, had the whole of Peanmeanach, and on his death it was divided between Donald, Roderick, Ewen, Allan, and one other?—Is not that what I am telling you?

50,403. Then Peanmeanach was in the hands of one tenant?—Another brother left there and went to Goirtean-a'-Chaolais, and the remaining three were left. He had had the grazing of three cows, and the remaining brothers got his share.

50,404. Alexander Macdonald's holding was, at his death, divided into four or five for the sons?—It was divided among his four sons, but since then one of them left the place, and his share is occupied by the remaining three.

50,405. When Allan went to Goirtean-a'-Chaolais, was not his croft divided among the remaining brothers?—That is so.

50,406. Then the holding has been sub-divided by the tenant, and re-extended by the proprietor?—Yes, that is so.

50,407. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did the landlord agree to that sub-division of the holding, among the four

Arisaig. —— James Macdonald.

brothers?—He did; it was done by Mr Nicholson's orders. [*Mr Nicholson.*—It was years before I came].

50,408. *Mr Nicholson.*—How would the tenants have viewed this if the estate had not agreed to sub-divide it, according to their wishes?—I don't know how that would be.

50,409. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I notice that your father-in-law's rent, before it was settled by the Crofters Commission, was £8, 4s. 2d.?—Yes.

50,410. And it was reduced to £4, 12s.?—Yes.

50,411. How long was he paying £8, 4s. 2d.?—I am sure they were paying at that rate for forty or fifty years.

50,412. And his whole arrears amounted only to £12, 2s. 1d.?—Just so.

50,413. He was paying almost double the fair rent for forty years?—Yes.

Arthur William Nicholson.

ARTHUR WILLIAM NICHOLSON of Arisaig (42)—*examined.*

50,414. *The Chairman.*—I believe you have a statement to submit to us?—Yes. I am the husband of Mrs Nicholson of Arisaig, the proprietrix of the estate of Arisaig and South Morar, for whom I desire to make the following statement:—

'On the estate of Arisaig and South Morar, the only 'ground cleared for deer is on the promontory of Rhu. 'The forest has an acreage of about 3500 acres, and 'was formed about 1853. There are about 62 acres in 'the Rudha which are now under cultivation. These are 'fenced against deer, as well as the grazing on Rudha 'Farm. There are 50 acres in the forest, which, from 'appearances, may have been under cultivation at some 'previous date, besides about 13 acres, in the vicinity 'of the Mansion, grazed as part of the Home Farm. The 'arable land is partly worked by the tenant of Rudha 'Farm, and the rest is in the occupation of two stalkers, 'a joiner and a steamboat ferryman.

'The whole of the forest is on a narrow promontory 'of low-lying ground, fenced at the land end. It might 'more aptly be termed a deer park. Its small extent 'and shape are such that, to take any part which might 'appear suitable for cultivation and settlement of 'crofters, would entirely destroy it for use as a forest.

'The farms on the the estate are mostly hill farms 'of moderate size, the largest grazing about 1500 sheep, 'and if their low-lying lands were removed their value 'would be greatly decreased, as the farms would not 'then be able to winter their stock as at present.

'In the event of any pasture lands being offered to 'persons of the status of crofters I do not know of any 'who would be able to stock a new holding properly 'and erect the necessary houses, buildings, and fences, 'and put in the drains. I may remark that better houses 'are required now than formerly when crofters erected 'their own houses as has been stated to-day.

'Even supposing that the land was stocked and 'equipped, I am very doubtful whether it could be 'profitably occupied by small tenants. I am frequently 'told by crofters who have had fair rents fixed by the 'Crofters Commission that their crofts do not pay, and 'I am certainly of opinion that the land could not be 'worked to a profit while paying a rent equal or 'approximating to its rent as a deer forest.

'Although the forest is low-lying ground there are 'no crofts contiguous to it, so no part is suitable for the 'extension of present crofts, and its utilization for 'crofters would entail the establishment of houses, 'buildings, fences, &c., &c., *de novo.*

'I submit that there are sufficient crofters on the 'estate for all the employment that exists, and that 'the introduction of other crofters would increase the 'supply of labour, and thus prejudicially affect the 'state of these already here.

'I may here contrast the value of Rudha as a deer 'forest and as a possible sheep farm or farms. Esti- 'mating it at 3500 acres and allowing 3 acres per sheep, 'it might graze nearly 1200 sheep. At a rental of '1s. 6d. per sheep, the rent would be £90 as against 'the present £240. Arisaig.

'It must also be borne in mind that the letting value 'of Arisaig mansion-house would suffer if parted from the forest. Arthur William Nicholson.

'In conclusion of my remarks on this head it is my 'opinion that Rudha (promontory) cannot be put to a 'better use than at present looking to the benefit of 'the community here. A better rent is obtained from 'the ground as a forest than could otherwise be got, 'and the whole of this as well as the other rents of the 'estate are spent on the property. It is also within 'my knowledge that the local expenditure of the 'shooting tenant averages fully £400 a year besides 'the rent paid to the proprietrix.

'In submitting this statement I desire to point out 'that both Mrs Nicholson and I have shown ourselves 'by no means averse to the extension of existing small 'holdings when suitable opportunities occur. For 'proof of this I may state that since 1883—from 'which date I have personal knowledge—additions 'have been made from lands tenanted by others than 'crofters to nineteen out of the thirty-seven* crofter 'holdings on Arisaig and South Morar estates, and 'that there also have been thirteen cases of enlargement 'of crofts out of crofting lands falling into the proprietor's 'hands. During this period no crofter has been 'evicted. It should, however, be understood that in all 'cases but three (in which the rent remained unchanged) 'there has been considerable loss of rent where the 'extension has been from farm lands, while the other 'cases have afforded no increase of rents. Potato 'ground has also been found for some of the village 'tenants.

(Signed) ARTHUR W. NICHOLSON.

50,415. Is this forest of Rudha the only forest on your estate?—Yes, I should like to state in this connection that there was a bit of ground on the outside which up to about the year 1882 was cleared for deer, but it was then put under sheep again.

50,416. And is it now part of a sheep farm?—It is now part of a sheep farm.

50,417. Which farm is that?—West Glenbeasdale, which is worked in connection with Kinloid.

50,418. And by whom is it held?—I farm it myself.

50,419. What is the rent of that farm?—It is estimated in the Valuation Roll at £50.

50,420. Is this forest held under lease by a tenant, or is it in the hands of the estate?—It is under lease, but this is the last year of the lease.

50,421. The lease has been running on for some years?—Yes, for five seasons.

50,422. You speak of a rent of £240 for the forest: has that always been the rent?—Since the tenant has had it I have never made any alteration in the Valuation Roll though I may have made private reductions.

50,423. Is there a farm called Rudha Farm held by a tenant?—Yes.

50,424. What rent does he pay?—He is put down in the Valuation Roll as paying a rent of £50, but there was a reduction given him below the rent in the lease.

50,425. The farm is held under lease?—Yes.

50,426. When does the lease expire?—At Whitsunday next.

50,427. Whereabouts is Rudha Farm?—At the end of the promontory.

50,428. It is that piece of land jutting out into the sea?—Yes; and it includes Rhumach.

50,429. Then is Rhumach hill a grazing attached to that farm?—No, it is only a piece of fenced arable land, about 15 acres in extent.

50,430. You referred to the farms on this estate,—may I ask how many farms there are on the estate above the crofter limit of £30 of rent?—There are twelve.

50,431. Could you give us their names?—Kinlochailort, Kinloch-nan-Uamh, Laggan, Rudha, Mains,

* See letter of 28th August 1894, page 1240.

Arisaig Inn, Keppoch, Kinloid, Scamadale, and Goirtean-a'-Chaolais a small farm of £35, on the Arisaig portion; and on the South Morar portion, Traigh and Cross.

50,432. Are any of these farms rented at over £100?—One.

50,433. Which is it?—Kinloch-nan-Uamh.

50,434. What is the rent of it?—£110.

50,435. May we take it that the rents of all these farms have in recent years suffered some reduction?—You may.

50,436. Were any of them let eight or ten years ago at a rent of over £100?—Yes.

50,437. Just give us the names of these?—Kinloch-nan-Uamh, Kinlochailort, and Kinloid.

50,438. And the other farms also have suffered reductions no doubt?—Yes: there is not a farm on the estate which has not.

50,439. What is the average reduction of rent on these farms,—what percentage?—I should say 35 per cent. or something like that; between 30 and 35 per cent. I can give you the actual rate if you like before you leave.*

50,440. If you please. I should be glad to have it. Are all these grazing farms, or are any of them what are called in the low country arable farms?—The Mains Farm is chiefly an arable farm; it keeps only 100 sheep.

50,441. What extent of arable land under rotation, is there on it?—There are about 115 acres of land which has been cropped at some time or other.

50,442. But these 115 acres, may I take it, have not been cropped for a good number of years?—Some parts have been cropped, and others not.

50,443. Has any part not been cropped at all within the last fifteen or twenty years, out of these 115 acres?—No, I think not.

50,444. How far back does your connection with the estate extend?—Eleven years.

50,445. And it has not been cropped within your recollection?—There are pieces which I have not seen cropped, but I think from their appearance and from my own knowledge that these were cropped very shortly before that.

50,446. Then the other farms may be described as grazing farms?—Yes, except that I was going to add Keppoch Farm is a small farm which is chiefly arable.

50,447. That is the farm that lies into the crofters' land pretty closely?—It is backed by the crofters' grazings.

50,448. And, I suppose, some of the other farms are close to the crofter townships, either marching with them or at no distance from them?—No, there are no crofter townships alongside of Kinlochailort; there is a short length between the crofters' march and Kinloch-nan-Uamh, but none at Rudha. Kinloid you have heard about, Glenan Cross you have also heard about; there is some land contiguous to crofters there certainly.

50,449. And Goirtean-a'-Chaolais?—That is a small farm which lies,—well, the march is partly the sea, partly Keppoch Farm, and partly the Keppoch crofters.

50,450. You refer to the crofters who live in what is called Back-of-Keppoch?—Yes.

50,451. Now about houses; have the crofters' and cottars' houses on the Arisaig estate been mainly put up by the tenants or by the landlord, or have they mainly been erected by the tenants with assistance from the landlord?—I may say outright that the houses have been mainly erected by the landlord, and I have not in my recollection any case of a crofter's house which has been erected entirely by the tenant.

50,452. Perhaps you would put it this way, that you cannot recollect any individual case of a dwelling-house and steading having been erected entirely either by the landlord or by the crofter?—No, I would not put it that way, because I know plenty of cases where the houses have been erected by the landlord.

50,453. With crofters' labour?—I was about to add,—some of them with crofters' labour,—the crofter doing the labour and the landlord finding the materials, but I think I am right in saying that there are cases where the whole buildings have been done by the landlord. But such is not the general rule.

50,454. I fancy not; at least it would be very unusual if that were the case.—Well, I fancy more building is done here by the landlord than is usual on most estates.

50,455. Can you tell us any individual case where the whole of the outlay and the whole of the labour has been expended by the landlord?—No, I don't think I can: I have some cases in my mind where the houses have been erected entirely by the landlord, but, so far as I can recollect, most of the other buildings,—barns and byres, &c.,—have been erected partly by the landlord and partly by the tenant.

50,456. In that connection, has there been to your observation an improvement in the houses of the crofters since the passing of the Act, or a building of new houses?—I don't know of any new houses built by crofters since the Act,—we have got one in course of erection now, where the estate is giving materials and the tenant doing the labour; but it is right to add that as the rent in this case had been recently reduced, a low rate of interest is to be paid by the tenant on the estate outlay.

50,457. Where is that?—Port-na-Luchaig.

50,458. Would you say that the houses generally were in a pretty good condition at the date of the passing of the Act?—I believe so.

50,459. Did the late proprietor spend a good deal of money on the estate?—Certainly.

50,460. Including crofters' and other small tenants' houses?—Yes.

50,461. And gave a great deal of work to the tenants on the estate?—While the place was making there was, of course, a great deal of work going on, but after the mansion was completed, and the grounds laid out, the work naturally fell off.

50,462. You mentioned an extension of holdings to some crofters. Are there some townships on the estate which, speaking frankly, you would like to see an extension given to?—I have had that matter under consideration, and I cannot say that, at the present time, I have any extension in view which I think is possible.

50,463. Do you mean possible with reference to existing leases?—No, I meant with regard to other circumstances,—circumstances of farms, and so on.

50,464. I don't want you to disclose anything, but just tell us what you mean,—what kind of circumstances?—I don't know any cases where the crofts could be extended without injury to the farms. That is what I mean.

50,465. You don't know of any case where an extension could be granted without material damage?—Without material damage to a farm.

50,466. But apart from the question of material damage to neighbouring farms, are you of opinion that there are townships which ought to have an extension?—That means that the crofters' holdings would be better if they were bigger?

50,467. Well, it has a twofold meaning, and it is quite right that I should explain it. It means this: whatever the effect of material damage upon a neighbouring farm, would you in certain cases be inclined to advise an extension of grazings, and in individual cases an extension of arable?—I may say, answering generally, if I may do so, that I am as willing now to extend crofts, where I can see that it can be suitably done, as I have been on previous occasions.

50,468. I am taking that for granted: but what I would like to get from you, if you are in a position to answer it, is this: are there cases of townships where, if you could, you would both grant extension of grazings and increase the arable of the individual holdings?—Certainly I would, if I had the land that I thought I could do it with.

50,469. I take it then that you are of opinion that there are cases,—there are townships and there are individual holdings, requiring extension, if such exten-

* Mr Nicholson has since explained that the reduction is 'about 28 per cent. taking into account the capital outlays.'

Arisaig.
Arthur William Nicholson.

sion could be reasonably granted by the landlord?—I don't think there are any urgent cases.

50,470. Are there any cases that are requiring consideration? Are there cases where, if you had a free hand, looking to the narrowness of the holding and the small limit of the grazing, you would extend the arable and the grazing too?—Yes, I don't mind saying that I would, it being understood that I am answering a hypothetical question.

50,471. Now, I would like to know from you, is there less employment given on the estate to crofters and other small tenants than used to be given? I ask simply as a matter of fact and not one of feeling?—Certainly, there is less than when Mr Astley was forming the place and building the mansion-house and improving the grounds.

50,472. To what extent do crofters and small tenants get employment just now? Do they get employment in any considerable number?—No, not in any considerable number.

50,473. Is the employment constant employment, or is it a precarious livelihood?—Among the crofters it is not regular. There are certain crofters who do certain jobs for me, fencing and dyking and so on.

50,474. But, I suppose, I may take it that it is intermittent and precarious?—Certainly.

50,475. We heard a great deal about cottars,—thirty cottars, and so forth, who have no land but who apparently have houses that have been built by the estate; and these cottars are asking us now to consider the question of more land. Do you suggest any practical mode of our meeting that complaint, or do you suppose that the existing state of matters should be indefinitely continued?—I do not see any way out of the present state of matters. It has been suggested that Rudha would form holdings for some of these cottars: but grant that Rudha is suitable, where are the houses? Here at the Strath, the nearest holdings on Rudha Farm would be over a mile and a quarter away from the houses. I heard it suggested that these cottars who now live in the village should get holdings on Rudha. Either they are going to live in their present houses, which are suitable for men of their class, and work their land from there, or they will have to have new houses. In the former case I submit that it is not possible for a man to live a distance of 1½ to 2 or 3 miles from his holding; and in the latter case, what is to be done with the present cottars' houses?

50,476. That is the difficulty you foresee?—That is one difficulty which suggests itself to me. Of course, I have already tried by means of the questions which I have put to witnesses to show that there are other difficulties as to buildings and so on; but as regards these individual men who say they want land, I say that even if Rudha were suitable, and if it were to be divided among them, the people could not live in the Strath and work their holdings properly from there.

50,477. But supposing the difficulty arising from their vacating the houses in the village were got over and they got houses or built houses for themselves upon Rudha, are you of opinion that they might get on there very profitably upon the whole in ordinary circumstances?—The present crofters, having had their rents fixed by the Crofters Commission, tell me that the crofts do not pay, and that there is not labour enough in the place for them to make a good livelihood, and I don't see how you are going to improve their position.

50,478. You put that consideration forward as an argument against extending the present crofter system?—Yes, against the increase of this class.

50,479. Then is your solution of the difficulty or problem presented to us by these thirty cottars simply this, that if they cannot get along where they are, with houses built by the landlord, they must go away?—My view of it is that their case is that of the poorer persons in any town, in Fort-William, or in Glasgow, who have no land. If they cannot make their living out of their labour, like people of other places, they must go somewhere else.

50,480. At the same time, in the abstract, I suppose you would concur in this view, that if it could be arranged with due respect to the rights of all concerned, it would be desirable from the general point of view to retain such persons in the localities where they are at present placed?—I am not at all sure of that, looking to their own advantage. I have had it said to me by crofters here,—some of the most hard-working and steadiest of the crofters—that they would not stop a moment if they got a chance of somewhere else to go.

Arisaig.
Arthur William Nicholson.

50,481. But,—dealing again with the matter in the abstract,—would you not be in favour of such a course of procedure adopted as I say with reasonable regard to the rights of all concerned as would tend to preserve that class of the community in the localities where they are placed?—I certainly would not be in favour of increasing it.

50,482. Then, of course, you concede, I daresay, that if it is not to be increased, or reasonable facilities afforded, it must also necessarily in some cases decrease?—Yes, I think so.

50,483. Then, would you be in favour of the continuation of a system which might lead, in course of years, to the entire exodus of such people from a particular district?—This is a very large question, my lord, and one which I can scarcely answer off-hand. Perhaps you may say that I should have been prepared to answer all questions; but I do not pose as an authority on the crofting question. But my own view, sorry though I should be personally to see persons who are attached to the place, and who have lived on it all their lives, go away, is that they should not be treated differently from any other class in the community, whether my own class or any other, if the force of circumstances is hard upon them.

50,484. That is to say, you would allow the force of circumstances to operate, and you would interpose no check by legislation or arrangement otherwise?—I fear that I do not foresee any permanent good.

50,485. *Mr Sutherland.*—I think most of the questions which I would have had to put have been already disposed of by the frank way in which you have stated your position. But in reference to the matter about which the Chairman has just asked you, I presume from the tenor of your answers that you do not believe in the basis on which the Act of 1886 was passed? Is it unfair to assume that practically your position amounts to that?—Do not believe in it?

50,486. Well, that you consider there was not sufficient justification for legislation on the question?—My experience is small: I have not had any general experience of the question up and down the coast and through the islands, and I only profess to speak of what I have really seen in this small corner; and so far as that goes, I doubt whether there was any necessity for legislation: and I think, if I may say so, that the advantages which crofters have got within recent times have been obtained outside of legislation,—any extension of holdings or improvements have been done apart entirely from the force brought to bear by legislation.

50,487. But you have had very good opportunities of knowing that the chief arguments in favour of the passing of the Crofters Act were mainly historical, arising out of the peculiarities of the history of the people in the Highlands?—I have heard that.

50,488. Well, it has been asserted, and, to my mind, at least, satisfactorily proved, that their treatment in the past has been exceptional; that certain circumstances,—call them what you like,—pressed more heavily upon the people of the Highlands than they did elsewhere, and that the exceptional treatment in the past necessitated exceptional treatment in the present?—I have heard it stated, and I will grant that it was the case in a number of instances; but whether the treatment which brought about this legislation was anything like universal, I doubt.

50,489. It would not of course be similar in every locality,—it would vary in degree, and I grant that you are perfectly consistent in taking the view which you do. So that the position you have stated with regard to the case of cottars not being different from

that of poor people in Fort-William or in Glasgow is differentiated by the fact that the history of the past is a little bit different,—at least that has been the justification for the legislation?—That is alleged.

50,490. And besides being alleged, it was sufficient to induce Parliament to pass the Act of 1886?—But that Act does not deal with cottars.

50,491. The crofters and the cottars are the same people however. For instance, we had a cottar here to-day giving evidence, who was a crofter at one time?—I am quite well aware of that, but I only meant that the Act does not give any benefit to the cottar. [*The Chairman.*—Except that on renunciation of holding he gets compensation.]

50,492. You personally have got no responsibility for the distribution of the population on this estate? The present distribution was practically before you had anything to do with the estate?—Yes.

50,493. But, however, you adopt it?—I do not see my way to make any change, and I am not willing to make any change.

50,494. I want to make it quite clear that you personally had no responsibility in the matter of their distribution?—Oh, no.

50,495. You stated that you thought there were enough crofters on the estate for the work there was for them to do?—That is my belief.

50,495A. Is it then your view that an estate ought to have only as many crofters as it can provide with labour?—No, but my object in stating that is this: it has been stated in evidence to-day that these men do not ask for holdings large enough to support them entirely, but that they ask for holdings from which, in conjunction with other labour they could make a decent livelihood. That was my reason for saying so.

50,496. Your remark then only applied to that particular observation?—Yes, but that I think was stated more than once,—it was the general drift of the evidence.

50,497. And I think I may say that such has not been at all the drift of our evidence elsewhere, speaking generally?—That may be so, but I think I am right in saying that it has been the general drift of the evidence to-day.

50,498. Yes, you are quite right as to that.

50,499. *Mr Gordon.*—In view of the railway coming to this part of the country, do you anticipate an improvement in the condition of the people generally?—I am in hopes that it will enable, in the first place, those able-bodied men who can work and will work (and I am glad to say there are a considerable number of them) to get a certain sum of money, which if they be careful may enable them to get small holdings, such as a farm, or if they prefer it, to acquire fishing-boats.

50,500. You mean out of the profits of the labour?—Yes. Beyond that, I am afraid it is doubtful how much good the railway will do to the district.

50,501. After the railway is completed, there will always be a certain number of men required as surfacemen,—possibly between this and Kinlochailort, thirty, forty, or fifty men: then there will be another staff of men of a superior class required for the stations in the capacity of porters, and to hire carts, &c. These may not all be drawn from the quarter, but a good many of them will in all probability be taken from the inhabitants of this neighbourhood?—I trust they will.

50,502. That would to a certain extent afford an outlet for the people, and especially for the class of men who occupy small holdings?—Yes.

50,503. Then, do you anticipate that this part of the country might to some extent become a fashionable resort for,—I would not say tourists exactly, but residenters during a certain period of the year?—I take it that we shall see more. Even with the present communications I think that if not every year, every period of five years sees more tourists and people coming to the district; but I must say they come for a very short time in the year.

50,504. We have not seen the place yet, and therefore I am unable to judge myself, but I would like to ask whether those houses which have been built for the crofter or cottar class are of a nature that would be sufficient to accommodate a respectable family for a longer or shorter period?—Some few of them might be, but I don't quite know where the tenant would live in the meantime.

50,505. Possibly they might live in their present houses and build other ones to accommodate the strangers. Now, if the railway comes here and proves a success, one result will be that the fishing of this district will be very considerably developed?—I hope so: I hope there is really some prospect of an improvement there.

50,506. Would you or would the proprietrix be willing to grant small holdings in such a place as Arisaig here for a fishing population,—I mean for men who would devote their time mainly to fishing?—I cannot answer that question: I have not had it in my mind.

50,507. Would you not anticipate that the railway would be a likely means of developing that industry?—Yes, it may be. Of course, Arisaig itself is not a good place; there is not a harbour, and it is an exceedingly bad place to get to.

50,508. Is Mallaig harbour on your estate?—No, it is on the Lovat Estate.

50,509. Are there not good bays on the south shore of Rhu, on the forest ground? Are there not any safe harbours there?—No, I don't think there is one; unless you haul up the boat.

50,510. Is there any place on the south shore where fishermen's holdings could be got?—There are no good harbours.

50,511. But suppose there was such a place as they thought they could utilise for a harbour, would it be possible to find space for a small fishing population along the south shore of the Rhu Forest without material damage to the forest?—No, I maintain most clearly that the whole of the Rhu Forest from its configuration and size, if touched at all, will be spoiled as a forest.

50,512. No doubt, if it was materially interfered with?—If there were any settlements made anywhere along the shore, they would come right into the forest.

50,513. Now with regard to the conversion of larger holdings into smaller holdings, have you any idea of the cost that would be entailed in the division of a holding of say 60 or 70 acres into six holdings of 10 or 12 acres each?—Do you mean the cost of fencing and of buildings?

50,514. They might do without fencing, perhaps, but they cannot do without buildings. How much would it cost to build a small house and steading for a croft of ten acres?—I don't think I can build a house under £100, and the byre and barn I take it will cost at least £40 or £50 more, built of stone and lime and corrugated iron.

50,515. I think that is a moderate enough estimate?—I have put it as low as I could, though in a written estimate I worked it out higher.

50,516. Therefore, if you were to say an average cost of £150, that would mean a total cost of £900, less the value of the present buildings which could be utilised?—Yes.

50,517. Now, would you, as a proprietor, supposing that that money had to be borrowed, be inclined to accept responsibility for the interest?—No.

50,518. You think either the money would have to be found by the crofter himself, or he would have to be responsible for the interest if the money was borrowed?—Yes. I don't think that I should be inclined to undertake that.

50,519. Would you think it fair for a proprietor in a general way to undertake that responsibility?—I do not see why he should be called upon to do so: I fail to see what return he could get for the risk he would necessarily run.

50,520. Therefore you consider that, if this money requires to be borrowed, it would require to come either from Government or whatever other body might lend it, on the absolute responsibility of the tenant?—Yes, I do; and I think, if a great deal of it was not found by the tenant, it would not be worth much as a security.

50,521. So far as your opinion goes as to the crofters or cottars, or other applicants who are likely to ask for land, do you think that the greater part of the money required for buildings would have to be borrowed?—Without professing to know the circumstances of every individual tenant on the place, I think I have a fair knowledge of what they are; and, as I have said, I do not know more than one who could find any sum like £100 to establish himself in a new holding.

50,522. Then there are very few of them hereabout who could start fair on their own resources, even on a croft of 10 acres?—I think there are hardly any; and I think that opinion is borne out by the evidence taken to-day.

50,523. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You put a question to-day, Mr Nicholson, to bring out the fact that if there was less work the population was getting less on the estate. You say, therefore, that the population is decreasing?—I do not say it, but the witness had stated that the population was decreasing. That was his own statement, and my point was that, on his own showing, though the work was less, the population, as he stated, was also less.

50,524. But if you knew that his statement as to the population was inaccurate, what was the use of founding a question upon it?—I did not say that it was.

50,525. I only want to find out whether it is your opinion that it is decreasing. Is the population decreasing?—Since when?

50,526. Say since the houses were built?—I cannot tell you, because I have no means of knowing what the population was when the houses were built.

50,527. What is the population on the estate just now?—I believe it is about 700, roughly speaking,—between 600 and 700; but the exact figures can be easily got from the returns.

50,528. Are the crofters on the estate getting fewer? Do some give up their holdings?—In eleven years I can recall four cases of holdings which have fallen in through crofters giving up their holdings; and I have a sort of notion that there may have been one or two more cases perhaps.

50,529. How many crofters are there altogether?—Thirty-seven.*

50,530. I see that in a statement made by Mr N. B. Mackenzie, the then factor on the Arisaig estate, before Lord Napier's Commission, he gives an analysis of the tenantry, and he says:—'The following classification 'speaks for itself:—

'Tenants paying over	£100	and under	£200,	3
'	,,	,,	30	,,	100,	10
'Crofters	,,	,,	2	,,	30,	66.'

What do you say to that?—I would suggest that when that statement was made, it was before the Crofters Act was passed, and there was no proper definition of a crofter. Small tenants were spoken of indifferently then as crofters, whether they had land or not.

50,531. But is not this class pretty much in accordance with the definition in the Act, 'Crofters paying 'over £2 and under £30'? Is not that pretty much a description of a crofter?—Yes, it is, but I take it that at that time some of those who were not really crofters but cottars were classed generally as crofters. I think I am right in saying generally that the word 'crofter' was a term applied generally to small tenants in those days, until there was a statutory definition.

50,532. It might no doubt include some who would now be termed cottars, having only a house. How many cottars are there on the estate now?—I cannot tell you the present number, but there has been no alteration. I think the two together would make sixty-six. If you would not mind taking it from me, the cottars are the same in number as they were; there has been no alteration practically in their numbers. We have heard it in evidence to-day that there are thirty cottars on the estate, and I say there are thirty-seven crofters; that gives us sixty-seven.

* See letter dated 28th August 1894, page 1240.

50,533. Quite so; but mark what Mr Mackenzie goes on to say:—

'Cottars on crofts,	15
'Cottars not on crofts,	13
'Cottagers in the village paying £2 and upwards,	26.'

So that you have a vast number of cottars along with those whom he terms crofters?—I do not pledge myself to the number of cottars. I am quite willing, if the Commission would like it, to put in a definite statement. I would prefer to do that.*

50,534. This shows on the face of it a great decrease in the number of crofters?—Well, you have not had any evidence, I take it, to that effect.

50,535. I only show you that this statement of Mr Mackenzie on the face of it, compared with what we have heard to-day, shows a great decrease of crofters; because we have here more cottars than are given by you and more crofters also?—I say that I do not pledge myself to the number of cottars; I do pledge myself to this fact, that there is no material decrease in the number of cottars from that date down to the present time.

50,536. But that won't explain the great difference here?—No, I don't think it does. I don't know whether you attach much importance to it, but I cannot say that I see it is very important myself, from my point of view.

50,537. Whether they are decreasing or not decreasing?—Yes, if you can prove that they are decreasing; but have you had any evidence to prove that?

50,538. This is surely an authority to which I can refer as showing the numbers then on the estate, and I want to find out the numbers there are now?—Well, I am perfectly prepared, as I say, if the Commission would like it, to make up a statement of the number of crofters and cottars on the estate, and then you will be able to see the facts. I should like to do so. [*Mr Gordon.*—Have you not rated the number of cottars too low? I think we heard it stated as 49 or 50, which would make a total of 86.]—It was not my statement that there were thirty; there may be many more.

50,539. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated that there had been thirteen enlargements of present crofters' holdings from other crofters' holdings?—Yes.

50,540. Does that account in any way for a decrease?—No, because though thirteen crofters got enlargements it was not at the expense of other thirteen. Take the case of Angus Macdonald already referred to: his croft gave enlargement to about six other crofters; and the same thing happened in other cases. When one croft fell in, it helped to enlarge more than one other croft.

50,541. Then how many vacancies are represented by these thirteen enlargements?—I have said that I can recall four cases, and perhaps there may be one or two others that I cannot at present name.

50,542. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—What was done with the houses of the six?—In the first case that presents itself to me, the house was turned into a byre for one of the crofters who had a good slated house when he got the enlargement. A similar thing happened in the last case that we are just talking of, that of Angus over at Ardnish. In a third case, where the croft fell in two years ago, the house was made over to the tenant of the croft. I do not quite know what use he is putting it to at present, but he is living in it. Speaking generally, the houses (which were black houses) have been made over to the tenants who got the crofts.

50,543. Were there applications from people in the districts for crofts that were vacant?—Yes, there were in some cases from men who already had crofts and who wanted the whole of the vacant croft added to theirs; and in some cases from persons who had not crofts.

50,544. But may I take it that in every case where a vacancy occurred it has not been filled up by any new crofter?—You may take it that in every case where a vacancy has occurred the croft has been divided among other crofters.

50,545. So that that was the policy, and the policy tends towards a diminution of the number of crofters?

* See Letter of 28th August 1894, page 1240.

—The policy tends towards the enlargement of the crofts.

50,546. And the diminution of the number of the crofters,—that is so, is it not?—Of course it is.

50,547. You stated, I think, that townships would be the better of an extension of their grazing as well as arable land?—I said in the abstract, perhaps, some of them might. The question was put hypothetically by the Chairman, and I said perhaps that might be so. It is not my view of the policy which should be followed, and I have made that quite plain, I think.

50,548. Of course you have made it quite plain; but the question is whether the holdings are not too small, and whether the occupants would not be more comfortable if they had larger holdings. Don't you think they would be more comfortable?—Some of them would, and some of them would not.

50,549. Now, in the neighbourhood of some of these townships is there not land that might be added to their holdings?—No.

50,550. Why not?—I have already said that I do not know of any land which could be divided among any of the townships without serious detriment to farms.

50,551. But if they got the land, it would be a benefit to them? There is land contiguous to them?—In hardly any case is there land actually contiguous.

50,552. Are there crofters contiguous to Kinloid farm?—Yes.

50,553. Is there not land there that would be of benefit if they got the use of it?—If you take away the arable land first, then you will get the hill contiguous, but at present you do not. I do not think that these crofters want more arable land.

50,554. Could they not get grazing ground without touching the arable land?—It is just possible that they could find a way, but that is about all. It would be merely a narrow strip.

50,555. You think, I take it, that it would damage the letting value of the remainder?—I do, because if you go past the arable land you come to the low-lying ground of the farm, and if you are going to take that from the farm for any other purpose you will at once damage the farm.

50,556. You look more to the fact that there would be a greater damage to the farm than benefit to the crofters?—Yes, I take it that the farmer is part of the community, and as such is entitled to consideration.

50,557. In your opinion are the crofts too small? Would not a larger size of crofts be more comfortable, and of benefit to the crofters?—In some cases it might, and in some not. One man is a fisherman, and another is not. We must judge each case on its merits; at least that is what I have tried to do.

50,558. Taking a general view of the crofts here, is it your view that they are too small or too large, or are they the proper size?—Some are small enough, no doubt, but if a man has labour or any trade they are not too small; if he has fishing, they are not too small. Others are bigger, but they are certainly not enough to give a man his livelihood; I grant you that.

50,559. There was one statement which you made, that you heard from the crofters that their crofts did not pay?—The statement has been made to me frequently.

50,560. What do you think is to be conveyed by that?—That crofting is hardly a profitable occupation.

50,561. Might it not be this, that they could not make a living by the croft alone?—I don't know; I only give it as it was given me; that is how I read it.

50,562. What meaning do you attach to the words?—I have given my meaning; that crofting is not a profitable occupation.

50,563. Might it not be a profitable enough occupation although they could not make their living by it alone?—Of course, if you alter the system, you may make it profitable; I am only speaking of the present system.

50,564. I am only speaking of the present system. It might be held that it did not pay, simply because they do not make their whole living by it; but it is quite possible to conceive of its paying in another sense,—that it was a great help, for example, when they could not get work?—I take it that when a man says the place does not pay, he means that he cannot make enough out of it to pay his rent, and pay his own labour. Then I say it is not profitable.

50,565. Are they willing to throw up these crofts?—No, they are not.

50,566. Although they do not pay; so that we must judge of the meaning of the word 'pay' from their conduct. They are attached to their crofts after all?—Exactly; there are certain sentimental considerations which actuate them. Of course, they have my sympathy; they do not wish to leave.

50,567. But would they suffer very material damage if they were deprived of their crofts?—I think you should examine some of the crofters on that point.

50,568. You give the statement here as having a certain weight, and I want to know what weight to attach to that particular statement?—I give the words and the meaning which I attach to them.

50,569. I want to make sure that the wrong meaning is not attached to them by putting the words down simply, and I want to make it clear that although the crofters may have said that to you, at the same time they may consider it a very great benefit to them to have the croft?—I think you had better get that from themselves.

50,570. The extent of the forest, according to your statement, is 3500 acres?—I believe that is about right.

50,571. Was it ever less than it is at present, since it was formed in 1853?—I cannot answer the question except as to my own period.

50,572. How far back does your period go?—Eleven years.

50,573. To 1884?—Say 1883.

50,574. The forest has not been increased since then?—No. I think I am correct in saying that the forest has been decreased,—that certain patches have been taken from it and fenced for cultivation, but that happened prior to 1883.

50,575. And still it extends to 3500 acres?—I said so.

50,576. I observe that before Lord Napier's Commission the following question was put by Mr Fraser-Mackintosh to the factor who had then the management of the estate 'How much of that was under deer until 'lately?' and he answers: 'I should fancy something like '2000 acres.' That seems to show that 2000 acres was the former extent of the forest?—That is his statement. I do not know that there was ever any measurement made, but in any case I had nothing to do with that. [*The Chairman.*—The answer given by Mr N. B. Mackenzie was not a very confident one.] [*Mr Gordon.*—Are you sure the extent is 3500 acres?—I would judge it to be only about 3000. I estimated it at the very outside, and I said 'about' 3500.]

50,577. A question is put to the same gentlemen by Mr Cameron: 'Would you tell us exactly the present 'acreage of the ground which is called a deer forest?' and the answer is: 'I have been endeavouring to 'calculate it from the Ordnance Survey, and it seems some-'thing like 1500 acres.' So that if this statement made by the factor is correct, the area under deer must have been doubled since then?—Well, I may state most distinctly that it has not been increased in any way since that time.

50,578. But is it not an extraordinary thing that statements furnished to a Royal Commission by the factor of an estate should turn out to be so very inaccurate that the area was double what he stated it to be?—I am not called on to support that evidence: I I had nothing to do with preparing that evidence.

50,579. This is the factor on your estate?—I had nothing to do with making up that statement. I have had something to do with the making up of my own statement, and I ask that it should be considered on its merits.

50,580. If your statement is correct, then his statement could not have been correct, and it certainly shakes the value of such evidence to find such a great discrepancy as that,—you saying 3500 and he saying

Arisaig.

Arthur William Nicholson.

1500?—Well, as I say, I have put the 3500 so as to be quite sure in my own mind that I was not understating the area.

50,581. *The Chairman.*—Would you be disposed to ask us, in view of this question, to regard Mr N. B. Mackenzie's evidence as reliable?—I do not know how far you can expect me to answer that question I have no doubt, of course, that Mr Mackenzie gave, as he thought, a correct estimate.

50,582. It does not coincide with your knowledge of the areas so far as your knowledge goes?—It certainly does not, but I am quite prepared for you to find that I have overstated the figures.

50,583. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Then with regard to this forest, I think there is a statement that the rent which it at present gives under deer could not be got if it were put to any other use?—That is my view.

50,584. What do you get for this deer forest?—It is down in the Valuation Roll at £240. At least, it is included in the total of £390, and as the other shootings were let on one occasion for £150 I value the remainder at £240.

50,585. Does that include the house?—No.

50,586. *The Chairman.*—Suppose money to be advanced to crofters with the view of forming new holdings, would you consider that such money would be reasonably secured?—I cannot say; I have not had any experience to enable me to answer that question.

50,587. Mr Gordon opened the important subject of the railway, and he put a material question to you which I should like to put in another form. Suppose the formation of this line to Mallaig were to lead to considerable employment being available to persons in this neighbourhood, would you, as a matter of estate management, be in favour of considerable facilities being afforded for the formation of holdings suitable to persons employed on the railway?—I most certainly would be most disinclined to do anything to prevent or retard the formation of holdings for an undertaking which may benefit the community so much as that.

50,588. We will suppose the railway made or in course of construction, and that there is employment for a considerable number of people more than at present; also that a demand for holdings on the Arisaig estate suitable to persons employed on the railway were to arise; would you, as a matter of estate management, be in favour of granting every facility possible for the formation of such holdings, so as to enable the employees to live in the locality near their work?—I most certainly would. I have no hesitation in saying that it would be my desire to further the working of an undertaking like that.

50,589. Even though the formation of such holdings might perceptibly affect the value of the lands, farms, or forests or other holdings from which the holdings were taken?—Well, of course I must qualify my statement by saying that I should have to take into consideration, as these proposals were made, every circumstance as to what the loss might be in one way or another, and the gain in another. That would be the business point of view, but I start most distinctly with an inclination to do my best to assist the working of a railway of that kind.

50,590. Or may I put it this way: you would start the consideration of that question with an inclination to cast the balance in favour of the employees?—I would start with a favourable inclination, if I may put it like that.

50,591. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you take it, then, Mr Nicholson, that the fixed policy of the estate management is to maintain the present distribution of land,—the one that really exists at the present moment?—No; my policy has been to extend the small holdings where suitable opportunities occur. My policy has been that since I have had anything to do with it and that will be my policy in the future. I am not at all inclined to stereotype the present state of things.

50,592. Then we may take it that the conditions are such that a suitable opportunity very seldom occurs, because practically the distribution is the same ever since you were connected with the estate?—No, I think if you would kindly allow me to call your attention to the fact that I made nineteen extensions of crofts from lands other than those occupied by crofters,—out of farm lands in fact. 'Additions have been 'made from lands tenanted by other than crofters to 'nineteen out of thirty-seven* crofter holdings in 'Arisaig and South Morar estates.'

Arisaig.

Arthur William Nicholson.

50,593. Have you any idea of the area involved in these additions?—No, I admit that it is not very large; some have been small, but others of considerable amount. You heard of Keppoch getting 48 acres additional grazing.

50,594. It struck me that on an estate where the landlord has done so much in the way of erecting houses that perhaps the system of extensions might have been carried advantageously a little further; when you were erecting houses you might further utilise the expenditure by giving them a little more land?—That is what I have had a hand in doing so far; and besides that, there have been thirteen cases of enlargement by consolidation.

50,595. Of course you are aware that there is a provision made for that in the Crofters Act?—Yes, I know that.

RANALD MACDONALD, Samalaman, Glenuig (62). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Ranald Macdonald.

50,596. *The Chairman.*—I see the area of your croft is 1 acre arable, and 2 acres 2 roods outrun, and each crofter in Glenuig and Samalaman is entitled to graze one cow and follower on a portion of the farm of Samalaman adjacent to his holding; the landlord is entitled to winter sheep on the holdings. Your old rent was £3, and your fair rent is £1, 10s.; the arrears were £8, of which £6, 10s. were cancelled and £1, 10s. ordered to be paid?—Yes.

50,597. The proprietor, the late Mr Maclean of Glenuig, had a right of wintering sheep on the crofts?—He was sending them there, at all events.

50,598. Was he doing so at the time of the passing of the Crofters Act in 1886?—Yes.

50,599. Did he winter his sheep on the whole of the Samalaman crofts?—On the Samalaman side the only croft was my croft and the land in his own occupation; but on the Glenuig side there were crofts, and on these he wintered his sheep.

50,600. How many sheep did he usually winter?—We do not know; there was no turning of the sheep stock; they came and went as they chose.

50,601. What length of time did he exercise this right or privilege of wintering?—There was no fence to keep back the stock and they came in to the crops, and the tenants kept them back as well as they could. His own orders were that the sheep were to be there until the 13th or 14th of the first month of summer, and they would be in again in the middle of October.

50,602. Did they often come before the crops were lifted?—Yes, but the tenants would keep them back when the crops were on the ground.

50,602A. Did they do some damage to the crops?—Yes, I would require to be up at three or four in the morning to keep them back, and sometimes I found them on the crop before me.

50,603. Was this a system which the crofters found injurious to themselves?—It was doing us damage and destroying our crops.

50,604. Did any of the crofters at Samalaman or Glenuig complain of that to the late Mr Maclean?—We went once or twice; but the sheep are there to this day.

50,605. Was there at any time any allowance made in the rent or other compensation paid for the injury done to the crops by his stock coming over?—I am not aware of any to whom he gave anything, except one tenant. One night his horses got into this tenant's crop, and he got some compensation from Mr Maclean, but I don't know what it was.

50,606. Apart from this, may we take it that the

* See letter of 28th August 1894, page 1240.

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relations between Mr Maclean and his crofters were very friendly?—Sometimes; sometimes we agreed, and at other times we did not. The crofters always complained, and he used to say that his sheep were doing them no harm.

50,607. Is there a demand in your quarter for more land?—Yes, there are four of us here who want to get land in Glenuig; we are needy of it.

50,608. Who are the four?—John Macpherson, who resides in his brother's house; his brother, Charles Macpherson, may turn him out at any time.

50,609. And who are the other three?—Hugh Macneill, who also lives in his brother's house.

50,610. What is the name of the brother?—Lachlan Macneill.

50,611. Now give us the names of the other two?—Alexander Gillies—he has no holding.

50,612. Is he a cottar?—He has nothing but the bare house, and he has a weak family.

50,613. Does he pay rent?—No; the people of the township gave him admission to the house he occupies.

50,614. Where is that house situated?—In Smearisary, in the midst of the crofters' houses.

50,615. What is the name of the fourth?—A brother of the last named: Angus Gillies, who now lives in his mother-in-law's house.

50,616. What is her name?—Widow Mary Macdonald.

50,617. What rent does she pay?—Two pounds ten shillings, reduced by the Crofters Commission to £1, 12s. She left the land, leaving Gillies and his wife in possession, but he has got no promise of the land from the estate.

50,618. Now just tell us if there is land available for those who desire land in the neighbourhood of Samalaman or Glenuig?—Yes.

50,619. Is it land upon a farm?—It is now in the hands of the proprietor, but formerly there was a large number of tenants also at Egnaig.

50,620. Is it in your recollection when these places were cleared?—Yes.

50,621. When was that?—Forty-two years ago.

50,622. Were you there at the time?—Yes, I used to see the tenants who were there back and fore between Smearisary and Glenuig.

50,623. How many were removed from Eigneig?—In my early recollection, Eigneig was occupied by one tenant, John Donald, married to an aunt of mine, and he went to Australia. There was one there since then. It is twenty years ago since he left of his own accord, and since then it has been in the hands of the proprietor.

50,624. Was it always in the hands of one man?—No; at one time there were four or five tenants.

50,625. But not in your recollection?—No.

50,626. Now, what is the name of the other place in which there were removals?—Glenuig is the place referred to. They were not, however, removed from there: they left of their own accord.

50,627. How many?—There were fourteen crofters or tenants there, and eight of them left. It was Dr Martin who was the proprietor at that time.

50,628. Did they emigrate, or did they get places in the neighbourhood?—They went abroad, and those who remained got portions of Glenuig, those who were able to take them.

50,629. You say they left of their own accord; what made them leave?—There were hard times; crops were not thriving, and there were no prices for stock, and they were hearing great reports of Australia, so they went there.

50,630. Do you ask us to consider lands in the district of Glenuig?—Yes.

50,631. Is the demand or complaint, want of land for new holdings or for extension of existing holdings?—New crofts for those who are landless; if they are removed to these places it is new crofts they will require.

50,632. In the case of those who might not be removed, is there any demand for extension of grazing?—Those who have land already have not said anything to me about it. The three that I have mentioned have no land, and they want holdings. I have a small holding, but I want more. Arisaig. — Ranald Macdonald.

50,633. Would it suffice for those over whose crofts the proprietor has a right of wintering, that that right of wintering should terminate?—They would prefer that, but they are waiting till the Commissioners go round to see what can be done. There are only ten cows in Glenuig now, but the souming of Glenuig, when it was tenanted, was sixty cows, and they had thirty sheep each in addition.

50,634. Would you be satisfied with this right of wintering on the part of the landlord being taken away, or do you desire both that it should be taken away and an additional grazing should be granted?—Yes, both, for we have only a poor place.

50,635. Are these the only lands that you ask us to consider, or are there any other lands?—There is Mr Stewart's land of Kinloch-Moidart—there is only a broken fence between it and Glenuig; and there are the lands of Caolas which are under deer.

50,636. Is there available land there?—Yes, I have seen seven tenants in Caolas, and other two in other places, making nine in all.

50,637. Is that land suitable for grazing or for arable, or for both?—The old tenants had arable land and sheep hill-ground, and Mr Stewart put that land under deer about seven years ago. The land, however, is in the hands of another farmer, and that farmer sends cattle and hoggs to winter there.

50,638. What is his name?—Macgregor.

50,639. And what is the name of his farm?—Kinloch-Moidart.

50,640. Are you here to-day as a delegate from Glenuig?—Yes, but I represent the four who are present, and whom I have named.

50,641. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You have told us that, in the district you first mentioned, forty years ago crofting was not a profitable occupation. Can you give us any reason why it should be more profitable now?—The world was poor at that time, and the tenants felt the hard times more; and those tenants of us who have now got holdings think that if we had more we would be better off.

50,642. Do you seriously think that farming a small farm would be more profitable now-a-days in that district than it was forty years ago?—They were better off at that time, although they left the place, than the tenants who are there to-day.

50,643. But you have already told us that in those days they found prices so low and times so hard that they were glad to go to Australia; and now you tell us that they are in a worse plight to-day?—Yes, but since then, the tenants who remained were restricted to one cow's grazing, and deprived of the right to keep sheep.

50,644. Do you think that working a small farm in that district to-day could be done with more profit to the tenant than it could be done forty years ago, having regard to the prices of stock and cattle?—At that time those who had the old lots paid £7 of rent, and for this they had the right to keep five cows and thirty sheep. But Mr Stewart, who bought the estate from Dr Martin, deprived them of these stocks, and reduced them to one cow's grazing, for which they paid £3. He deprived them of their sheep altogether, and he had the wintering himself.

50,645. [*Question repeated.*]—We would keep our families together if we had more land than we have; they would go back and fore earning their livelihood, and this would be their home.

50,646. But kindly confine your answer to the farming of the land alone. Do you think that farming a small farm in that district would yield more now-a-days than it would forty or fifty years ago, having regard to prices of crops and stock?—I think it would now: the land there has run out, but potatoes are thriving better now than at that time.

50,647. But if the land is run out, why do you think farming would pay better now-a-days?—The land could be brought in and re-drained.

50,648. Then there would have to be a considerable

Arisaig.
Ranald Macdonald.

outlay before any profit could be looked for?—It would take some years before he got it into proper order, but he would get a crop from parts of it very soon after getting possession.

50,649. *Mr Gordon.*—In answer to the Chairman you stated that one of the objects of relief you have in view was to get rid of the landlord's wintering. If you got rid of the landlord's wintering, would you be inclined to pay more rent for your crofts?—If judges of the land considered that proper, we would not be against it; but we would, in any case, like to be relieved of the wintering of sheep.

50,650. It would appear that the fact of the sheep being wintered on the crofts was taken into account when your rent was fixed?—Yes, that is so.

50,651. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you in the same place as you were forty years ago?—No. It was on my father's land I was at that time; since then I am on a small piece of my own. It is twenty-seven years since I got the piece of land I now occupy; the house was built by myself, and I reclaimed the land.

50,652. Are there tenants in Glenuig now?—There are none at present in Upper Glenuig, but there are some in Lower Glenuig.

50,653. And the land you are referring to is the land that is lying idle at present?—Yes, the land in Upper Glenuig; it is under rushes and water.

50,654. How many tenants were in it at the time they went abroad?—There were fourteen families in Upper Glenuig.

50,655. And there are none now?—Upper Glenuig is clear, but there are tenants in Lower Glenuig, and these are reduced to a cow each.

50,656. So that the people are not on the same land now as they were on forty years ago?—Yes, those who remained are on the same land.

50,657. But when some went abroad, was the land set free given to the remainder?—No; Mr Stewart then came in, and those of them who were able to put a stock of two cows got the right, and paid £3 for the grazing of each cow; but after a time they were obliged to give that up.

50,658. Was it exactly forty years ago that these people left?—So far as I know, it is forty-two years ago. At that time the estate was divided into two, and the hill-ground was sold to Professor Blackburn. It is now the Roshven Estate.

50,659. The land you were speaking to was Upper Glenuig?—Yes.

EWAN MACMASTER, Shepherd, Letter-Morar, Glen-Alladale Estate (40).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Ewan Macmaster.

50,660. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

50,661. Are you engaged as a shepherd at present?—Not at present.

50,662. How do you earn your livelihood just now?—Working back and fore and sometimes staying at home assisting my parents.

50,663. Were you a shepherd at one time?—Yes.

50,664. Where were you employed?—I was in different places, in Glenfinnan and in Meoble.

50,665. What is it you wish to say to us to-day?—I would like to get a piece of land.

50,666. Where would you like to get it?—In any suitable place.

50,667. Do you mean about Letter-Morar?—Yes; there are places there which were formerly tenanted.

50,668. You are appearing on your own account, I suppose, and not as a delegate?—For myself and other members of the family.

50,669. What are the names of the places on the Glen-Alladale Estate that were formerly tenanted?—There is Retlan on the Colonel's property; it is on Loch-Morar side.

50,670. Any others?—Scamadale, Dalalamaidh.

50,671. Is that upon Loch-Morar?—Yes, on the south side.

50,672. Where is it from Letter-Morar?—West of it.

50,673. Any other place?—Yes, other places east of that: Refern, Clachaig, Torr-na-h-Airidh up the river Meoble between Loch-Morar and Loch-Beoraid.

Arisaig.
Ewan Macmaster.

50,674. Is there land on any other estate you wish to mention?—There is Meoble itself; there used to be tenants there.

50,675. But that is also on the Glen-Alladale estate, is it not?—No, it is on Mrs Cameron-Campbell's estate.

50,676. Is there anywhere else on her estate formerly occupied?—Kyles, up opposite Loch Beoraid.

[ADJOURNED.]

Following on his undertaking in answer to question 50,533, Mr Nicholson sent the following communication:—

'*Arisaig, Fort-William, 28th August* 1894.

'SIR,—I have now the honour to send you a statement as to cottars on Arisaig and South Morar according to request of the Commission on 21st inst.:—

'The number of cottars, viz., tenants of houses without land paying a rent of under £2, according to the definition of 1883, is 23 against 28 mentioned by Mr N. B. Mackenzie before the Royal Commission on the Highlands and Islands. [See Note A]. It should be explained that this latter figure did not include cottars on crofts paying no rent to the proprietrix. These were given in a separate Return *re* crofters showing the number of houses on each croft. They are not included in the 23 cottars mentioned above, and they are, I believe, above 5 in number. [*Vide P.S.*]

See p. 2119 Evidence, R. Commission, Highlands and Islands, Q. 33,260.

See Appendix B., R. Commission, Highlands and Islands. Return No. 1, pp. 516–7.

'The number of 'cottages in village, &c.' (of Arisaig) paying a rent of £2 and upwards given as 26 by Mr N. B. Mackenzie, is the same now as then. Some of these should perhaps now be classed as cottars, although not so defined in 1883. There are also in other parts of the estate 4 tenants of houses without land paying rents of from £2 to £3 per annum.

Ibid. Q. 33,260.

'I should have stated the number of crofters now on the estate as 48 instead of 37, which figure I gave on 21st inst. When making up my statement I inadvertently took the number of crofters (viz., 37) who applied to the Crofter Commission for fair rents, instead of the whole number on the estate.

'It will perhaps be noted that Mr N. B. Mackenzie, in 1883, mentioned 66 as the number of crofters (which should, I think, have been given as 65). This included 6 cases of double tenancies (viz., widows and sons, &c.), and 5 small tenants who have not now a legal status as crofters (*i.e.*, the Roman Catholic priest and tradesmen). From this it will be seen that the number of crofts surrendered since 1883 is in accordance with what I stated in my evidence.

Ibid. Q. 33,260.

'The tenant of the Mains Farm informs me that all that part of the farm which has been previously cultivated is now under cultivation, with exception of two pieces. One of these he intends ploughing in the course of the next two seasons, and the other is not, in his opinion, a cultivable subject.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

'ARTHUR W. NICHOLSON.

'*The Secretary,*
'*Royal Commission* (*Highlands and Islands*, 1892).'

'*P.S.* referred to on page 1.—I have given this figure to the best of my belief, but as the houses in question pay no rent they do not appear on the Estate Rent Sheet. I could not therefore be certain as to exact number without inquiry at the outlying township of Penmeanach. This would entail delay in sending this letter which I think best to avoid.

'A. W. N.'

'NOTE A.—This decrease has resulted thus. Two were paupers in houses of a nominal rent of 1s. per annum. One of these houses, on the removal of the pauper by the Parochial Board to another house on the estate, was in so bad a condition that it was pulled down, the other was occupied by a pauper till last year, since whose death it awaits a similar occupant. The 3rd and 4th houses were very old and of the poorest type, and, on their occupants becoming tenants of other houses on the estate, were taken down. The 5th case I fail to trace.'

FIFTY-NINTH SITTING.

INVERNESS, August 30, 1894.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
MICHAEL HUGH SHAW STEWART, Esq., M.P.
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
JAMES NOEL MÜLLER FORSYTH, Esq.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
JOHN MACLEOD, Esq.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

WILLIAM MACGILLIVRAY, Balnaberran, Errogie, Stratherrick (30)—*examined.*

50,677. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—I am a farmer.

50,678. What rent do you pay?—£100.

50,679. Are you appearing here as a delegate?—As a delegate.

50,680. Appointed at a public meeting?—Yes.

50,681. Was the meeting held recently?—A few months ago.

50,682. Have you a written statement?—I have taken notes, my lord.

50,683. The Secretary has handed me a petition from the crofters in your district which is in these terms:—

To the Chairman of the Royal Commission (Deer Forests, &c.).

'The petition of the undersigned crofters, cottars, 'farm-servants, and others, in the Stratherrick district '(including the parishes of Boleskine and Dores, and 'part of the parish of Dunlichity, in the county of 'Inverness), humbly declares that, at a meeting held at 'Errogie of those desirous of taking advantage of the 'opportunity now given them of laying evidence before 'the Royal Commission as to the suitability of land, 'presently under deer and sheep, of being formed into 'small holdings, delegates were appointed to give 'such evidence; and, that at a subsequent meeting, it 'was moved, seconded, and unanimously carried, that 'the Commission be petitioned to have a sitting at the 'earliest opportunity, at a convenient centre, in order 'to hear evidence concerning the said district of 'Stratherrick; and, in support of said petition, the 'following reasons, which, to the petitioners, appeared 'sufficiently weighty to warrant the Commission to 'take more urgent steps regarding it than otherwise 'would be necessary, were adduced:—

'(1) That certain lands in the district are at present 'being cleared of people, apparently for the 'purpose of being formed into a deer forest.

'(2) That large tracts of the best land in the district 'are already under deer and sheep.

'(3) That many of your petitioners are prepared to 'take new holdings, or an extension of their 'present ones; while several are possessed of 'means to stock such new holdings.

'(4) Your petitioners further suggest that the full 'and immediate attention of the Commission to 'the several points above-mentioned would be 'an efficient means of suspending for a time the 'utilisation of land for the purposes of afforest-'ment or sheep-holdings.'

(Signed) 'WILLIAM MACGILLIVRAY, Balnaberran.
WILLIAM GRANT, Gorthlick.
MURDO MACKENZIE, Carnoch.
ALEXR. SHAW, Oldtown.
JN. CHISHOLM, Lochgarthside.
DONALD MACKINTOSH, Do.
JAMES GRANT, Wester Murnich.
FINLAY MACLEAN, Lochgarthside.
WM. MACDONALD, Birchfield.
PETER MACDONELL, Inverfarigaig.
DONALD CAMERON, Knockchoilum.
HUGH MACDONALD, Do.
ALEXANDER CHISHOLM, Lochgarthside.
DONALD SHAW, Errogie.
EWEN MACDONALD, Killin.
JOHN MACGRUER, Lochgarthside.
JOHN MACDONALD, Wester Murnich.
ANGUS FRASER, Lochbranside.
JOHN MACDONALD, Wester-Drummond.
JOHN KENNEDY, Drumtemple.
ARCHIBALD FRASER, Lochgarthside.
DONALD KENNEDY, Knockchoilum.
EWEN MACDONELL, Do.
ALEX. CAMERON, Culantyre.
JOHN CAMERON, Boleskine.
JOHN ROBERTSON, Boleskine Glebe.
HUGH CAMERON, Fox Hill, White Bridge.
DONALD MACDONALD, Trinlast.
ANGUS MACDONELL, Bunchegevie.
DUNCAN GOLDIE, Do.
DONALD MACGILLIVRAY, Lochgarthside.
DUNCAN CAMERON, Fenacriech.
JAMES CAMERON, Lochbranside.
JOHN CAMERON, Lochgarthside.
A. FRASER, Gorthlick.
SIMON MUIR, Duhallow.
DUNCAN GRANT, Do.
DUNCAN MACGILLIVRAY, Errogie
ALEXANDER FRASER, Do.
PETER GRANT, Aultnagoire.
JOHN MACKINTOSH, Do.
ALEXANDER MACDONALD, Do.
ALEXANDER MACLEAN, Do.
DONALD GRANT, Do.
SIMON MACLAREN, Errogie.
DUNCAN MACINTOSH, Do.
JOHN CLARK, Moor of Errogie.
SIMON GRAHAM, Do.
DUNCAN MACTAVISH, Do.
JOHN MACGILLIVRAY, Balnadalloch.
JOHN D. MUIR, Duhallow.

50,684. You appear in support of this petition?—Yes.

50,685. If you have some written notes we shall be glad to hear them?—There are two farms in particular which I think very suitable for the purpose of being formed into small holdings in the district for which I appear. The name of one farm is Balchraggan on the estate of Mr Fraser-Tytler of Aldourie, and it was occupied formerly by six tenants.

50,686. What was the rent of Balchraggan, do you know?—The rent is £250. Then there is the farm of Balnedan tenanted by James Forbes; Mid Balnedan, by John Macdonald; Balnagarline, John Fraser; Balnuilt, John Macdonald; Balnachraggan, John Fraser; Balnafettock, Murdo Mackintosh; Balinroich, Donald Macdonald. All these farms are now included in Balchraggan.

50,687. Can you mention the rents of these different farms?—No, I have not ascertained the particular rents; but there were from three to six cows, one pair of horses, and a number of sheep kept by each tenant.

50,688. How is that land occupied now?—Part of it is cultivated and part of it is under sheep.

50,689. And belongs to what farm?—To the farm of Balchraggan.

50,690. Are all these holdings that you have been describing situated on what is now the farm of Balchraggan?—Yes.

50,691. Can you tell me to what extent that land formerly so occupied is under rotation?—I would say there are about 100 acres under rotation and as much under sheep.

50,692. Is that the only land to which you invite our attention?—In this farm; but again there is the farm of Dunchea on the estate of Balnain.

50,693. What can you tell us about it?—It was formerly occupied by five tenants whose names I have

Inverness.

William Macgillivray.

not ascertained, but I have ascertained the names of three tenants who were removed from that place when it was put under sheep.

50,694. Can you give us the date when it was put under sheep?—Not the exact date, but it was about 35 years ago. It was leased by one man, Mr Fraser, tenant of Abersky, and factor for Balnain at the time. That place was tenanted at the time by John Fraser, Duncan Fraser, and Thomas Fraser, each of whom had from five to six cows, a pair of horses, and a sheep stock in common, employing a shepherd to herd the sheep.

50,695. Can you tell us what rents they paid?—No, I cannot give you the rents.

50,696. But at any rate you say that land which is now part of the farm of Dunchea was occupied as separate holdings and tenanted by those individuals?—Yes.

50,697. How is it occupied now; is it under rotation or grazing land?—A few acres are under rotation and all the rest is grazing.

50,698. Do you place it before us as land suitable for occupation again?—Yes, very suitable.

50,699. Any other locality?—There is the farm of Aberchalder on the estate of Dunmaglass,—I mean Easter Aberchalder. It was at one time tenanted by Alexander Mackenzie, Ewan Fraser, Alexander Shaw, William Macgillivray, William Macpherson, Donald Macpherson, John Fraser, John Macgillivray, Alexander Fraser, Donald Fraser, Alexander Fraser. Altogether they had about 60 milk cows with followers. Some of them had a pair of horses, and others only one horse, but none of them less than 40 sheep.

50,700. Can you tell me when these people left their holdings?—I have not ascertained the exact date, but the farm was taken over by one Mr Mactavish who had the farm of Migovie I understand, and was a Solicitor in Inverness.

50,701. You are not giving that information I suppose from your own knowledge?—No.

50,702. Where does it come from?—From witnesses still living.

50,703. Do you mean old people?—Yes, old people.

50,704. Who cannot come here?—Who are unable to come here.

50,705. None of the information you have given as to these former tenancies, I suppose, depends on your own knowledge?—No.

50,706. It is all got in the way you describe?—Quite so.

50,707. Is there any other locality you wish to mention?—There is the farm of Dunmaglass.

50,708. What do you say of it?—About a year ago there were two tenants removed from that place who had about six or seven cows each, a pair of horses, and 200 or 300 sheep. At one time (I cannot give the exact date) it was occupied by a large number of small farmers or crofters, about twenty in all, I am led to understand. It is now in the hands of the proprietor solely.

50,709. Were the two who were removed about a year ago crofters?—Yes, or small tenants.

50,710. Then, I suppose they had fallen behind with their rents?—No, they did not: they were well-doing people.

50,711. How many occupants were there altogether, in former days?—About twenty, I am led to understand.

50,712. That also is information you have obtained from others, I suppose?—So far as regards those twenty tenants who occupied that place formerly.

50,713. But this matter that happened a year ago, you were cognisant of yourself, I presume?—Yes.

50,714. Is that land suitable for cultivation or advantageous occupation now?—It is, very suitable.

50,715. Any other place you have to mention?—I think these are all in the district that are suitable for the purposes of the inquiry.

50,716. And that district is, I understand, the only district for which you speak?—Yes.

50,717. You were appointed at a public meeting, and you know the feeling of the people, I daresay. Is there a strong desire among those you represent for new holdings?—Yes, there is a strong desire.

Inverness.

William Macgillivray.

50,718. Is there any congestion in the district you represent?—Among the crofters there is. They occupy small patches of very poor soil, very inferior soil.

50,719. Is their desire for new holdings, or for extension of grazing?—Partly for extension and partly for new holdings.

50,720. And suppose such individuals got new holdings, could they take them up and carry them on without assistance?—Several of them can do so.

50,721. And do you say others cannot?—I believe others are not in a position to stock the holdings without aid.

50,722. Or to put up buildings?—No.

50,723. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated that there were certain parts of the district you are here to speak for, where there was congestion. Could you indicate more particularly the place or places where there is such congestion of population?—Well, there were some representations made to me from Mr Cuninghame's estate at Loch-Garthside; two or three parties from that place told me that they wished larger holdings than their present ones, which were too small they thought.

50,724. Have they got any pasture behind their arable holdings on Loch-Garthside?—No, not those parties.

50,725. That is those holdings along the road?—Yes.

50,726. And do you say they have got no hill pasture behind their grazing lands?—Not those parties who spoke to me.

50,727. And how many were they?—They were two, I think, or three.

50,728. Had these parties small arable holdings?—Yes, small crofts.

50,729. Without hill grazing?—Without hill grazing.

50,730. Do you know how many of the whole people at Loch-Garthside are in that state,—having simply arable holdings without any grazing?—I really cannot say, but there is another delegate coming after me who, I think, could give fuller information about the matter. But there are a few crofters on the estate of Balnain who are desirous of an extension; they wish some pasture added to their present holdings.

50,731. Is there good and suitable pasture contiguous to them?—Yes, on the farm of Farraline.

50,732. Is that a very large farm?—The rent is about £200, I think. I believe it has about 1800 acres of hill ground.

50,733. Do you know anything about these holdings at Loch-Garthside,—when they were made?—I cannot very well go into that.

50,734. Was it before you had any recollection?—Yes, it was, in the case of most of them.

50,735. And has any additional land been reclaimed within your memory?—Yes, there has, but I cannot say to what extent.

50,736. What I wish to know is, have you seen the land in the process of being made there?—Yes, I have in different parts.

50,737. What sort of subject was it before it was reclaimed?—The worst kind of soil, from an agricultural point of view.

50,738. What made it unfavourable for reclamation, do you think?—I believe the people were driven off all the best land, and had to settle down in places where the land was inferior even as pasture.

50,739. What was the characteristic of the land that made it, in your opinion, unfavourable for reclamation?—The nature of the soil; it was a kind of moor, and nothing growing on it but heather.

50,740. And was it strewn all around with boulders?—Yes, in most places strewn with stones.

50,741. Were all those stones that we saw lying on the road-side taken off the land by the people?—Yes, so I understand.

50,742. Was it the people of Garthside themselves who reclaimed the land, or was it done for them?—It was the people themselves that reclaimed the land.

50,743. Do you know in that neighbourhood any land far more suitable for reclamation than the land that was given to the people?—There is; that land I have mentioned at Aberchalder, I think an acre of it will be worth three acres of what they presently occupy.

50,744. What sort of crops do they generally raise on this reclaimed land at Loch-Garthside?—Fairly good crops in a good season, but I think a good deal of it is due to their own skill and industry.

50,745. And is it your opinion that equally good crops could be raised in any place round about there as at Loch-Garthside?—Much better crops than at Loch-Garthside.

50,746. Have you any idea where the people were before they were put there?—A good many of them lived on those farms that are now large farms under sheep.

50,747. Do I understand you to say that some of the small tenants that occupied these farms got the pieces of moor on Loch-Garthside to reclaim?—Yes, some of them did.

50,748. When they were removed?—I understand so, when they were removed. I do not mean that the present occupants got it, but their predecessors in occupation.

50,749. And I may take it generally to be your opinion that if an opportunity were given in better localities than this Loch-Garthside to make new holdings, the people would succeed far better?—I have no doubt about that.

50,750. But you contemplate new holdings with a sufficient amount of hill grazing attached?—Yes; and fairly large holdings; I think from 20 to 30 or 40 acres would be most suitable.

50,751. But you are not able to speak, are you, with any knowledge of the arrangements that were made when the people were put there, such as building of houses or advances of money? Did they get advances of money, do you know?—I cannot go into that.

50,752. *Mr Gordon.*—You say about 30 or 40 acres would be a suitably sized holding?—Yes, in some cases; I would not make them all of that extent.

50,753. How many of that size would you get on Aberchalder?—I would say from three to four, at any rate.

50,754. Would you take the whole farm?—Well, I believe there could be more land reclaimed there.

50,755. You would have to reclaim the land?—Of course, a good deal of the land there just now was cultivated at one time, but along with that, there is land that would make very good agricultural land, I think.

50,756. Does the farm of Aberchalder include the old township called Ballindalloch; or do you know that country?—There is no place in Aberchalder called Ballindalloch that I am aware of. There is a small holding on the Balnain estate called Ballindalloch.

50,757. But does the Balnain estate cross at the parish march?—The two estates join there, at the parish march.

50,758. And the small place called Ballindalloch is on the Balnain estate?—Yes.

50,759. Now, in your proposals, would you do away with the farm of Easter Aberchalder altogether, and convert the whole farm into small holdings?—Well, there are some farms more suitable for the purpose than others, I think. In the case of Aberchalder, a good deal of capital has been sunk by the proprietor in the shape of buildings; but those farms upon which very little capital was sunk are more suitable, I think.

50,760. If you convert the whole farm into small holdings, what would you propose to do with the buildings?—They would be quite useless.

50,761. What capital do you suppose has been expended on the building?—I really cannot say, but it means a good deal in the rental.

50,762. Would it be something like £1000 or £1200?—Quite likely.

50,763. Possibly more?—Possibly.

50,764. Therefore, if you break up that farm in small holdings, the buildings would be practically valueless?—Yes, I think so.

50,765. Supposing then that you convert the farm into four small holdings, what capital would be required to equip them with the necessary buildings?—That would depend upon who erected them. If the tenants themselves erected them they would not cost so much.

50,766. It does not depend on who erects them; the money would have to be paid either by the proprietor or by the tenant, but the cost would be the same?—I think those who would erect them themselves could erect them for a much lower sum than the proprietor.

50,767. Of an inferior class?—Yes, of an inferior class, perhaps, but suitable enough for the purpose.

50,768. But suppose now you take the inferior class; what do you suppose the buildings would cost the tenant?—I am not prepared to state definitely what they might cost; I am not a builder, and I cannot go into the matter very carefully.

50,769. But you are here representing a very important subject to-day, and you would require to be able to tell us that. Is there much land other than what is presently arable upon the farm of Easter Aberchalder that could be reclaimed?—Yes, there is a good deal, I think.

50,770. Would it be difficult to reclaim?—No.

50,771. Is there not a good deal of the same class of land you described to one of the other Commissioners as full of boulders?—It is quite different land; most of it is green pasture.

50,772. But is there not a good deal of stony dry land?—In some parts, but in other parts very little.

50,773. Would there be any difficulty with regard to this land on which there are no stones, in consequence of the water from Loch-Garth and Loch-Farraline?—Part of that land is presently under cultivation, and I think the part that is not under cultivation was under cultivation quite recently.

50,774. To what do you attribute the fact that the water is so high now?—I don't think it is higher than it was formerly.

50,775. Does that land not get flooded in winter?—It does; but so does my own farm, and yet I cultivate it.

50,776. But you would surely not propose to put down houses on land subject to flooding?—There is no necessity for that; there is land contiguous which is highly situated, and there is no danger of buildings being flooded.

50,777. Could you give us any idea of the cost to a tenant or a proprietor of breaking up a farm into small holdings? Suppose you have a farm rented at £200, and that you want to break it up into six small holdings?—Do you wish me to state what it would cost the proprietor?

50,778. What would it cost,—I don't care whether it is proprietor or tenant, but what would be the total cost of breaking up say a £100 farm into three holdings of £33 each, or a farm of £200 rent into six holdings of the same rent?—I have no doubt there would be a good deal of expense in the erecting of the buildings.

50,779. And you would have in all probability a good deal of expense in connection with fencing, would you not, in an open country?—Yes, if the particular holdings were enclosed; but if they occupy them as formerly there would be no expense incurred, I think.

50,780. But is fencing not the order of the day?—In some parts of the country it is, in others not. For instance, part of the farm of Dunmaglass to which I have already referred was tenanted by two farmers who had not their holdings fenced. They held their sheep stock in common.

50,781. Fencing is considered if not an actual requisite still very essential?—I do not think it is necessary. I have known cases in which club farms have worked very well.

50,782. I am not speaking exactly of hill grazing, but of the lower ground, the arable land. Do you think you could break up the farm of Easter Aberchalder into six holdings or four holdings without a very considerable amount of fencing?—It would be desirable, I think, to fence the particular farms.

Inverness. — William Macgillivray.

50,783. Have you any idea what the buildings and the fences would cost, breaking up the farm of Aberchalder into four holdings?—I can give a rough idea, I think.

50,784. Well, roughly, what would it cost to provide the buildings and the fencing?—I am not going into the buildings; but, I think, a matter of £30 would meet the fencing.

50,785. But you would have to put something on the buildings; some one would have to pay money?—Certainly; the proprietor or the small tenant.

50,786. Would you think it fair to ask the proprietor of Easter Aberchalder to build the steadings?—I think it would be fair to ask the proprietor. I think it would be more desirable to call upon a proprietor who has got land under sheep, good land suitable for the purpose, and land upon which very little capital has been expended in the shape of buildings.

50,787. Then, would you go away from Easter Aberchalder and take a hill part?—No, I would not; *e.g.*, I would take the farm of Dunchea, upon which there are no buildings at present.

50,788. Would you go away from Easter Aberchalder?—In the first place I would leave Aberchalder until such farms as Dunchea were taken up.

50,789. There are not buildings in Dunchea at present?—No, not suitable to the farm there.

50,790. You would first propose to deal with the outlying farms that are not fully housed?—Yes.

50,791. Now, you mentioned Loch-Garthside. Who are the crofters there? Are they labourers?—They are crofters who depend upon employment during the summer season.

50,792. They are rather small crofters, most of them?—Most of them are.

50,793. Who derive their living from labour in the neighbourhood?—Quite so, and a few of them are tradesmen.

50,794. Where would you propose to get the pasture for these crofts?—I do not think there is pasture contiguous to the crofts there. There may be a difficulty in that. I understand there is a farm, Dalcrag, presently under sheep, not far from these crofts: but I do not want to go into that matter because another delegate coming after me knows the country better than I do.

50,795. *Mr Sutherland.*—But you said it was not possible to get grazing; what makes it impossible? It is contiguous to *something*, is it not?—Yes, there are part of the crofts contiguous to other crofts.

50,796. But I am talking of the hill pasture behind?—There is very little hill pasture behind: it is mostly young plantation. A good deal of it is now planted.

50,797. And the remainder?—There is very little pasture, I think.

50,798. *Mr Gordon.*—It is mostly black dry heather?—Black dry heather.

50,799. And rather rocky?—Yes.

50,800. It would not be of very much use to them if they got it?—I don't think so.

50,801. And there is no other pasture. There is that black rocky heather on the Inverness side, and the loch on the south-east side; and that is all?—Yes.

50,802. Suppose you were to find places for these people otherwise, do you think they would leave the small holdings they have there and go and build houses upon other land?—Some of them have told me they would.

50,803. I don't want you to mention names; but were the people who told you so, tradesmen?—Yes, one of them was a tradesman, quite prepared to erect a building and to stock the holding.

50,804. In a more central place?—Yes.

50,805. But that would not be on hill ground; a tradesman would not naturally go to a hill ground?—He would take a holding, a part of which would be arable and part hill ground.

50,806. But he would require to be beside some accessible district, near a public road?—Well, I think he would settle down on the holding if he got it.

50,807. What class of tradesman is he?—He is a mason.

50,808. You would not describe Loch-Garthside as congested, would you?—Yes, I would, because the people cannot now get the employment they were getting at one time, and the crofts are too small.

Inverness. — William Macgillivray.

50,809. What were they employed at formerly?—Some were employed by the shooting tenants at this time of the year, and one way or another there was more work in the district than now.

50,810. Going back for one moment to the capability of the crofters in that district to take larger holdings, I may fairly assume that before he could start a croft and provide fencing and a reasonable sum for building, say on a £30 holding, a man would require to have a capital of not less than £300?—I think that would meet the case.

50,811. Are there many crofters up there who could raise that money?—I have not asked them what they might raise or what they have got; they have just told me, some of them, that they have it.

50,812. What is your own opinion?—I know several of them were in a position to lay out that expenditure.

50,813. In other words you know a good few of them who have money?—There are others who, I think, have not got the necessary money for a holding of that size, but there are some of them who are prepared to take a smaller holding than one of 33 acres,—15 or 20 acres.

50,814. Fifteen acres you say?—Fifteen to twenty, thirty, thirty-five, or forty.

50,815. You would approve of a gradation of holdings?—Yes, I would.

50,816. *Mr Macleod.*—Would there be anything to prevent the Loch-Garthside tenants from holding a club farm although it might happen to be a short distance away from their present holdings? You do not think there would be any insuperable difficulty, do you?—No; if they were confined to sheep it could be easily worked.

50,817. With regard to this farm of Dunmaglass, I do not think you told us if it is presently under crop or whether it is being grazed by sheep?—I think there is a proportion of the arable there presently under rotation, but evidently it is the intention to allow it to run out under sheep.

50,818. How much is under rotation at the present time, do you think?—I cannot state positively the proportion.

50,819. Can you give us any idea?—No, because it was only last year that Mr Sopper of Dunmaglass took it into his own hand.

50,820. So that you cannot give us any information as to the proportion under crop?—No, except that the area under crop is reduced.

50,821. And is it the general impression in the district that it is intended to allow it all to go out of rotation?—Yes, the general impression is that he is to convert the hill ground into a deer forest.

50,822. Then, what were the names of those two tenants that were removed a year ago?—Alexander Macgillivray and Donald Macgillivray.

50,823. Do you know the rents they paid?—From £37 to £40, I think each.

50,824. Did you say that there were more than these two tenants at one time?—There were a great many more.

50,825. You don't know how many?—No; I would say about 20 at one time.

50,826. *Mr Munro.*—You mentioned that a number of holdings in Stratherrick were cleared to make room for Mr Mactavish?—Yes, that is on the farm of Aberchalder.

50,827. You do not remember that yourself, I suppose?—No.

50,828. Mr Mactavish was then the Town Clerk of Inverness; you have heard that, I suppose?—Yes.

50,829. So that these men were deprived of their small holdings in order to make room for a man who earns his living from other sources than farming?—That is so.

50,830. Do you remember the circumstances attending the eviction of these people?—I do not remember it, but I can give it as explained to me by people who

were living at the time. Of course, I cannot vouch for the truth of it; it is all hearsay.

50,831. Were they evicted under circumstances of severity?—Yes, that is so.

50,832. Now, returning for a moment to this farm of Easter Aberchalder upon which Mr Gordon has been putting several questions to you. Supposing that that farm was divided into six small holdings, would they, in your opinion, be readily taken up by people resident in Stratherrick at present?—I think so; I think they would.

50,833. And could these people erect the necessary buildings?—Some of them could, and others perhaps could not.

50,834. Others could with help?—Yes, so I understand.

50,835. Is there any shooting on the farm of Aberchalder?—Yes, there is shooting on the hill ground.

50,836. So that the present farm-house might be converted into a small shooting lodge, could it not?—There is already a shooting lodge at Dunmaglass; if the shooting were divided into two parts it should serve the purpose of another lodge.

50,837. But could the existing farm-houses be utilised for any purpose in connection with small holdings?—They might be used for the purpose of two holdings, perhaps.

50,838. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to this matter of the erection of houses, have you ever seen a new holding made?—No, I cannot say I have.

50,839. The tendency has been the other way within your memory, has it?—Exclusively the other way.

50,840. To make small holdings into larger ones?—Into larger ones.

50,841. Let us take this case of Loch-Garthside, however. Was that not a case of making new holdings?—It was.

50,842. Was there any difficulty about the putting up of the houses and the fencing?—I don't think there was the least difficulty; the houses are there, and I understand they were built by the people themselves.

50,843. You are certain they were built by the people, are you?—Yes, but lately, I understand, some assistance has been given by Mr Cuninghame.

50,844. But subsequently the houses were built by the people themselves?—Yes.

50,845. I was very much surprised to hear that there was no grazing to give to the people of Loch-Garthside?—Not contiguous to their crofts.

50,846. But is this the reason that the land was so poor that it is not worth giving to them?—It is very poor, but then there is very little of it.

50,847. And is it the fact that the people were planted down to make new holdings on land that is practically not worth the taking?—Yes, that is so in almost every case where there is a township of crofters.

50,848. So that this result, that we saw ourselves, of the crops in Loch-Garthside is produced on land that is practically not worth taking?—That is so.

50,849. Admittedly, according to your evidence, the worst subject that could be given to the people?—Yes.

50,850. And they erected their houses, made their fences, and supplied their stock without any assistance whatever?—And expended a good deal on drainage.

50,851. Is it your opinion that, whatever has been done on the worst subject, could be far more profitably done on a good subject?—Yes, that is my opinion.

50,852. Have you ever seen two large farms made into one?—Not in my day, I think.

50,853. You spoke here to-day of the farm of Dunchea?—Yes, I did.

50,854. Did you ever see that a separate farm?—No.

50,855. Was it a separate farm?—It was tenanted, I understand, at one time by six tenants.

50,856. And who holds it now?—Mr Rose.

50,857. What other holding has he?—He has Abersky also.

50,858. Is the building upon Abersky quite sufficient to work the two holdings together?—I think not, if the farm of Dunchea were cultivated.

50,859. Quite so; but, as a matter of fact, is it cultivated?—Very little of it; a few acres.

50,860. Are the buildings upon Abersky alone found sufficient to carry on the two adjoining farms?—I don't think so.

50,861. Is Dunchea farm-house or steading occupied in any way?—There is no dwelling-house there.

50,862. Is there a steading?—There is one building only, quite insufficient for the purpose of a steading for that farm.

50,863. But was it a sufficient building when Dunchea was a separate holding?—No, it was not.

50,864. Why was not another house put up?—I understand it was the intention to put up a steading.

50,865. But here there was a farm carried on with only one house?—As a pastoral farm.

50,866. That at least is one case where they would not require to put up additional buildings supposing it were given to one tenant?—They would require to lay out a great deal on buildings.

50,867. What it amounts to is this, that it was found not necessary to erect a farm steading on Dunchea?—That is so, because it was a pastoral farm.

50,868. Then, did you ever hear any difficulty with regard to these farms when they were being cleared? Did you ever hear of any difficulty being made as to the erection of the new steadings?—None whatever.

50,869. Is it not a fact that when these small farms were put into one, there was one big central steading erected?—Of course, it was the practice at first when those small farms were occupied and cleared, they were made into one farm, and then a large steading was erected.

50,870. Who bore the expense of that?—The proprietor.

50,871. And did these, in every instance, give him a return, do you know?—They might have done so sometimes; I don't think they give a good return to-day.

50,872. Do you think that the fact that they made an investment that ultimately does not pay ought to stand in the way of making small holdings, even if it were an obstacle?—I think small holdings would pay the proprietor better to-day than large holdings.

50,873. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—I want to be quite clear about those houses that you have just been asked about. Did the tenants erect them entirely by themselves, or did they receive some help from Mr Cuninghame?—I understand they erected them entirely by themselves, but a few years back they got some assistance from Mr Cuninghame which helped them to build better houses than they formerly had. Some of them took advantage of that, and others did not.

50,874. In the cases where they got assistance from Mr Cuninghame it cannot be said that they erected the houses themselves?—As I understand, the assistance was very small in proportion to the general outlay.

50,875. But if they got any assistance at all to help them to build their houses, it cannot be truthfully said that they erected these houses entirely themselves?—It cannot, of course, be said that they erected them entirely themselves.

50,876. *The Chairman.*—Are the new holdings which persons in your district desire to get, self-sustaining holdings, or holdings where the occupant lives partly by his holding and partly by labour?—Do I understand, my lord, that you refer to the new holdings that the people would like?

50,877. Yes; are these new holdings that the people wish to get, self-sustainiug holdings, or holdings of such a kind as they have already, where they live partly by the holding and partly by labour?—Some of them want self-sustaining holdings, and others smaller holdings.

50,878. Such as exist already?—Yes.

50,879. Is that a kind of holding of which you are in favour?—A few.

50,880. You are in favour of that sort of holding?—In favour of a few of them existing. I think there ought to be a gradation of holdings.

50,881. You would have both holdings which are

Inverness.

William Macgillivray.

merely homes, where the man lives mainly by labour, and self-sustaining farms?—Yes.

50,882. And is there land in the district you come from suitable for the formation of both classes of holding?—Yes, there is.

50,883. And sufficient in area to meet the wants of all those who desire new holdings?—Quite so: that is my opinion

50,884. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Of course, you know that this inquiry has no concern with land that is regularly cropped?—I do not refer to such land.

50,885. In regard to the steading you spoke about, do you think that when steadings existed upon land that is wholly pastoral, these steadings should be any obstacle at all to the breaking up of these farms? You see the steadings cannot be used for the purpose for which they were put up if the land is being pastured?—That is so, but it is quite possible that those holdings might be let again and cultivated, and I think it would be desirable in the first place while there are holdings without houses, that they should be utilised for this purpose before touching those holdings upon which a great deal of capital has been expended.

50,886. You think that those that have gone out of cultivation simply because there are steadings on them, should be allowed to stand until some person should come to take the holdings; is that your view?—It is not my view that they should be allowed to stand; but they should not be touched until the others were taken up,—those on which the landlord or proprietor has made very little outlay.

50,887. But would you not hold that as a proof of the failure of large farms, when these large steadings are not utilised for a series of years so that the land had to be let as sheep farms? Does not that prove to you the failure of the system of large farming?—Yes, in a good many cases it would.

50,888. And would it not be, *primâ facie*, probable that the land on which those large steadings were erected is the most suitable for small farms?—It is in most cases. But, I believe, a good many of these large farms presently pastured are allowed to run out of cultivation because there is a great difficulty in finding hands to work them,—labourers and farm servants.

50,889. And what remedy have you for that?—I would think if there was a larger number of small holdings, good farm servants could be got from among those families occupying such holdings.

50,890. So that you think that even for the success of moderately large farms it is necessary to have a large number of small holdings?—Yes, I think so.

John Macdonald.

JOHN MACDONALD, Wester Muirnich, Mussady (40) —*examined.*

50,891. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

50,892. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

50,893. Is your croft No. 16 Mussady?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The area is 6 acres 3 roods 15 poles arable, 5 acres 1 rood 10 poles outrun, and no common pasture. The old rent was £5, 0s. 6d.; the fair rent £4; and the arrears £5, 11s., of which £4 were cancelled, and £1, 11s. ordered to be paid.]

50,894. Were you appointed a delegate to give evidence?—Yes.

50,895. At a public meeting?—Yes.

50,896. Have you a written statement?—No.

50,897. Well, tell us what you came here to say.—I came here to say that the farm of Mains of Foyers is at present under pheasants and rabbits.

50,898. And what about the land?—The land would be very suitable for two or three crofters.

50,899. With what size of holding?—About 15 acres each.

50,900. Of arable, do you mean?—Yes.

50,900A. Is the land suitable for being turned into arable?—It is arable; it is cultivated for game.

50,901. Do you mean that it is under rotation of crop?—Yes, some of it.

50,902. But our remit does not extend to land that is under regular rotation of crop. Is there grazing land there?—Yes. Inverness. John Macdonald.

50,903. What extent of grazing land is there on the farm of Mains of Foyers?—I am not quite sure, but I should think about five hundred acres.

50,904. Is that land that was formerly under cultivation, or has it always been pasture land?—About 70 acres of it is old arable.

50,905. Is that the land that you think might be formed into new arable?—Yes, it would do.

50,906. How many new holdings would you put there?—About three; two in Foyers and one in Ardarroch.

50,907. Suppose such holdings were established, would they have hill grazing?—Yes.

50,908. On the high ground above?—On the west side of it.

50,909. Are there individuals ready to take such holdings on the estate?—I cannot say.

50,910. You do not know that?—No.

50,911. But are there individuals there who are in need of new holdings?—A few.

50,912. How many?—About half-a-dozen that I know of.

50,913. But you cannot tell whether they could take such holdings without assistance or [illegible]?—No, my lord.

50,914. Are these holdings that you have in view, holdings by which the occupants would live, or where they would have to labour outside?—Very little labour; the holdings would support the tenants.

50,915. The land which could be made arable is good land, is it?—Very good.

50,916. Would it grow all the ordinary crops?—Yes, it has a first-class climate.

50,917. The climate is very good, and the rainfall not excessive?—No.

50,918. Is there any other land that you wish to speak of?—Yes, the farm of Glenlea; it is held by the proprietor too. I forgot to tell that the farm of Foyers is in the hands of the proprietor.

50,919. How long has it been in his hands?—About ten years.

50,920. Who was the former tenant?—One Mr Meikle.

50,921. Then you were mentioning another farm?—Yes, the farm of Glenlea, which is also held by the proprietor.

50,922. Is it near the Falls of Foyers?—Yes.

50,923. How long has it been in the hands of the proprietor?—About ten years.

50,924. Who was the last tenant there?—Mr Fraser.

50,925. Do you remember what rent he paid?—I think it was about £113.

50,926. Is there old arable land there that could be made into new holdings?—Very suitable for new holdings.

50,927. What extent of it?—About 50 acres, I would think.

50,928. That is land lying between the woods there and Loch-Garthside?—Yes.

50,929. How many holdings would you put there?—Three holdings; one in Glenlea, one in Dalbreck, and the third at the east end of Glenlea.

50,930. Are there individuals you know ready to take such holdings and set the crofts agoing at their own expense?—No.

50,931. Anywhere else?—The estate of Gorthlick is held by the proprietor too, and the whole of South Lyne, and a part of Tomvoit.

50,932. And the hill grazing of Duhallow?—Yes, but Lyne and Tomvoit are on the estate of Foyers, not on the estate of Gorthlick.

50,933. Who is the proprietor of Gorthlick?—Mr Cuninghame; he holds it along with the estate of Foyers.

50,934. Is there much land there?—I think the former tenant was paying about £500.

50,935. Was that the rent he paid?—Yes.

50,936. The tenant of the farm of Gorthlick?—Yes.

50,937. And was his land mainly between Loch-Garthside and the woods fringing Loch-Ness?—It is on the east side of Loch-Garthside, between Loch-Garthside and Loch-Farraline,—a little to the west of Loch-Farraline.

50,938. What extent of land is there in that locality? How many holdings would you put there?—I would put two or three in Gorthlick, and one in Duhallow.

50,939. And where else?—West Altnagoire.

50,940. How many there?—One, and one in Alltcumhang.

50,941. That makes seven altogether. Now, what sort of rents would you have for these holdings?—Fair rents, of course.

50,942. You do not condescend upon a particular amount?—No.

50,943. Are the holdings you have in view self-sustaining, or holdings where the man would labour a good deal?—He would live always on them.

50,944. He would occupy his whole time on the holding, and be enabled to live by it?—Yes.

50,945. But you cannot say that you know anybody ready to take such a holding?—No.

50,946. You yourself have a holding of over 12 acres; you do not want a new holding, do you?—No.

50,947. You have no pasture?—No.

50,948. Have you no stock?—Yes, I have stock.

50,949. Where do you keep it?—I keep all that I have on the croft.

50,950. And buy your provender in winter?—No.

50,951. Do you get as much off the croft as to keep you going?—Yes.

50,952. Are you a tradesman?—No, I am employed at the present time by the shooting tenant at Garrogy, on the Foyers estate.

50,953. Are you employed by him every year during the shooting season?—Yes.

50,954. And that considerably supplements, I daresay, what you make from the holding?—Yes.

50,955. In what capacity are you employed?—As a giffie, or anything that I am wanted to do. There is another farm too, the farm of Compass, which is held by the proprietor also. It is above Whitebridge,—between Whitebridge and Badenoch.

50,956. Who is the farmer there?—The proprietor.

50,957. Is that on the Foyers estate?—Yes.

50,958. Do you know the extent of the farm?—No, but there were a great many crofters on it at one time; it was all held by crofters at one time.

50,959. I see it is entered in the Valuation Roll at a rent of £270. You say a great many crofters were there at one time; you got that information from somebody else, I suppose?—The old ruins are to be seen to-day.

50,960. Can you tell me how many crofters would be there?—About twelve, I think, and one in Garrogy.

50,961. Can you tell us about what time they left their holdings?—I cannot tell, but the ground is green yet, almost all.

50,962. It is now used as grazing land?—Yes, not cultivated; none of it except the shepherd's and gamekeeper's crofts.

50,963. And it is good shooting ground, I daresay?—Very good indeed.

50,964. That land you say is suitable for holdings?—Very suitable.

50,965. How many would you put there?—About twelve between Compass and Garrogie.

50,966. That is to say, you would re-form twelve holdings similiar in size to the holdings that were done away with?—Yes.

50,967. And do you think that would be a good plan?—Yes.

50,968. You think that would be a better course to adopt than forming a smaller number of holdings with a larger area?—Yes.

50,969. Then do you contemplate that the occupants of such new holdings would live partly by labour?—Oh, the land would keep them going.

50,970. Do you know whether the land kept the former tenants going?—I was not born at that time.

50,971. No, but you know all about it, I suppose?—Oh, I think so.

50,972. Is there a good deal of labour got along Loch-Ness through the districts you have been speaking of?—Very little labour.

50,973. Is there any other locality you wish to mention?—Meallagy, also on the estate of Foyers.

50,974. Is there available land there?—Yes.

50,975. How many holdings would you put there?—Two.

50,976. Had there been holdings there before?—Yes.

50,977. But they have not been there, I suppose, for a length of time?—No.

50,978. Anywhere else?—The estate of Wester Aberchalder is let to a large farmer.

50,979. Do you know what rent he pays?—No, I do not know.

50,980. But there is land there under grass, is there?—Yes.

50,981. Which you think we ought to consider?—Yes. And there is the hill grazing of the south side of Glenmarkie.

50,982. Is it also on the estate of Foyers?—It is an estate by itself.

50,983. Would you be in favour of new holdings being put there also?—Yes.

50,984. Is the land suitable?—Very suitable for summer grazing.

50,985. Is there any other place?—Not on the Foyers estate.

50,986. Are you able to speak of any other estate?—Yes, there is the farm of Garthbeg on the Lovat Estate.

50,987. Is that a large farm?—Yes.

50,988. Do you know the rent paid for it?—I think about £500.

50,989. What is the name of the tenant?—Mr Campbell.

50,990. Is the land on that farm to which you refer under rotation or under grazing?—Some of it is under rotation.

50,991. Well, never mind the land under rotation; but what is the extent of the land under grazing that you would like us to consider?—Well, it is a large farm; I think it would keep about 20 crofters.

50,992. Is there a shooting tenant there?—Yes.

50,993. You do not work for him, I suppose?—No.

50,994. Whereabouts is that land from the dwelling-houses and buildings on Wester Aberchalder?—It is all round the buildings.

50,995. You do not, I suppose, include in the land you mentioned any land under wood?—No.

50,996. You say about 20 crofters could be planted there. Can you give us any notion of the extent of it?—From 20 to 30 acres each of arable.

50,997. There is an extent of land available sufficient to afford 20 to 30 acres?—Well, I would say 15 to 20 acres.

50,998. For 20 crofters?—Yes.

50,999. Is that land at a moderate, or at a high elevation?—Neither very high nor very low.

51,000. Is there a desire among those you represent for land in that particular quarter?—Yes, a part of it for the township I am in just now.

51,001. That is Mussady?—Yes.

51,002. Is it a congested township?—Yes.

51,003. How many are in the township?—There will be about twelve or so; some would like to go there, and others to South Lyne, to Dalcraig and Tomvoilt.

51,004. Have the crofters of Mussady no pasture?—No.

51,005. They are all in the same position as yourself?—Yes.

51,006. Do they all keep stock on their own holdings?—Yes: we generally send a stirk or so away to summering.

51,007. Where do you go for summering?—I put mine up to a place called Drummond.

Inverness. — John Macdonald.

51,008. And you pay something for that, I suppose?—Yes.

51,009. Is there any high ground near the township of Mussady suitable for an extension of grazing?—Yes, Dalcraig on the Lovat Estate.

51,010. Would it provide extension of grazing to a sufficient extent?—Yes. There is also the estate of Knockie.

51,011. Who is the proprietor there?—Grant of Glenmoriston. It is let to an absentee tenant.

51,012. Who is the tenant?—I do not know his name.

51,013. Is there land there?—Yes, very suitable for crofters.

51,014. How many could be accommodated there?—Six or seven.

51,015. With areas such as you have already mentioned?—Yes, with pasture attached to every one of them.

51,016. There is land that could be made arable, and a corresponding hill pasture?—Yes.

51,017. Now, anywhere else?—I do not remember.

51,018. But I may ask you this general question. Do you know personally, from having often traversed them, the whole of the lands of which you have spoken?—Yes, I have traversed them all my days.

51,019. Partly as a crofter and partly engaged by the shooting tenant?—Only for six or seven weeks in the year with the shooting tenant.

51,020. And for how many years have you been so engaged by the shooting tenant?—For 17 or 18 years.

51,021. You are very familiar with the whole of that ground?—Yes, all my days.

51,022. *Mr Munro.*—Would the lands you have mentioned be readily taken up by the crofters if offered to them in small lots?—I think so.

51,023. You know that yourself from your intercourse with the crofters?—Most of the people in my district have holdings already, but they are very small.

51,024. Would they be able to stock new holdings if they got them?—Yes, some of them.

51,025. But some of them could not?—No. The people in my country will have to leave it if they cannot get a holding of their own; there is no labour going.

51,026. *Mr Macleod.*—You are on the Foyers Estate?—Yes.

51,027. Can you tell us anything about the assistance that has been given for the building of houses in your district by the proprietor?—There was a lot of assistance given.

51,028. Was it in the shape of money, or what?—For buildings and reclaiming land.

51,029. When did those payments begin first?—When they got it, about seven or eight years ago,—perhaps more.

51,030. How many years is it since the holdings were formed?—Mostly about 30 years ago. Some of them are older than that; some are about 70 years.

51,031. You had a house and buildings, I think, before any assistance was given?—Yes.

51,032. Can you tell us anything about the farm of Tullich in Strathnairn?—No; but the farm of Aberarder in Strathnairn is in the proprietor's hands.

51,033. You cannot speak of Tullich from your own knowledge?—No, I don't know Tullich, but I know Aberarder.

51,034. What particulars can you give us with regard to Aberarder?—I can give no particulars except that it is in the proprietor's hands, and that it is not under rotation at all.

51,035. Are there any buildings upon it?—They are falling down; they are almost in ruins.

51,036. How is it held at the present time?—There is no one stopping in the house.

51,037. Are there sheep on the place?—I cannot say.

51,038. You say you know about it; is there a stock of any kind upon it?—Very likely, it is let for summer grazing.

51,039. Then about this land that you have been speaking about further up,—is there much of it high ground?—There is some of it very high ground.

Inverness. — John Macdonald.

51,040. Would you propose to attach that very high ground to crofters' holdings?—Yes.

51,041. You think that it could be properly used by them?—Yes, for summering.

51,042. And would they have a sufficiency of wintering for the stock they might put on it?—Yes, if the holdings below were enlarged.

51,043. If the holdings were of the size you spoke of, you think the high ground could be properly used?—Yes, for so many.

51,044. And you know the locality well?—Yes, the low ground; but it is very stormy on the high ground; it would only do for summering.

51,045. But you think it could be profitably used for summering?—Yes.

51,046. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Is there a steading on the Mains of Foyers Farm?—Yes.

51,047. And is the land worked in connection with it?—Yes, the land is round about it. The steading is in Foyers, but Ardarroch is on this side of the river.

51,048. I am speaking of Mains of Foyers: is that under cultivation now?—Yes, it is cultivated for game.

51,049. In what state are the fields,—in crop, or in grass?—Some of them are in crop for rabbits or pheasants.

51,050. Do you mean that the crop is not reaped?—Not for the benefit of human beings.

51,051. Are you sure of that?—Quite certain.

51,052. None of the corn is taken to the mill?—No.

51,053. And what becomes of the green crop?—It is eaten up by game.

51,054. As it lies on the field?—It will not get time to lie on the field; it is eaten before it comes on the field.

51,055. Then you mean that the turnips and potatoes are not lifted off the field?—I don't think there is either turnips or potatoes planted; but there is corn sown, which is eaten up by game. Perhaps it is lifted, but it is given to the pheasants again during the winter months.

51,056. You say it is good land?—Very good.

51,057. And would you be ready to take a holding there yourself?—I have a holding already.

51,058. But I understand you to say your holding is too small?—I would be glad if I could get it enlarged where I am.

51,059. And is it good land?—It is myself that made it good; it was not good when I got it.

51,060. But the farm you are telling us about, the Mains of Foyers, is it good land?—Yes, very good land.

51,061. What rent per acre could be given?—A fair rent.

51,062. What would you call a fair rent per acre?—Just what it would be worth.

51,063. Would you kindly be a little more particular,—that is a very general statement, you know. Do you know the land yourself?—From 12s. to say 7s. or 8s. an acre. I would consider that to be a very fair rent.

51,064. What size of holding would enable you to live entirely by a small farm there?—That would depend on the quality of the ground.

51,065. But you have just told us the ground is very good?—Very good in Foyers, but some is better than the rest.

51,066. Supposing you had your choice of a piece of that farm of the size you wanted, could you live entirely by that?—Yes.

51,066A. At present you are not able to live entirely by your holding?—No; you would not expect me to live on a £4 croft.

51,067. I want to know on what size of holding you could live?—If it was just double the size and had a few acres of pasture I could live.

51,068. Now, as to the farm of Ardarroch, you say it has 50 acres arable?—I said 70 acres, between Ardarroch and Foyers.

51,069. I understood you to say there were 50 acres in Ardarroch alone?—No, I did not say that.

51,070. How many acres arable are in Ardarroch alone?—I think 20 to 25; it is under rabbits, pheasants, and gamekeepers.

51,071. Not under crop?—No: if it is under crop, it is for the use of game.

51,072. But is it under crop?—I don't think there is a bit of it this year under crop; it is a rabbit warren.

51,073. You don't know whether it is under crop or not?—Whether it is or not does not matter if—

51,074. It matters very much. You are asked the question and you say you know the land, and it turns out you cannot tell us whether it is under crop or not?—It is under crop, but it is for game.

51,075. But it is under crop?—Yes. There is a servant kept on the farm to cultivate it.

51,076. Then as to the Knockie Estate, is it largely planted?—I don't think it is planted at all; there is a small patch of it planted, about five or six acres.

51,077. Is that all the extent that is under wood on the Knockie Estate?—No, there is a large amount of it under natural wood.

51,078. Did I understand you to say that in your neighbourhood, you did not know of any of your neighbours who were ready to take up these new crofts that might be made out of these farms?—Well, I don't know; maybe there are some, but they did not say so to me. But they would all like to get an enlargement of their present holdings.

51,079. You do not know any who would be willing to remove to others?—No.

51,080. *Mr Sutherland.*—Your present holding consists of six acres of arable?—It is ten acres now; I have improved it since I was in the box before.

51,081. Since your rent was fixed by the Crofters Commission you have increased your arable holding to about ten acres?—Yes.

51,082. In what year was your rent fixed?—Three or four years ago. [*The Secretary.*—The Order is dated 13th May 1891.]

51,083. So that since then you have increased the area of your holding by taking in land from a state of nature?—Yes.

51,084. Then we can safely call you an improving tenant?—Thank you for calling me that.

51,085. You have raised your arable area from six acres to ten in a space of three years?—Yes.

51,086. Did you ever know a sheep farmer to do anything like that?—No: I have never seen one of them yet.

51,087. And is it practically the same land as the people of Loch-Garthside have got?—Yes, but their land was taken in a long time before.

51,088. But it is practically the same locality?—Yes.

51,089. You are up from the loch, behind them?—Yes, just so.

51,090. You have done that to land which previous witnesses described as land not worth adding to them as pasture,—is it the same sort of land?—Yes.

51,091. Have you a crop on the additional arable land this year?—Yes.

51,092. How is it looking?—Very good, some of it, and other bits not so good.

51,093. How many tons of stones have you taken off the four acres; have you any idea?—I believe a thousand tons; it was full of stones.

51,094. And you have no pasture at all, you say?—That is so.

51,095. For these six acres of arable land that you had before you reclaimed any, you had to pay £5 of rent, I suppose?—I got some money for improvements; and it is for interest on that money that I was paying 15s. 6d. I got the croft in 1881 for £4, 5s., and I was paying the rent and interest.

51,096. At what rate per cent. was the interest to be?—Five per cent.

51,097. You were paying 5 per cent. on the money that had been advanced to you to reclaim the farm?—Yes.

51,098. At what rate per acre were you able to reclaim that land? I am speaking to a man who has done it, and I wish to get precise information that cannot be gainsaid. You have done this work?—Yes.

51,099. I want to know from you authoritatively and finally, what did you pay per acre for reclaiming that?—I ploughed some of it and trenched some.

51,100. How much have you got from the landlord per acre for reclaiming the land?—I got nothing for reclaiming the land: it was before my fair rent was fixed that I got the money for it.

51,101. I thought you said money was advanced to you for which you paid 5 per cent.?—That was before my fair rent was fixed.

51,102. But was there not an understanding?—I was paying 5 per cent.

51,103. You had got no assistance at all before your fair rent was fixed?—No.

51,104. Then you did it yourself entirely?—Yes, entirely.

51,105. That is not mere theory?—No, it is not theory; I have done it.

51,106. Now, I wish to ask you a question with regard to the farm of Mains of Foyers. How much arable land do you think is on that farm?—I think about 70 acres.

51,107. How does that land compare with the land that you have got?—It is far superior to the land I have got.

51,108. Is it down on the level of the loch?—It is almost down to the level of this place.

51,109. On the shores of Loch Ness?—Just so. Neither frost nor winds will do harm to it.

51,110. And do you say deliberately that that land is being used for the purpose of raising crops for game?—Yes.

51,111. It is actually cultivated for that purpose?—Yes.

51,112. And for no other purpose than that?—No.

51,113. Do you know the rabbit-warren along the road coming down here?—Yes.

51,114. Is that part of it?—There is a rabbit-warren at Glenlea.

51,115. And is it joined with this farm of Foyers?—Yes.

51,116. It is close to it?—Yes; but it was made a warren when the tenant had Glenlea Farm; the low side of it is open now.

51,117. Do you know how many large holdings are on the estate of Foyers altogether?—Well, the proprietor has all the large holdings in his own hands, except Wester Aberchalder.

51,118. He has the whole place in his own hands?—Yes.

51,119. Has he to your knowledge tried to let them?—I cannot say; I don't think so, but I am not sure.

51,120. But it is a fact that with the exception of Wester Aberchalder he has the whole of the large holdings on his estate in his own hands?—Yes.

51,121. You cannot give us any information as to whether he attempted to let them?—No.

51,122. Does he carry them on as large farms himself?—Yes.

51,123. You have stated that you know the farm of Garthbeg?—Yes.

51,124. It is also called Garthmore?—Yes.

51,125. How does that come about?—There was a tenant in Garthmore, and a tenant in Garthbeg, and a tenant in Bunchegovie.

51,126. Do you recollect a time when there was a tenant in each of these farms?—No: I remember when there was a tenant in Dalcraggie which is also along with it.

51,127. And they are all now in the one farm?—Yes.

51,128. *The Chairman.*—How many shooting tenants are on the Foyers Estate?—There is only one, I think.

51,129. You say that you have been reclaiming land since the fair rent was fixed?—Yes.

51,130. So that you have been reclaiming rather over an acre a year on an average?—Yes.

Inverness. John Macdonald.

51,131. You say that you reclaimed some by ploughing and some by trenching?—Yes.

51,132. How much of the reclaimed land did you reclaim by ploughing?—I reclaimed the most of it by ploughing except bits that were too stony.

51,133. How much of it did you reclaim by trenching?—About three quarters of an acre.

51,134. Then the cost of the reclamation by ploughing was simply that you put the plough through the land after lifting out the stones?—Yes.

51,135. And had you much trouble in getting the stones out?—Yes.

51,136. Now, as to the trenching, can you tell us what the cost of the trenching was, or whether it cost anything beyond your own labour?—It was not any cost except my own work.

51,137. How deep did you trench?—About 18 inches, or maybe less.

51,138. And is all that land under cultivation now?—Yes.

51,139. And, in your opinion, the result has been to show that it was worth your while to reclaim the land?—It was.

51,140. *Mr Charles Innes, Solicitor, Inverness, Agent for Foyers Estate.*—Where is this land that you say you have reclaimed?—It is on my croft.

51,141. On what part of it?—The whole of it, except a small bit at the furthest corner.

51,142. And all since the fair rent was fixed?—Yes.

51,143. Was there no arable under the plough before the fair rent was fixed?—Yes, there were six acres and some poles.

51,144. And how many are there now?—Over ten.

51,145. What portion of the croft have you reclaimed since the fair rent was fixed?—Just the west side of it; the east side was reclaimed before.

51,146. You say the most of the land you reclaimed by ploughing?—Yes.

51,147. What do you mean exactly by that? What condition was it in before?—Just black ground.

51,148. No crop had ever been taken out of it?—Never.

51,149. But it was reclaimed simply by putting the plough through the land?—Yes.

51,150. Most of the four acres has been reclaimed in that way?—Yes.

51,151. Is it not in your knowledge that prior to the fixing of the fair rent a certain proportion of your land was to be reclaimed?—Yes.

51,152. Including the land you have since reclaimed?—Yes.

51,153. That was the arrangement on the estate?—Yes.

51,154. In the event of any additional land being provided at the suggestion of the Commissioners to enable small holdings to be created, would you apply for one of them?—I am quite content where I am, if I can get an enlargement of my holding in the way of grazing.

51,155. Where would the most convenient place for you be?—Dalcraggan, on the estate of Lord Lovat.

51,156. *Mr George Malcolm, Secretary, Highland Property Association.*—You have told us of, I think, four or five farms which are in the possession of the proprietor, Mr Cuninghame, at present. Can you tell us if a farm stock is kept on these farms?—Yes.

51,157. There is a stock of cattle kept on each of these farms?—On Gorthlick Estate.

51,158. And it is a very good class of cattle, is it not?—Yes, a very superior class.

51,159. Can you tell us where the provender is got for the support of these cattle?—I was never asked.

51,160. Can you tell me where Mr Cuninghame feeds those cattle off the farms?—Very likely; I don't think I have anything to do with that.

51,161. You stated that those farms were at present cultivated for the support of game?—Foyers and Glenlea only.

51,162. And those two farms still support a stock of cattle. I want to know from what source those cattle are fed. I put the question whether they are fed from the produce of the farm?—Very likely at Gorthlick they are fed on the produce of the farm; I did not say anything about game at all in the case of Gorthlick.

Inverness. John Macdonald.

James Macdonald.

James Macdonald, Duhallow, Aberarder (45)—*examined.*

51,163. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

51,164. What is your employment?—I am not employed at present; I am a pensioner.

51,165. You have been in the Ordnance Survey?—Yes.

51,166. Are you appointed as a delegate to appear before us to-day?—No.

51,167. You are appearing as an individual?—Yes.

51,168. Are you able to speak to particular lands anywhere in this locality?—Yes.

51,169. What are the lands you know most of?—The estate of Aberarder.

51,170. Who is the proprietor?—I really do not know: I think Mr Sutherland is the proprietor, but the estate is under trustees.

51,171. The estate belonged to Mr E. C. Sutherland?—Yes.

51,172. Is it not occupied at present?—A good deal of it is not occupied.

51,173. Do you live upon that estate?—Yes, I was born upon that estate.

51,174. How many farms are upon it?—I think now there are only about half a dozen farms altogether: there used to be several more,—at least, there used to be several more people on the estate than now.

51,175. You mean there used to be small tenants?—Yes, a great many more tenants.

51,176. How many were there on that estate at one time?—On one particular farm there used to be five tenants.

51,177. What is the name of that farm?—Glenbeg.

51,178. And is the land which was occupied by these small tenants in former days, in your opinion, land that could be profitably occupied again?—Yes, there is not the least doubt about that. It is one farm; I really do not know whether it is the proprietor or a farmer who occupies it.

51,179. Do you know whether that particular farm is let to a tenant?—No, I do not know, but there is a man occupying the farm.

51,180. You cannot tell whether he is there as tenant, or whether he is managing the farm for behoof of whom it may concern?—No.

51,181. What is the area of land there that you think might be re-occupied?—The whole estate really.

51,182. Confine your attention for a moment to this particular farm where you say there were some small tenants in former days, Glenbeg. Can you give us the extent of land which you think might be profitably or advantageously occupied by such similar tenants?—Between 60 and 70 acres, I think.

51,183. Is that land under crop, or is it under grass?—Under crop and grass.

51,184. How much of it is under grass?—I think they work it on the five-shift system—that would be divided into five.

51,185. Do you know particularly about it, or are you only giving general impressions?—I know all about it; I was born on the place, and know all about it.

51,186. Leaving out the land that is under rotation, how much of it is left that you think might be so occupied?—Only the place that was occupied before; it is worked now.

51,187. As arable land?—Yes, excepting the hills. Of course, there are a lot of hills with it which are not occupied.

51,188. It is not a large farm; it appears from the Valuation Roll to be let to a tenant called Peter Brown at a rent of £68?—Yes.

51,189. And there is another farm called Cairnban, —did you refer to it?—No, it is a croft.

51,190. It is let to a man named William Maclean at a rent of £12?—Yes.

Inverness. — James Macdonald.

51,191. Then there is another farm called Wester Croachy?—Yes.

51,192. Is that one of the farms you had in your mind?—Yes; it is let.

51,193. I see the tenant is Donald Shaw and the rent £40?—Yes.

51,194. Then there is Bridgend let to Donald Fraser at a rent of £10?—Yes.

51,195. That is a crofter's holding?—Yes.

51,196. Then there is the farm of Tighanruich and Gort-nan-Gobhar let to William and Donald Macgillivray at a rent of £64?—Yes. There used to be three people in that place. All the alterations have been made since 1860. These three people have been removed, and there are only the Macgillivrays left. The Macgillivrays used to be in Glenbeg, and now they occupy the two farms. Tighanruich was at one time occupied by two tenants, brothers, and Gort-nan-gobhar by a separate tenant.

51,197. Do you know what rents they paid before?—I should say they would be £30, or so,—perhaps less.

51,198. Then there is a small holding on Clarkston let to Margaret Macgillivray or Macmillan, at a rent of £1, 10s., and Wester Croich let to Miss Nairn at a rent of £1?—Yes, there used to be a croft attached to that cottage until within a few years ago.

51,199. Then there is on the farm of Duhallow let to Widow Margaret Maceachan and Miss Macdonald at a rent of £2, 7s.; that also is a crofter's holding, I suppose?—That is the farm I was born on: it was let up to 1880 at £26 or £28.

51,200. The farm of Duhallow?—Yes.

51,201. It has undergone some changes since then?—Yes, and before that.

51,202. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Can these farms that you speak of be properly described as moderately-sized or small arable farms, *e.g.*, Glenbeg?—Yes, I should think it would be a moderate size.

51,203. Any others of a small or moderate size?—They are really all small farms excepting Aberarder, which is not let at all.

51,204. Mostly cultivated in rotation?—No. Duhallow and Milton (Balavullin) have been under grass for some years now.

51,205. But I am speaking of the farms that you told us of just now. Could they not be described as either moderately-sized or small arable farms?—Yes, I suppose you could not call a 70 acre farm a large one.

51,206. Is that not the correct description of them?—Yes, to a certain extent; but you cannot alter the fact that the people were removed.

51,207. *Mr Sutherland.*—You did not mention the farm of Aberarder, did you?—Yes, I did.

51,208. How is that farm occupied now?—It is not occupied at all; the grass parks are let in summer-time, but that is the only occupation.

51,209. But is it cultivated?—No, it is under grass.

51,210. Does it not comprise more arable land than any other farm on the estate?—Yes, it does.

51,211. It is the largest farm on the estate?—Yes.

51,212. And has a greater area of arable land than any other farm?—Yes, I should think it is twice the size of any other farm.

51,213. And there is no tenant on it at all?—No, not for some years now.

51,214. Is that, in your opinion, a favourable subject for our consideration?—Yes, the whole estate is.

51,215. What are the particular circumstances that you have in your mind when you form the opinion that the present is a favourable time?—The place is unoccupied.

51,216. And do you think the most is not being made of the land on the estate of Aberarder generally?—No, I should think not. The most may be made of it for the landlord, to be sure.

51,217. But I am talking of the public good?—I should not think so, seeing it is not occupied; of course, the most cannot be made of it.

51,218. How long is it since the Ordnance Survey of that locality was made?—I should think it would be about 1867, or so; but the publication will tell you.

51,219. The date on the map is 1873?—It would be surveyed three or four years before it was published. Inverness. — James Macdonald.

51,220. I find from the Ordnance Survey six houses in 1873: how many are there now?—Only one. I should think at the time the survey was made there must have been about six houses there, and previous to that there would have been more.

51,221. And now there is only one?—Only one.

51,222. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—What are the other Dubesides Aberarder that are in pasture?—There is farms hallow and Balavullin, and there are all the hills,—they are unoccupied.

51,223. On these two farms is there arable land that is pastured?—Yes, they are all under pasture.

51,224. With these exceptions, are all the farms cultivated?—Yes, all except these two, or rather these three.

51,225. How did these fall out of cultivation? What is the reason of their being uncultivated do you know?—Because he would not let people have the land, I suppose. He would not let them have the land because they could not pay the rent he wanted for it. He wanted double the rents it carried previous to 1880, and, I suppose, the people really could not afford to give that, and they were obliged to leave.

51,226. And so the land has gone out of cultivation. Do you know what sort of rent that land now pays?—I have not the least idea. The grass parks are put up to auction. I never troubled myself going into what they got.

51,227. You cannot tell us then whether these people have been put out for the profit of the landlord,—whether he has profited by their removal?—I do not know at all. He may have a profit for all I know, but the people were removed.

51,228. *The Chairman.*—There is one farm not mentioned in the Valuation Roll,—Balavullin. Do you know about it?—Yes.

51,229. It is on the estate of Aberarder?—Yes.

51,230. Is there a tenant on it?—No, there is nobody in it except a man who occupies the house. He has been there since last term, I think.

51,231. Is it a farm called the Home Farm?—It is called Milton: Balavullin (Baile-a'-Mhuilinn) is the Gaelic for Milton.

51,232. Do you know anything of that farm?—Yes, I know that farm; it adjoins the farm that my father had.

51,233. Is there land there available?—Yes, certainly, it is under grass. There is no one occupying it, so, of course, it must be available.

JOHN GRANT, Blacksmith, Dalarossie (63)—*examined.* John Grant.

51,234. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—I have the Glebe of Dalarossie at present from the minister of Moy, Mr Simpson.

51,235. Have you a written statement?—No.

51,236. Are there any lands to which you wish to invite our attention?—Yes.

51,237. Where are these lands?—The same place that I was occupying myself, Banchoruan on the estate of Dalmigavie.

51,238. Is it grazing land?—It is all under sheep now.

51,239. Is it let to a tenant?—It is.

51,240. What is his name?—Donald Watson.

51,241. Do you know what rent he pays?—I am not quite sure; he has got the whole estate now.

51,242. What is the extent of his farm?—I cannot exactly say: there are about 41 acres in Banchoruan itself.

51,243. Has it any other name?—Banchoruan is the farm that I was on. There were three farmers when I was there; I and my father had the half of it, and other two farmers had the other half.

51,244. What rent did your father pay?—When we entered there in 1854 the rent was £14 for the half, and the other two were also paying £14 between them.

Inverness. John Grant.

The place was in very bad order, with poor buildings; we put up new buildings and improved the place, and it was valued at £515, 0s. 2d. Then it was put in the market as one farm, and it was then a friend of my own happened to come in, and took it over at £90.

51,245. Is it now called Dalmigavie Mains?—No, Banchoruan.

51,246. All that land, I understand, is now under sheep?—All under sheep.

51,247. And is it suitable for re-occupation now?—Undoubtedly it is.

51,248. It is good soil?—Yes, good soil.

51,249. What is the extent of it?—There will be about 41 acres.

51,250. Under permanent grass?—It is all under grass now.

51,251. And has it been so for many years?—For three or four years now. This farmer only occupied it for about three years, and he had to give it up; it was too much rented. Myself and my father were paying £38 when we left, and then he came in and got the whole farm for £90 and kept it for only three years.

51,252. Upon that land you are now speaking of, how many new holdings do you suppose could be made?—It would answer very well for two farms, with splendid pasture.

51,253. Farms of a self-sustaining kind, where the person could live upon his holding?—Perfectly well.

51,254. Is there a desire for such holdings?—Undoubtedly, they might be let.

51,255. Is there any other land you would wish to speak of?—Yes, Dalmigavie. The present tenant, Mr Watson, occupies the whole estate except what the proprietor keeps for himself.

51,256. He pays a rent of £135?—He does not pay that now; he has entered on a new lease this season.

51,257. Do you know what rent he is paying?—The rent is smaller now than that. He has just entered on a seven years' lease.

51,258. Is the land there suitable?—It is grand land,—very good land.

51,259. How many holdings could be planted there, do you think?—I myself recollect seeing five farms upon it.

51,260. What rents were paid for these farms, do you know?—I am not sure about the rents.

51,261. Would they be under £20?—They would be more than £20, but some not so much, for there are two very small ones. But Dalmigavie is a very large farm.

51,262. Supposing such holdings were formed and occupied, is there plenty suitable hill grazing at hand?—Oh, yes. This land is suitable for carrying about 2000 sheep,—Dalmigavie and Banchoruan together. The latter is put out for 300, but taking the two together they would hold 2000.

51,263. All these holdings of which you are speaking are holdings by which a man could live, I suppose?—Perfectly.

51,264. How many acres arable have you in view for each holding?—I could scarcely say; perhaps there will be about 130 or 140 acres in Dalmigavie Mains.

51,265. How many would you allocate to one tenant?—There might be three tenants perfectly well.

51,266. You would put three tenants on an area of 140 acres arable?—Yes. There was a farm called Tullich once.

51,267. Where is Tullich from Dalmigavie?—It is between Banchoruan and Dalmigavie.

51,268. What was the size of it?—It might be about 30 acres.

51,269. And do you remember the rent?—No, I do not remember.

51,270. Was it occupied at one time as a small farm?—It was occupied by two farmers at one time.

51,271. How long ago is that?—I have just a slight memory when they left that place.

51,272. You have only a vague impression about it?—Just so.

51,273. But is the land there suitable for re-occupation?—Yes, it is splendid land, and part of the buildings are still to be seen. Inverness. John Grant.

51,274. Is there any other land you know about?—Not on that estate.

51,275. Well, in any district?—Turn to Coignafearn and the lands on The Mackintosh's estate.

51,276. Do you mean grazing farms?—Grazing farms and lowland ground.

51,277. What farm do you refer to particularly on The Mackintosh's estate?—Coignascallan and Coignafearn.

51,278. Are they occupied by tenants at present?—No, they are under deer.

51,279. Do you remember a time before they were under deer?—Oh, perfectly, the whole of them.

51,280. When was that land afforested?—I think about ten years ago.

51,281. Added to what forest?—To The Mackintosh's forests. There are about 52,000 acres of hill ground.

51,282. What was the extent of land afforested about ten years ago?—These two farms that I mentioned, Coignascallan and Coignafearn.

51,283. What would be the total area thus added to the forest?—Perhaps about 200 acres.

51,284. That is of low ground?—Of low ground.

51,285. And before that land was afforested I suppose it was all under sheep?—Not the whole; Coignascallan was occupied by the tenant who is there just now, Mr Macrae, who had the hill grazing, about five miles to the river-side following these two farms.

51,286. Could that land which you say has been recently afforested be advantageously re-occupied now?—Perfectly well.

51,287. By tenants of the crofter class?—There are two splendid large steadings on it in grand order.

51,288. When were these steadings built?—They were there before my memory.

51,289. What state are they in now?—In a very good state.

51,290. How far away is the nearest crofter from this land that was afforested?—It is just adjoining that shooting lodge.

51,291. Are there crofting tenants adjoining that ground?—The river divides them: there are eight tenants across the water.

51,292. Is there a township there?—Yes.

51,293. What is the name of it?—Lower and Upper Coignashee and Coignafiontarnach.

51,294. Do you know the rents paid by these people?—Not exactly; they got their rents reduced when some ground was taken from them eight years ago.

51,295. What size of holdings had they?—Perhaps 20 acres each, some smaller and some larger.

51,296. And had they hill grazing?—A lot of hill grazing.

51,297. As I understand, however, you were not appointed to represent their views?—No. But the hill ground is not suitable for anything but deer; it is very high ground. I was for six years with one gentleman there, and I know the hill ground of Coignafearn.

51,298. In what capacity were you acting?—As a gamekeeper to a gentleman there.

51,299. So you know the ground very well?—Perfectly well.

51,300. Can you give me the total area of The Mackintosh forest as it exists now?—I was there at the time Mr Mackay, the surveyor, was there, and he told me there were about 52,000 acres.

51,301. And possibly it is more now?—No, it cannot be more.

51,302. You know that forest very well. Can you tell me if any other land has been added to the forest in recent years besides what you have mentioned?—Not on The Mackintosh estates.

51,303. You have mentioned the only land that has been added to the forest?—Yes.

51,304. Now, is there any other land that you wish to speak of?—Just following down again,—Sir John Fowler's land at Glenmaseran; it is now all under deer.

51,305. Speaking of the land of Glenmaseran belonging to Sir John Fowler, is there any land there that was recently added to forest?—Yes.

51,306. What extent of land?—I could scarcely say, but there is a lot of very good low land; they are just cultivating a small bit of it for grazing for the shooting tenant.

51,307. And has the rest of it been added to the forest?—The whole estate is added to the forest.

51,308. Can you tell us the extent of Glenmaseran?—No.

51,309. Do you remember when it was added to the forest?—Perfectly well,—three years ago.

51,310. Had there formerly been a grazing tenant there, a farm tenant?—Yes, there were four there within my own recollection.

51,311. What is the name of the last farm tenant?—Andrew Clunas.

51,312. Were the sheep cleared off when he left the ground?—He gave over the sheep at a valuation to Sir John Fowler.

51,313. And then the land was added to the forest?—Yes. But this is a different forest from that of The Mackintosh; it is a forest by itself. The whole estate of Sir John Fowler is now under deer.

51,314. And do you say that the whole of that forest of Glenmaseran has been recently made a forest?—Yes.

51,315. Within the last few years?—Within three years.

51,316. In order to the formation of that forest, was there any arable land included,—land that had been under rotation?—Yes.

51,317. To what extent?—Perhaps about 200 acres.

51,318. Of land that had been recently under the plough?—Yes; a lot of it was waste ground for a long time, for a period of 40 years, and then it was turned into forest.

51,319. Is there any other land that you wish to speak of?—Next is the land of Mr Mackenzie of Farr and Glen-Kyllachy.

51,320. What land is there that you wish to speak of?—There is one farmer there at present.

51,321. What is his name?—William Macgillivray.

51,322. What is the name of his farm?—Garbole.

51,323. Can you give us the extent of that farm?—I think about 130 acres arable.

51,324. Land under rotation?—So far as I can judge, there is about that amount of arable land; and half of the hill ground or so is let out for deer forest again, and the other half is with Mr Macgillivray under sheep.

51,325. When was the half of the hill ground put under deer?—It will be six or seven years ago.

51,326. And was that land taken off what had been farm land before?—Yes.

51,327. And added to the forest?—It is all the one farm now. I recollect seeing six farmers there myself.

51,328. What rents did they pay?—I cannot remember the rents.

51,329. But were they of the crofter class?—Yes.

51,330. And is all the land they occupied under forest now?—Oh, it is not in the forest; all the cultivated land is kept in reserve for the present tenant at Garbole. He has got the whole.

51,331. But a considerable portion of ground which was formerly part of that farm is now added to the forest?—Yes, the hill ground.

51,332. Do you happen to know the extent of that ground?—No, I cannot say.

51,333. But that took place within recent years?—Yes.

51,334. *Mr Sutherland.*—Does it amount to this, that practically the whole of the upper reach of the Findhorn valley is now in deer forest?—Yes, on the north side; and part of the south side too.

51,335. And is that what is called the forest of Glenmaseran?—The highest part is The Mackintosh's, which is also a forest.

51,336. Are the two forests marching?—Yes, Glenmaseran and Coignafearn.

51,337. And was Glenmaseran made entirely out of sheep farms?—Yes.

51,338. There was no deer forest there before, to which a farm was added?—No.

51,339. But it was made to march with The Mackintosh forest?—Yes.

51,340. You were a gamekeeper, I think you said?—Yes; I was there as a keeper for six years.

51,341. You know something about the making of deer forests?—Oh, surely.

51,342. On what principle are they made?—Well, I will tell you: the ground of The Mackintosh is fit for nothing else, the very top of it, but for deer. Speaking roughly, all the ground that is under deer up there, with the exception of the low-lying ground, is suitable for nothing but for grazing in summer; but I know that there would be between 15,000 and 16,000 sheep on the two forests that are now under deer.

51,343. And they lived there, these 15,000 to 16,000 sheep?—For a number of years.

51,344. And thrived there?—Yes.

51,345. And would do so still?—Undoubtedly, in summer-time; it is a grand grazing place.

51,346. I asked you about the principle on which deer forests were made: what I want to have from you is this—Do you think the proprietor was induced to turn this upper part of the Findhorn valley into a deer forest because there was already another deer forest in existence that he could tack his on to?—Well, perhaps that was not the intention at that time: I think he was expecting that deer foresting would pay better than the grazing.

51,347. What do you think would make it pay better?—The fact that the gentry are so fond of deer shooting. One of the gentry told me he would rather give the whole rent, if he could kill one stag. But that place was not a forest.

51,348. And could you kill one stag, when it was not a forest?—Oh, yes, you could generally get one.

51,349. And are there more there now?—Yes, they are almost as plentiful as sheep.

51,350. Where did they come from?—They came from Gaick forest, and they will soon rear up.

51,351. Is that The Mackintosh's forest?—Yes. [*Mr Allan Macdonald.*—Gaick is not The Mackintosh's forest.]

51,352. Suppose a deer was going from Gaick forest to Glenmaseran, what ground would it have to pass through?—They might come through many ways.

51,353. Could it come on deer forest altogether?—Yes.

51,354. Then, don't you think that the proprietor in making this deer forest would have in his mind that he could tap another deer forest?—Oh, probably. The Mackintosh was rearing them there, and he had taken them from Gaick, and reared them on the estate there for many years.

51,355. Do you know of deer forests anywhere that are surrounded entirely by sheep farms?—None but this one; I don't know any other.

51,356. But this one is not: it marches with other deer forests. Do you know at the present moment one single deer forest that is surrounded entirely by sheep farms?—No.

51,357. But you know several deer forests that are clustered together, don't you?—Yes, they generally are.

51,358. Is that then the principle on which they are constructed?—Probably it is: probably enough, that is the case.

51,359. Have you ever looked at the deer forests on a map, and observed the tendency they have to grow?—Yes.

51,360. Do they all cluster round each other?—Very often they do.

51,361. And you say you know of no exception to that rule, that in every case one forest hangs on to another forest: we are talking just now of the making of this forest of Glenmaseran?—Well, it is mostly closed on the one side by The Mackintosh forest, but on the other side there is no fence at all; the deer can go where they like.

Inverness. — John Grant.

51,362. So that a deer forest is generally made in the hope of taking deer from another forest which already exists?—Probably that is the case.

51,363. You have been a gamekeeper, and should know?—The animals that are here to-day might be a hundred miles away by to-morrow.

51,364. You say the top part is fit only for deer?—Undoubtedly.

51,365. Why did they take the lower part?—The lower part did not belong to The Mackintosh.

51,366. But the high mountain tops are best suited for deer?—Yes, of course, where there is any green pasture.

51,367. Are the deer better there?—Undoubtedly, where there is plenty grass.

51,368. Then the rearing of deer on the low ground is against the rearing of good deer?—Yes, I think so.

51,369. As subjects of sport?—As subjects of sport.

51,370. As subjects of sport, will the deer reared and kept on the high mountains be better than those that are reared in the valleys?—I think they are.

51,371. Did you ever hear that the low lands were added to the deer forests for the purpose of supplying them with wintering?—Yes.

51,372. So that they are obliged to winter deer as well as sheep?—Yes, they cut grass and corn to feed the deer in winter, if a heavy storm should come.

51,373. And they are just treated in all respects like sheep?—Yes.

51,374. And like domestic animals?—Yes, with turnips and artificial feeding.

51,375. In your early days, do you remember when they did not winter deer?—There was no word about it in the beginning of my time.

51,376. And was there good sport?—Plenty sport.

51,377. Was it better sport than is to be got now?—Much about the same, I think.

51,378. Did you ever in your former days see men sitting on a rock or on a chair and shooting deer?—Not often.

51,379. Did you ever see it at all?—It might happen occasionally, when stalking, and so on.

51,380. You have seen stalking?—Yes.

51,381. Is stalking as common as it used to be?—Much more so; if there are deer they will require to be stalked.

51,382. But is it as difficult as you have seen it, at first?—Not half so difficult.

51,383. You are no doubt an authority on sporting; you are a practical sportsman?—Of course, I have been trying my hand at it.

51,384. And is it your opinion that sport is not at all what it used to be?—They will get good sport, undoubtedly.

51,385. I am not asking as to the amount, but as to the nature of it?—I know that it is more valuable than it was in the beginning of my days.

51,386. There are two aspects of the question, the one of sport, and the other of value: there is the value to the landlord, and the sport to the man who shoots?—Yes.

51,387. You said that stalking is now twice as easy as it was within your memory?—Yes.

51,388. But does not the value of sport to the sportsman consist in its difficulty and its danger?—I think that makes it more valuable.

51,389. And you say it is not half what it used to be?—Just the half.

51,390. In other words, people can shoot stags now who were not able to do it before?—Well, they were not so practical as they are now; they were not so practised in handling guns.

51,391. That is quite possible; but, as a matter of fact, sporting is far easier now than it was in your memory?—Indeed it is.

51,392. And people can do it now who have not half the skill or strength that used to be required?—Not half the skill.

51,393. So that sport is very much degenerated?—Yes.

51,394. Now I wish to ask you a question about the tenancy of this forest that has been formed. All the people have been cleared out of the sheep farms?—They were not cleared out.

Inverness. — John Grant.

51,394A. I am talking of the new forest of Glenmaseran?—They are all left.

51,395. Are all the shepherds left?—Yes.

51,396. Are they turned into gamekeepers?—Well, one of them died.

51,397. Are there as many families left in the place as a deer forest as there were when it was a sheep farm?—There is none now but the one keeper, and a farm servant who keeps a small bit of it cultivated.

51,398. That man is there in addition to the gamekeepers?—Yes.

51,399. So that after changing it into a deer forest, is the population practically what it was before?—Oh, no; the people left.

51,400. Do you think the population is the same as it was before the place was made into a deer forest?—Oh, they are not so numerous, surely.

51,401. Do you know anything then about how it was occupied before it was made into sheep farms?—Yes.

51,402. How was it occupied?—There were farmers on it; it was placed into three if not four farms.

51,403. Do you see any remains of smaller holdings than that in the district?—Oh, yes; plenty.

51,404. Do you see ruins of old houses, and traces of old cultivation?—Plenty of them; too numerous indeed.

51,405. So that first of all it was under small tenants; then it was put under larger tenants, sheep farms; and now it is all under deer forest?—All turned to sheep now.

51,406. I want you to follow the case of Glenmaseran; first it was in small tenancies, the remains of which are still visible?—Yes.

51,407. Then it was made into one or two sheep farms?—Yes.

51,408. And now all the sheep farms are swallowed up in a deer forest?—Yes.

51,409. That is the process which has been followed?—Yes.

51,410. *Mr Gordon.*—How many sheep were upon the farm latterly?—It would hold about 2000.

51,411. Was that the summer stock, or the winter stock?—It was the summer stock; they had to put most of them, the hoggs, to wintering, and get them back in spring.

51,412. Did they send any sheep to winter except the hoggs?—Some years,—it depended on the crop of hay to winter them. If they had a good crop of hay, they did not send so many away.

51,413. They required either to be sent away or hand-fed during the winter?—Yes.

51,414. Is that part of the country subject to very heavy falls of snow?—Yes.

51,415. How would you propose to re-occupy it now?—By turning it into small farms again.

51,416. Is there arable land in it sufficient for several small farms?—Yes.

51,417. Or land that could be reclaimed?—Oh, yes, plenty that could be reclaimed.

51,418. How many small farms could be placed in Glenmaseran?—Three.

51,419. What was the old rent of Glenmaseran?—It was different rents; I think Mr Clunas was at one time paying £300, but he got a reduction of £50 from Sir John Fowler.

51,420. Then the place would make three farms paying about £80 each?—It might just come in about that.

51,421. Suppose this glen were offered to three farmers, do you think it would be readily taken up?—Oh, there is no doubt about that.

51,422. What would be the probable amount of money required to stock it?—It would take a good deal to stock the whole.

51,423. Would it take £3000?—Less than that would stock it.

51,424. In addition to the sheep, would you propose

to have a cattle stocking?—Mr Clunas kept 14 or 15 milk cows.

51,425. That would be five milk cows for each of the smaller places?—Yes.

51,426. And a pair of horses?—He kept four horses.

51,427. But the three smaller tenants would each require a pair of horses?—Yes. He was not cultivating all he might have done.

51,428. Then, they would have to provide that stock in addition to their sheep stock?—Yes.

51,429. They would, of course, have the buildings to provide?—Yes.

51,430. Do you suppose you could find people willing to go there and to put up the buildings themselves?—There are few people in the glen now, but I know that if it were put out, it would soon be taken up.

51,431. But would you propose that the proprietor should rebuild the houses, or the tenants?—It would just depend upon how they would be rented.

51,432. Could they build the necessary houses, and pay £80 of rent each?—Yes, if they got it at a fair rent, they could build themselves.

51,433. We are taking it for granted that the last rent, £250, was a fair rent; and dividing it into three makes a rent of rather over £80 on each new tenant. Now do you think you could find three people willing to go there and stock the farms and build the houses, and pay £80 of rent?—They might come from other places.

51,434. It does not matter where they come from?—I well believe if that was the case, it would soon be filled up.

51,435. You would find people ready and willing to go there and to build the necessary houses?—Yes.

51,436. What is the average height of the ground there?—Really, I cannot tell you.

51,437. Is it subject to frost?—Some years.

51,438. Are you personally acquainted with the country?—Perfectly well; I was born there.

51,439. Did you ever see the corn there frosted?—Several times.

51,440. Then it is not a place you would set down for small tenants?—Farther down there is plenty land that is quite suitable for small farmers.

51,441. But you would not propose to put small tenants into a place where their crops would be liable to be frosted?—That is what they cannot help; some years might come good enough, and another year's frost might take it all away.

51,442. But I am asking you a plain question; would you propose to put small tenants into a country where their crops are liable to be frosted?—They would need to take their chance of that.

51,443. You would recommend that being done?—I know that I did it myself, and I could not complain.

51,444. *Mr Macleod.*—About this farm of Tullich, is there much green land on it?—It is all green, the low-lying ground.

51,445. How many acres would you say?—Perhaps about 20 or 25, I could not be very sure.

51,446. Was it under crop before?—Yes.

51,447. How is it held now?—It is all under sheep now.

51,448. Who is the tenant?—Donald Watson; he has the whole of it.

51,449. You said you held some land yourself?—Yes.

51,450. Is it the glebe of Dalarossie?—Yes.

51,451. What extent is it?—About seven acres.

51,452. Is it under crop?—No, it is under grass.

51,453. Have you got any pasture?—A small bit, about two acres.

51,454. Do you march with the deer forest?—No, not quite; there is about half a mile between us.

51,455. Are you troubled with the deer there? Do they come down upon this land you have got?—No, I never saw any of them upon this very spot.

51,456. Do the deer come down upon the arable land in the district?—Yes, they do.

51,457. And is there much destruction to the crops thereby?—A great deal very often.

51,458–59. *Mr George Malcolm, Secretary, Highland Property Association.*—Are you able to tell the Commissioners with regard to Glenmaseran whether, before it was afforested, the proprietor tried to re-let it as a sheep farm?—No, he did not try.

51,460. It was not advertised, was it?—No. [*The Chairman.*—You mean that it was immediately turned into forest, without any endeavour to re-let it as a sheep farm?—He wanted to turn it into a forest, and did so.]

51,461. And was that also the case with reference to The Mackintosh's lands?—The man who had that part of the low land failed, and was not able to keep it; and The Mackintosh did not advertise for another farmer, and it was turned under deer.

51,462. Do you know that of your own knowledge?—Yes.

51,463. How long were you a gamekeeper?—For six years.

51,464. You were never a deer forester?—No.

51,465. Just a general gamekeeper?—Just a gamekeeper.

51,466. And never specially employed in the management of a deer forest?—No. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Have you ever stalked deer?—Yes.]

51,467. *Mr Allan Macdonald, Solicitor, Inverness, Commissioner for The Mackintosh.*—What extent of arable land did you say was in the forest of Coignafearn?—Between Coignafearn and Coignascallan, about 200 acres so far as I could judge.

51,468. I have got the book of contents of the estate here and it shows that there are only 97·8 acres of arable between Coignascallan and Coignafearn. [*Mr Sutherland*].—Is that land under cultivation, or land possible to be brought under cultivation? [*Mr Macdonald*].—Land that may possibly be brought under cultivation. [*Mr Sutherland*].—That is the figure according to the opinion of the estate people? [*Mr Macdonald*].—Yes, it is taken from the estate contents. [*To Witness*].—You said the extent of the forest was 52,000 acres?—Yes.

51,469. Would you be surprised to hear that the whole extent of the Monadh-liath is 38,000 acres, from which you have to take 10,000 acres that is let to tenants for pasture, so that practically the forest only covers about 28,000 acres? [*Mr Sutherland.*—We have a return giving the acreages of all the deer forests in the country.]

51,470. You said 15,000 or 16,000 sheep used to live there?—Yes.

51,471. But you know they only lived there a month or two in the summer?—They would not be more than perhaps two months.

51,472. And only in summer?—Only in summer.

51,473. That land is not suitable for wintering sheep?—Oh, indeed, no, it is not safe to winter sheep.

51,474. Do you know the Coigs tenants?—I do.

51,475. Do they winter sheep?—Very few indeed.

51,476. And you know why practically it was given up as a grazing land?—Well, it was asked, at all events; The Mackintosh asked it, and they did give it up.

51,477. Why did the whole of this land which used to carry 15,000 sheep cease to be grazing land?—As to that I cannot say.

51,478. Would you be surprised to learn it was very difficult to get tenants?—I well believe they were kept on; they were coming from Badenoch as you know to the grazing of Craig-Uanach, and from Strathnairn and Strathspey.

51,479. Would you be surprised to learn that at last it was difficult to get them to come from anywhere; and that even those who did come did not pay more than one-half the rent which was paid ten or twelve years ago?—I well believe the land pays better under deer.

51,480. The sheep rent fell by at least one-half within ten years preceding the afforestment?—It might.

51,481. You talked about Coignascallan and Coignafearn being added to the forest; but what really took place was that the land was afforested all at the same time?—Yes.

Inverness. — John Grant.

51,482. The farm of Coignascallan is outside the forest fence?—Part of it.

51,483. Almost the whole of it?—Not at all.

51,484. What part of it?—The west part is all fenced into deer forest. It goes up to the dyke crossing at the end of the bridge near the lodge.

51,485. The fence comes up to the bridge?—Further up than the bridge: the fence starts from the bridge.

51,486. That is what I am saying?—And the other part between that and Coignafearn is all on the forest.

51,487. How much land is there between the bridge and Coignafearn?—I should say close upon 30 acres.

51,488. Is there any arable land there?—It is all arable land.

51,489. Do you know about the steading?—Yes.

51,490. There is cultivated land there at present?—Very little.

51,491. The Mackintosh cultivates some himself, and Donald Macrae cultivates some?—That is down at Coignascallan.

51,492. That is what I am talking about. How much arable land is there there? I thought that was the bulk of the arable land at Coignascallan?—Oh, no, not at all.

51,493. You said that the farm of Coignascallan was vacant because the tenant Macrae failed?—I think that was the cause.

51,494. And that it had not been advertised or occupied as a farm since?—No.

51,495. Don't you know that Alexander Macbean, who is now at Ballachraggan, took it for some time?—Yes, but he did not farm it, he had sheep on it.

51,496. He had sheep on it since Macrae failed?—Yes.

51,497. Now, could you tell me what other forest marches with Coignafearn except Maseran which was made since it was afforested?—There is the forest of Lord Lovat which adjoins it on the west side.

51,498. Does it march with it?—Yes.

51,499. You said that deer could come from Gaick all the way?—I said that deer might come there from the Gaick forest, and I have no doubt they would.

51,500. I thought you also said they might come from Gaick to Coignafearn walking through forest all the way?—Oh, no, I did not mean that.

51,501. Would you just tell me what you mean by saying that sport is much easier now than it used to be?—How would it not be easier, seeing you may get a hundred deer for every one that used to be got.

51,502. That is not what was put to you. Is it less fatiguing to go stalking now than it used to be?—It is. When I was there, there was no road at Coignafearn at all; there was not a yard of road then, but now there is a carriage road from Coignafearn on to Dalbeg.

51,503. Tell me anything else that makes sport easier?—That is one point.

51,504. Tell me another point. [*The Chairman.*—Did the formation of bridle paths make it easier?—Yes.]

51,505. Are there any bridle paths in Coignafearn?—Yes, there are bridle roads there.

51,506. But is it much easier to shoot a stag now?—Yes. I might go ten miles without seeing a stag then, but now perhaps I might not go a hundred yards from the house to see one,—I might even shoot one from the window of my house.

51,507. Then, what makes it so much easier in your opinion is that there are so many more stags on the ground?—Yes, they are far more numerous. I was in a house not very long ago, and I counted 38 head within 150 yards of the lodge.

51,508. Where was that?—Just up at Glen-Kyllachy.

51,509. *The Chairman.*—Have you any general knowledge of the forests in Scotland other than those you have mentioned?—Oh, yes.

51,510. Which other forest do you know well?—I know one in Strathspey, the forest of Kinveachy.

51,511. Is that a deer forest, or a deer park?—It is a deer forest.

51,512. Has there been afforestment there recently?—Very little of cultivated land.

Inverness. — John Grant.

51,513. But grazing land; has any grazing land been added to it?—Not any.

51,514. Just to take that forest as an illustration, is there much of that forest suitable for deer and nothing else?—Well, no; that forest is quite suitable for sheep, all over.

51,515. For summer grazing?—For summer grazing of sheep.

51,516. Is any part of it suitable for winter grazing?—Not much of it; there is some low land that is quite suitable.

51,517. Do you remember when that forest was under sheep or any part of it?—Yes, I remember when the whole of it was under sheep.

51,518. When was that forest formed?—About 15 years ago.

51,519. Prior to that, was it wholly under sheep?—Wholly under sheep.

51,520. Now, do you know any other forest in the country which has been similarly treated?—Glenmore and Rothiemurchus.

51,521. Have been turned from sheep land into deer forest?—It was once under sheep.

51,522. Was it under sheep in your recollection?—I recollect it before it was turned into a forest, when Lord Stamford took it; it was he who made it a deer forest.

51,523. Which forest is that?—Glenmore.

51,524. Do you make the same remark with regard to Rothiemurchus?—The top parts of it are in the Grampians, but there is fine grazing for sheep on the low parts.

51,525. Do you remember when these lands were under sheep?—I do.

51,526. How long ago is that?—It will be over 40 years ago.

51,527. Is there any other forest that you are well acquainted with?—No, none that I am well acquainted with.

51,528. Speaking as a man who has skill and experience in matters relating to a deer forest, do you say that there are considerable tracts of land in these forests suitable for deer and for no other purpose?—Not except in this forest of The Mackintosh.

51,529. How many years' experience of forests have you had?—This Kinveachy was the first one, then Rothiemurchus and Glenmore, but I was not so well acquainted there.

51,530. But how long have you been employed in connection with forests?—About ten years.

51,531. How were you engaged before that?—I was a farmer.

51,532. May I ask how you are engaged now?—I am in many trades; I am a blacksmith, and at steam-engine works. With all these deer forests around, the blacksmith trade could not keep me alive, so I bought an engine and am now sawing timber.

51,533. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You say you have had skill in deer forests for the last ten years?—Yes.

51,534. In what way have you had such experience in the forest?—I have been with gentry who took me out to stalk for them.

51,535. In how many forests?—Only one.

51,536. *Mr Charles Innes, Solicitor, Inverness.*—You gave the Commissioners some evidence about the farm of Garbole upon the estate of Glen-Kyllachy?—Yes.

51,537. And, I think, you said there was one tenant there, William Macgillivray, who held 130 acres of arable land and half of the hill?—Something about that.

51,538. You said also that you knew a time when there were six tenants on that property?—Yes.

51,539. How long ago was that?—About 45 years ago, I daresay.

51,540. Long before the time of the present proprietor?—Oh, long before.

51,541. How long has he been in possession?—Mackintosh of Holm was the proprietor then: I think Mr Mackenzie has had the property about ten or eleven years.

51,542. Do you know what stock Mr Macgillivray keeps?—I think between 700 and 800 sheep.

51,543. And how many cattle?—About 20 milk cows.

51,544. He has rather a famous breed of Highland cattle?—Yes, it is Highland cattle he keeps.

51,545. But you know they are good stock?—They are good stock, undoubtedly.

51,546. Does he now hold all the arable acres that were ever cultivated upon that estate?—Not the whole; part of it.

51,547. Where?—There is a bit that Mr Mackintosh of Holm kept in reserve when he sold the estate that was joined into Garbole.

51,548. But I am talking of the estate as it now exists. Has not Mr Macgillivray, the tenant, in his possession all the arable land that ever was cultivated upon that farm?—No, there is part of it in the hands of Mr Mackenzie.

51,549. Where is that?—On the west side of the lodge.

51,550. How many acres?—Perhaps four or five acres.

51,551. The landlord keeps four or five acres that were arable land at one time in connection with the lodge?—Yes.

51,552. How is it grazed?—It is under deer.

51,553. Is it not in the possession of the game-keeper?—He has got a pony off Mr Mackenzie and a cow; that is all.

51,554. Four acres I suppose is not more than sufficient to feed a cow and a pony?—He has got all the land round the lodge.

51,555. How many acres are there?—I could not say; perhaps two acres.

51,556. Would you like to keep your pony and a cow all the year round upon these two bits of land?—I would do it nicely if I got the liberty his cow and pony have.

51,557. But it is not more than sufficient? He uses all that grows on it?—He just uses what will keep the pony and cow.

51,558. He does not sell anything from it?—No, not so far as I know.

51,559. With that exception Mr Macgillivray now has all the arable land upon the estate of Glen-Kyllachy?—Yes.

51,560. Do you know that Mr Macgillivray has sometimes to purchase fodder to feed his cattle and sheep?—I don't think he ever bought any yonder, so far as I know: he is always selling off the farm, but taking in none.

51,561. You are sure of that?—Quite sure.

51,562. How many sheep does he winter on the farm?—It is not the same number every year; some years he does not put away but the hoggs.

51,563. What proportion of the sheep does he send away on the average?—Perhaps about 200 lambs.

51,564. Could he keep a greater stock than he has?—Well, the stock would not be so good: he is rearing good stock, and if he was to get more they would not feed so well.

51,565. So that the place is just stocked for the quantity of food there is?—Just so.

51,566. Do you know the height of the lands of Glen-Kyllachy, the highest up?—No, I cannot tell you.

51,567. Will it be 2000 feet?—Oh, no.

51,568. In the portion of the estate which is in the proprietor's own hands, I mean the hill part, is there any land that ever was cultivated?—Yes.

51,569. Is there any land in Mr Mackenzie's hill which he does not let which was at one time cultivated?—Yes, I know one place where there was a family.

51,570. Where was that?—It was up the burn of Glen-Kyllachy. I saw the ruins there.

51,571. What was the extent?—I do not know.

51,572. Two acres?—Not so much; perhaps less than one.

51,573. Was that where a shepherd lived?—No.

51,574. Who lived there?—It was a daughter of the shepherd.

51,575. Give us the name and the date when the people lived there?—I do not remember it; but I was told about it, and I have seen the ruins of the house where they lived.

Inverness. John Grant.

51,576. It was before you were born?—Yes.

51,577. There was a quarter of an acre added to a cottage. And is that the only place in the portion of the estate in the proprietor's hands that you ever heard was cultivated?—Yes, with the exception of what was round the lodge.

51,578. Has the bit round the lodge ever been cultivated—the park?—Yes.

51,579. It has been in permanent grass for a good many years?—Since a long time.

51,580. For how many years?—Forty-eight years, I daresay.

51,581. And you know it is simply a paddock in connection with the lodge?—Yes.

51,582. You never saw a tenant there?—It was joining with the tenant in Garbole.

51,583. But the two acre bit in front of the lodge,—was that ever cultivated by a tenant?—Yes, I recollect seeing it under a tenant.

51,584. How many years ago?—About 45 years ago, when the Macqueens were there.

51,585. Do you say that a landlord when his servant has a cow and a pony is not entitled to keep that for his servant's use?—Oh, undoubtedly.

51,586. You would not divide that up?—Oh, no, that is just what is fair and reasonable.

51,587. There is no more cultivable land in the proprietor's hands than you know is fair and reasonable?—Not a bit.

51,588. Then knowing the country as you do, and as I do, do you think the climate is better or worse than it was in your young days?—Much about the same, but the land is better. When the lime quarries were opened it made a different country of it altogether.

51,589. But we are speaking now of Glen-Kyllachy, not of the whole strath. Is the climate there better or worse than it used to be?—Just much about the same.

51,590. Is there as much snow now as there used to be?—Just something similar.

51,591. Did you ever see on this very farm of Garbole the crops covered with snow to the depth of a foot?—Oh, several times.

51,592. Then on the portion of the estate in the proprietor's hands, how many sheep could be carried?—It would carry something like what it has got just now.

51,593. That is 700 sheep?—Between 700 and 800.

51,594. Could they be kept on that portion of the ground all the year?—Not with safety, unless there was a good crop of hay.

51,595. But there is no arable land to get a crop of hay from?—There is plenty, on the low ground.

51,596. But that is let?—Yes.

51,597. I am talking now of the portion of the estate which is in the proprietor's hands. Is it not so high that it would be impossible to keep sheep alive summer and winter?—It would not be safe to have them there; they would need to go to the low ground.

51,598. They would need to be wintered somewhere else?—Just so, or on the farm.

51,599. You said that the high tops were only available for deer,—that no other animal would live there?—Not in the winter time.

51,600. Do not deer as well as sheep require to live in the winter time?—Deer are stronger, and can stand a storm better than sheep.

51,601. But don't they require to live in the winter time?—When there is plenty of grass, there is no fear.

51,602. Is there a plentiful supply of grass on the Monadh-liath during the winter months?—Oh, plenty.

51,603. In the winter?—In the winter.

51,604. What depth of snow have you known there?—It is not the same; it will drift away, perhaps.

51,605. But I want to know what is the average depth to which the snow lies upon that high country of the Monadh-liath?—Perhaps some winters three feet depth, and perhaps some places six or ten feet.

51,606. Have you never seen even that extent of

Inverness. — John Grant.

snow upon the road along the strath?—I did see it there too; it will drift on to it.

51,607. Is that road not impassable every year?—Not every year.

51,608. How often in an average of ten years?—Perhaps not once every five years.

51,609. Are you sure about that?—Quite sure.

51,610. Do you know these farms along the strath there?—Perfectly.

51,611. Do you know that the rents have been considerably reduced in the last 10 or 15 years?—I think it is reduced.

51,612. Why was it reduced?—The tenants were complaining that it was too highly rented.

51,613. Why was it so?—Owing to the fall in prices of cattle and sheep.

51,614. Had the season nothing to do with it?—The season also might have an effect on it.

51,615. Don't you know that they had a very great effect on it?—Yes, I know.

51,616. And that that was the reason among others why the rents were lowered. Then knowing that the seasons had been so bad as sometimes to lose the greater portion of the crops of the existing tenants, whose farms are situated at a lower elevation, would you propose to put new men altogether on the bit of land which is now in Mr Mackenzie's possession?—Yes, if they were to get the low-lying ground and break up that farm which is in one man's possession, and which once had five men.

51,617. You would not call 130 acres a big farm?—It is not a small one; if I had a third of it I would be very pleased.

51,618. It is considerably bigger than the half-acre croft you told us about, which your father or grandfather told you about?—Yes.

51,619. Are there many young men in your parish?—Very few indeed.

51,620. Why do they go away?—Through rack-renting, probably. I remember 16 farmers leaving us all at once.

51,621. I am talking of the young men; why do they leave the parish?—Because they were over-rented in their farms, and had just to leave.

51,622. I am talking of the men who had no farms, the young men?—They had not the opportunity of taking a farm when their parents were too much rented at that time.

51,623. Do you deliberately say that the young men have left the upper end of the parish simply because they thought they could not get farms of their own?—Perhaps that would not be the opinion of the whole of them, but there are some of them of that opinion. [*The Chairman.*—Do you know of men who have tried to get farms for themselves and did not succeed in doing so?—That is so.]

51,624. Give us the names of these people, and the estate?—I may tell you that I saw them leaving from The Mackintosh estate and from Balnespick and from Strathnoon and Banchor, which is all under one tenant now.

51,625. Have you ever known anybody on Glen-Kyllachy estate apply for a farm and be refused?—Oh, they could not get the chance of it, when it was all turned into one farm. They were driven away to the other side of the water at that time when Mr Mackintosh, Holm, put them away.

51,626. The other side of the water belonged to him then, did it not?—Yes, at that time.

51,627. So that they were migrated from one side of his estate to another?—Some of them; but some had to leave and go to The Mackintosh's estate.

51,628. But they found places in the district?—Some of them did not.

51,629. You are talking of what happened forty-five years ago?—It is not forty-five years ago.

51,630. Are you sure?—It may be about forty-five, I daresay.

51,631. Do you know of anybody there now who wants a new holding upon this piece of Glen-Kyllachy?—I would take it myself.

51,632. Do you come here as a delegate or as an individual?—As an individual. Inverness. — John Grant.

51,633. You do no represent anybody but yourself?—No.

51,634. Do you know that there were always deer in your time on Glenmaseran?—Not on Glenmaseran.

51,635. You remember a time when there were none?—I recollect there were none to be seen at all.

51,636. Have you ever had any sport in that forest?—I daresay I have at times.

51,637. Do you remember on one occasion being caught there without authority, shooting or in search of deer?—I know I was punished in this house for it.

51,638. Then on that occasion, were you discovered sitting upon a rock?—No.

51,639. Have you ever been convicted of poaching deer?—Never, until then.

51,640. And of poaching birds, or other animals of sport?—I was once here about birds.

51,641. You have only been convicted twice?—Yes.

51,642. Is that all?—So far as I remember.

51,643. Your recollection of other things was very good; surely you can remember that? (*No answer*).

51,644. *Mr Sutherland.*—You were asked questions to show that this land that has been afforested was so changed because it was not capable of wintering sheep?—Oh, that was not the case.

51,645. Do you know any sheep farm in Scotland where they do not remove some of the sheep for wintering?—Very few.

51,646. If, then, that was the reason for changing this land into deer forest, the whole of the sheep farms in Scotland might equally well be changed into deer forests?—But I don't think that was the case here.

51,647. What do you think was the case?—I think the case was that it was to pay the landlord better under deer than under sheep.

51,648. But you have heard it stated to-day that the rent had afterwards to be reduced, when certain tenants were turned away?—Yes.

51,649. Did the landlord afterwards get the rent he wanted from the tenants he turned away in these cases?—He did, but those parties that would take that perhaps would not stop long.

51,650. Are the rents the same in that case on the tenants to-day as the rents the old tenants were paying?—They are reduced a few years since.

51,651. It comes to this, that the tenants were put away, and the landlord has not got the rent he wanted after all?—After all.

51,652. You were asked also if snow fell there. As a matter of fact, snow falls everywhere in this country?—Everywhere, in the streets of London too.

51,653. You said you had seen snow to the depth of a foot there; did you never see snow to the depth of a foot in the town of Inverness?—I have.

51,654. Have you seen the railway communication interrupted in the town of Inverness through snowstorms?—Yes, I remember perfectly there was a snowstorm there as well as with us.

51,655. But no one would think of turning the town of Inverness into a deer forest on that account?—Oh, no.

51,656. There are no special snowstorms in the country you speak of?—No.

51,657. So that any drawback with regard to that exists only when it applies to other places as well?—To other places just the same.

51,658. Then with regard to the grass that grows in this deer forest, have you ever seen grass rotting year after year in a deer forest?—Yes, when there was not enough stock of deer to eat it up.

51,659. And because of that, the herbage gets rank and wilder?—Yes.

51,660. And certainly deteriorates as pasture?—Once it rots in the ground, it makes the ground fatter, and the grass will grow next year.

51,661. But the grass grows ranker when it is not cropped by any animal?—Yes.

Inverness. John Macdonald.

JOHN MACDONALD, late Ballimore, Dochfour (47) —*examined.*

51,662. *The Chairman.*—I understand you have something to say?—I have given a statement before, at Beauly.

51,663. And what do you wish to say now?—Since then, of course, the bills made their way as far as Dochfour, and I was appointed a second time, that is how I come before you again.

51,664. And now you are to give evidence for Dochfour?—I gave my evidence at Beauly last year.

51,665. Have you any further evidence to give?—No, just the same.

51,666. So that we may take the evidence you are asked to give us to-day as a repetition of the evidence you gave at Beauly?—Yes, I gave all my evidence at Beauly.

51,667. Then we need not take your evidence again.—That is what I think. Of course, having been appointed, I thought it my duty to attend.

51,668. I quite understand; but I think it is unnecessary to examine you further.—I could only give the same evidence.

James Ross.

JAMES ROSS, Solicitor, Inverness, factor for Raasay (55) —*examined.*

51,669. *The Chairman.*—Do you wish to read a statement?—I wish to read a statement to your lordship and to the Commission.

51,670. You are factor on the Raasay estate?—Factor and Commissioner on the Raasay estate.

51,671. And it is with regard to that estate that you desire to give us evidence?—Yes.

51,672. You were not able to attend the sitting we held in Portree last year?—There was some misunderstanding about the time it was to be held: I arrived too late, but I had the permission of the Commission to attend here.

51,673. Kindly read your statement.—

STATEMENT by James Ross, Solicitor, Inverness, Factor and Commissioner for Mrs Wood of Raasay, as to the estate of Raasay, in the parish of Portree, and county of Inverness.

The following statement, in so far as it refers to matters happening prior to 1876, when the late Mr Edward Herbert Wood purchased Raasay, has been prepared from information carefully gathered from estate rentals and other documents, and also from the examination of old residents on the island; and it is believed to be substantially, if not completely, accurate. The facts relating to matters since 1876 are largely within my own knowledge.

The estate of Raasay,—which comprises the islands of Raasay, Rona, Fladda, and Isle Tigh,—is altogether about 18,000 acres in extent. The whole estate is about 18 miles in length, as the crow flies, and it varies in breadth from half a mile up to about three and a half miles.

At the date of Mr Wood's entry in 1876, it was approximately divided as follows:—

	Acres
Approximate area of sheep farm,	10,000
Approximate area of land held by crofters,	6200
Approximate area of Home Farm, pasturage, woods, and policies of Raasay House,	1800
Total,	18,000

The Home Farm extends to about 120 acres.

Prior to 1843 it was owned for centuries by the family of Macleod of Raasay, but in that year it was placed under trustees, from whom Mr George Rainy, a West India merchant, bought it in 1846, and entered into possession at Whitsunday of that year. The price paid by Mr Rainy was £27,660. Inverness. James Ross.

At that time the population was between 1000 and 1100, chiefly crofters and cottars. The crofting townships on the estate with the number of crofters and cottars in each were about this time as follows:—

Fearns,	26 crofters	8 cottars
Leac,	9 "	2 "
Lower Hallaig,	9 "	2 "
Screpidale,	9 "	3 "
Castle,	6 "	2 "
Torran,	4 "	2 "
Arnish	4 "	2 "
Umachan,	5 "	1 "
Kyle Rona,	10 "	3 "
Manish,	4 "	2 "
Balechourn,	6 "	– "
Fladda,	4 "	4 "
Isle Tigh,	1 "	– "
Dornaguilla,	3 "	2 "
Bigharbour,	1 "	1 "
Dryharbour,	11 "	3 "
Total,	112 crofters	37 cottars

Some ten years prior to 1846 Suishnish and Ayre were also occupied by crofters and cottars, but there were none on this part of the estate when Mr Rainy took possession.

As a good deal of sub-division of land had taken place among the crofters before 1846, it is difficult to say how many of the tenants given in the foregoing list of townships occupied whole crofts, but the full souming of each whole croft was as follows:—

	Cows	Calves till one-year old	Sheep
*Lower Fearns,	3	3	–
*Upper Fearns,	3	3	–
*Leac,	3	3	–
*Lower Hallaig,	4	4 2 two-year olds	–
*Screpidale,	3	one-year old 3	–
Castle,	6	6	10
Torran,	3	3	30
Arnish,	4	4	30
Umachan,	4	4	30
Kyle Rona,	2	2	20
Manish,	4	4	20
Balechourn,	4	4	8
Fladda,	4	4	20
Isle Tigh,	4	4	40
Dornaguilla,	5	5	20
†Bigharbour,	8	8	80
Dryharbour,	4	4	20

The larger holdings on the estate in 1846 were the following:—

Holding.	Rent.
Suishnish and Borrodale,	£105
Ayre,	77
Glaum and Brae,	100
Upper Hallaig,	36
Total,	£318

These farms were then held by single tenants under lease.

The whole of Raasay lying to the north of Castle, as well as Fladda, Isle-Tigh, and Rona, has been

* The sheepstock of these townships cannot now be ascertained correctly. They held all the hill ground in the middle of the island in common, along with tenants of Ayre and Suishnish, &c. The cottars had often more sheep on the ground than the crofters.

†Bigharbour is more a small farm by itself than a croft, but it was not held by the tenant at any time on lease.

Inverness. — James Ross.

wholly occupied by crofters and cottars as far back as we have any record, the old divisions and marches of townships remaining the same to the present day.

The people lived on the produce of their crofts and by fishing; fish-buyers and curers coming to the lochs and harbours in the district at the fishing season and buying up the fish caught and curing them on board their vessels. At other seasons when no curers were at hand, the people merely fished and cured for home consumption.

The estate having been for some years under trustees, before it was bought by Mr Rainy, no work was provided for the people during that time, and very few of them left to seek for work elsewhere. The price of cattle and sheep was very low, a cow or two year old being sold for £3; a stirk £1 to £1, 5s.; a ewe and lamb 6s.; a wedder 6s. Wool was also very cheap, but as the people manufactured all their clothing themselves out of their wool, very little was sold.

The arable land being limited in extent, the congestion of population began to be felt at the time Mr Rainy bought the property, more especially in the townships of Fearns, Leac, Hallaig, and Screpidale, all of which were thickly peopled.

The failure of the potato crop, as well as the partial failure of the small local fishing in the summer of 1846, reduced the people of these townships to the verge of starvation. To avert the calamity which then threatened the greater part of the Western Highlands and Islands, Destitution Committees were formed in Glasgow and Edinburgh to collect money for the purchase of meal to be sent to the districts where want was most pressing. This meal was distributed to the people through Local District Committees, and was given gratis to the most needy the first winter. In the following spring an attempt was made by the Central Committee to relieve the people by starting relief works in the form of road-making, &c., and for this work payment was made in meal, the allowance being 1 lb. for each able-bodied man employed, 1 lb. for his wife, if married, and ½ lb. for each of his children per day. These relief works in so far as carried on in Raasay, while averting actual starvation among the people, do not seem to have been of much permanent benefit to the estate, two small pieces of unfinished roads at Kyle Rona and Balechourn being the only traces left of the committee's work.

The population in the different townships in Raasay lying to the north of Screpidaile and in the Islands of Fladda and Rona being more sparse, the destitution did not reach the acute stage in these places that it did in the over-crowded townships lying to the south of Castle, but all the crofters and cottars on the estate were relieved more or less by the Destitution Committee. Altogether there seems to have been a good deal of mismanagement and waste in connection with the working of this Destitution Committee, and it only continued in existence for eighteen months. In the spring of 1847, Mr Rainy began general estate improvements, such as reclamation of waste land, draining, fencing, planting, road-making, building, &c., and these improvements were gradually extended till every man and woman on the estate, who cared to work, got employment.

The people were now paid in money wages, able-bodied men getting from 1s. to 1s. 6d., and women 8d. per day, but higher wages were generally earned by those employed at piece-work.

Between 1847 and 1851, owing to the difficulty of getting food supplies, Mr Rainy imported several ship loads of meal, which he kept in store, and sold to the people at a price that barely covered the cost and expense of storage and sale, as much as 1200 bolls passing out of the storekeeper's hands in five months.

In 1851 four families in Fearns applied to Mr Rainy for assistance to emigrate to Australia. He promised to assist, not only these four families, but all who cared to go. On this offer becoming known, a good many people from the townships of Fearns and four cottars from Hallaig took advantage of it.

In 1851 Government-assisted passages were granted to able-bodied men with their families, from this country to Australia, the fare for adults under 55 years of age being £2.

Inverness. — James Ross.

The people had by this time sunk into such a state of poverty that only two families out of all those who wished to emigrate could raise sufficient money by the sale of their stock and other effects to provide the £2 of passage money and the necessary outfit for the voyage. Mr Rainy took the cows belonging to the tenants of Fearns which they were unable to dispose of otherwise, as part payment for outfit and passage money, which he paid for all, except the two families already mentioned. He also paid full fares and expenses for them all to the port of embarkation, and full passage money to Australia for all those over 55 years of age. He likewise gave up all the arrears of rent due by those emigrating, which were very heavy.

Family connections being a good deal broken up by this emigration, most of those remaining in Fearns, as well as those in the townships of Leac and Hallaig left for Australia in 1853. These last were granted free passages to Australia, and had outfits provided and all expenses paid by the emigration agent, acting on behalf of the Australian Government. In these cases Mr Rainy also gave up all claim to the arrears of rent due. After the emigration of 1853, only nine families remained in Screpidale, Hallaig, Leac, and Fearns. Of these, four families went to Balechourn, taking the crofts there vacated by four crofters who left that township for America the same year. Other two families went to Umachan, one to Dryharbour, and two to Snizort, Skye.

Of the families then in Screpidale and Castle, two only were natives of Raasay, and these two went to Tote, Skye; the others going to different parts of Skye and the Mainland.

The four tenants in Manish in 1853 all went to Skye in that year.

During the time the Macleods held the property, the different factors, who were resident in Skye, were in the habit of constantly transferring tenants from Skye into holdings in Raasay and *vice versa*.

On the expiry of the leases of Glam, Suishnish, and Ayre in 1849, the proprietor took these holdings into his own hands and held them for one year.

They were then let to Mr Royston Mackenzie in 1850, as one sheep farm at a rent of £250 a year. In 1853 the arable and pasture lands of Fearns, Leac, Hallaig, Screpidaile, Castle, and Manish were added to this farm; and, two years later, part of the Balechourn hill pasture was also added, the rent of the township being reduced by £9. The various additions brought the rent of the sheep farm (known as Suishnish) up to £650 per annum, at which figure it remained till 1869, when, on the termination of the tenants' lease and the granting of a new one, the rent was fixed at £973. The estate improvements already referred to as carried out by Mr Rainy were continued, giving work to the people, up to his death in 1863. In that year Mr George Rainy was succeeded by his only son, Mr George Haygarth Rainy, but he being a minor for several years after succeeding to the estate the improvements may be said to have ceased at his father's death, only a sufficient number of people being employed as was necessary to keep the place in order. On Mr G. H. Rainy's death in 1872 the estate passed into the hands of the late Mr G. G. Mackay, the price paid being £55,000.

During the two years Mr Mackay owned the property, a good many men were employed, chiefly in making walks and bridle paths on different parts of the property, but these improvements were not of a substantial character, and were of little permanent benefit to the estate. Soon after entering into possession Mr Mackay took the township of Balechourn, consisting of six crofts and pasture land, together about 500 acres, into his own hands.

Though deprived of their lands the tenants of this township continued to occupy their dwelling-houses. Hitherto, or as far back as we have any record, the crofters' rents on Raasay estate remained practically

Inverness. — James Ross.

unchanged, but during Mr Mackay's ownership they were raised all over, from 17 to 66 per cent. In one township—Arnish—the increase was 73 per cent., the average increase over all the crofter townships on the estate being 43 per cent. Soon after this, and before the increased rents came due, Mr Mackay sold the estate for £62,000 to Mr W. J. Armitage, who took possession at Martinmas 1874.

Mr Armitage provided no work for the people. He restored the land at Balechourn to the crofters dispossessed by Mr Mackay at an increase of £1 per croft, on the original rent. He also let Isle Tigh, which had been vacant for a year, to a tenant at £10 rent per annum, being an increase of £2 on the rent paid by the former tenant.

Mr Armitage then sold the property to the late Mr E. H. Wood in 1876 at the price of £65,000, and Mr Wood entered into possession at Whitsunday of that year. At that time the population was about 650. In 1881 it was 707. In 1891, 678. It may here be stated that the number of paupers in 1883 was 16. In 1894, the number is 19.

On the estate near Raasay House, there is a range of buildings, consisting of six houses of two rooms each, entirely occupied by poor widows. Each widow sits rent free, and gets 4 bolls of meal, 2 tons coals, and ½ boll of potatoes per annum, and a money allowance of 1s. per week.

The increase of population between 1876 and 1881 may be accounted for by the introduction of extra farm servants, tradesmen, &c. to the island. A good many of the extra workmen engaged at work on the estate in 1881, left after Mr Wood's death in 1886, which mainly accounts for the decrease of population when the census was taken in 1891. There has been little, if any, increase since 1891. In 1892 the deaths registered exceeded the births by one. Mr Wood took the sheep farm into his own hands at his entry to the estate at Whitsunday 1876, taking over the sheep stock numbering 3200 from the representatives of the late tenant at valuation.

Immediately after entering into possession Mr Wood began very extensive building operations as well as other estate improvements, giving full employment to all the people of Raasay, &c., who had any desire for work, no man, woman, or child who asked work being refused. These estate works (apart from building) consisted chiefly of planting, road-making, trenching, draining, fencing, &c., on each of which large sums of money were spent. From the first, Mr Wood took great interest in his crofter and cottar tenants, and soon took steps to ameliorate their condition. Many of their dwelling-houses were in a ruinous condition, and he set about building new houses for them. Experience, however, showed that such a system would be both expensive and unsatisfactory. He consequently came to the resolution to furnish the tenants with timber, lime, doors and windows, &c., with a certain money allowance for building, leaving themselves to do the work. This course was carried into effect with considerable success. The value of timber for roofing and inside partitions, also doors, windows, lime, &c. for each house was about, . . . £6 0 0
Cash allowance given for building, . . . 10 0 0

Total for each—about £16 0 0

Over 30 crofters' houses were rebuilt in this way costing the proprietor about £480. At Arnish a slated house was built for one of the tenants there, on which the proprietor expended £98. This was done at the request of the tenant who promised to pay interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum, on the extra outlay, but this interest was never charged to him or his successors in the holding.

In all cases the proprietor offered to lay concrete floors in these new houses at his own expense if the tenants would provide the gravel and sand necessary for the purpose, but although, in most cases the gravel and sand could have been got on the sea-shore not far from the houses, none took advantage of the offer.

Inverness. — James Ross.

Besides those houses wholly rebuilt, others were repaired and improved by grants of timber and money made by the proprietor. While better houses were thus provided for most of the crofter tenants, six new cottars' houses were built, and six old houses rebuilt at Mill Place and Clachan, costing altogether £530. As much sub-division of crofts had taken place in the north end of Raasay and in Rona, Mr Wood had a desire to consolidate the crofts again as opportunity offered. With this object in view, the township of Brae was formed out of the sheep farm, and three tenants placed on it; one being taken from Umachan, one from Arnish, and one from Balechourn, where he was living on his father's croft. The lands occupied by the first two were added to the adjoining lots. New buildings were erected on Brae by Mr Wood at a cost of over £50.

The township of Oskaig was also formed by Mr Wood in 1878, six slated cottages being built at a cost of £1200. Mr Wood's object in building this class of houses was to induce tradesmen, such as a tailor, shoemaker, weaver, &c. to settle down in Raasay as well as to accommodate his yachtsmen or other servants who were paid a higher rate of wages than ordinary labourers. There was a piece of garden ground, and land sufficient to keep a cow, attached to each cottage. These cottages were not taken up by tradesmen as expected. So tenants from Kyle Rona, Dry Harbour and other places in the north end of the island, who made application for these houses and were given estate work at the south end of Raasay, were placed in them. A piece of pasture land, about 188 acres, was subsequently taken off the adjoining hill belonging to the sheep farm and added to this township. The total cost to the proprietor in forming the township of Oskaig was :—

	£.	s.	d.
Six Cottages, ...	1200	0	0
Barns, byres, and other outhouses,	82	18	0
Cost of taking spring water into township, with lead pipe, .	12	16	0
Iron and wire fences enclosing gardens, ...	20	10	0
Excavating and levelling about houses, making roads, drains, &c., ...	47	0	0
Total, .	1363	4	0

Notwithstanding this large outlay it must be confessed that the township of Oskaig has not served the purpose Mr Wood had in view, the houses being unsuitable to the habits and mode of life to which the occupants had previously been accustomed, and to which they still cling as far as their present surroundings will permit. As disputes frequently arose between the different townships on the island as to the herding of stock at the marches and the up-keep of township dykes, Mr Wood offered to put iron and wire fences in some of the marches, provided the tenants on either side would keep up the fences afterwards, and pay interest on the outlay. This they readily consented to do, and so he erected in all about 9662 yards of iron wire fencing, at a cost of £474, 6s. 11d. The interest on this outlay has never been paid or charged against any of the tenants. Loans were granted from time to time to the tenants for the purchase of fishing boats, nets, cattle, &c., to the extent of £407, 8s., which was never charged against, or paid by the tenants. The severe gale and high tides of 22nd November 1881 destroyed many of the small fishing boats on the coasts of Raasay and Rona, and as the people were unable to replace them, Mr Wood did so, paying two-thirds of the cost, the owners paying one-third. The summer of 1882 was very wet and stormy, which spoiled the potato crop, and, in consequence of this, there was a great scarcity of seed potatoes in the following spring. In order that all his tenants might have a thorough change of seed, Mr Wood purchased 63 tons of potatoes from Fife-shire and Easter Ross, at a cost of £360, and gave seed to

Inverness. — James Ross.

all the tenants free, in quantities of from ¼ boll to 2½ bolls each.

He also granted an abatement of one-third of the year's rent due at Martinmas 1882, which amounted to £135, 10s. 5d.

All the crofter tenants on the estate have had the free use from the proprietor of well-bred Highland bulls for their stock during the past 16 years, and the improvement made in the quality of their cattle in that time has been very marked.

Their value would be still further enhanced if more attention was given to their housing, feeding, and general management.

In order that those of the tenants who prosecuted the herring fishing might be able to take full advantage of the best markets for the sale of their fish Mr Wood had a salt store built at Oskaig which was fully stocked with salt and barrels. These were sold to the people at cost price, but the privilege was not taken much advantage of. A good part of the stock had to be given out on credit and was never paid, and the store was ultimately discontinued.

The cost of this store to Mr Wood was about £123.

Glaum Farm.

In order to meet the requirements of his large house establishment for dairy produce, and with the view of saving the large expenditure made from time to time in supplementing the supplies from the Home Farm, Mr Wood began in 1878 to reclaim a tract of waste land at Glaum, about 4½ miles northward from the Home Farm.

The soil at this part of the island is clay and peat, the former of a friable nature and easily worked. The exposure of the land is westerly, and the altitude varies from 500 to 600 feet above the sea-level.

Owing to the difficulty of getting suitable materials for the erection of the necessary farm buildings it was decided to construct them of corrugated iron on strong concrete foundations. The buildings were finally completed by the spring of 1881.

By ploughing, trenching, and draining 70 acres of the land was brought into cultivation and afterwards fenced.

The total cost of buildings and reclamations, road-making, fencing, &c. thus far, was as follows:—

Excavations for foundations of buildings, concrete foundation walls, cement floors, cartage and contract price for erection of farm buildings and four labourers' cottages,	£2065	8	0
Making roads,	181	7	0
Ploughing and trenching 70 acres,	482	0	0
Draining 70 acres, including cost of drain, tiles, and cartage,	592	0	0
Fencing,	85	14	6
Forming mill dam and conduit,	57	0	0
Wages to day labourers apart from contract and piece-work,	462	12	0
Seeding for the first year,	16	0	0
Total,	£3942	1	6

As the buildings were erected to suit a farm of 200 acres I have deducted one-half of the first item in the account,—which gives cost of buildings,—amounting to £1032, leaving the sum of £2910 or £41, 11s. 5d. per acre for the 70 acres reclaimed.

As already stated, this farm was only made to supplement the supplies from the Home Farm, consequently no farm dwelling-house was necessary. In the occupation of a resident farmer a further sum of £450 or so would fall to be added as the cost of a dwelling-house, thus considerably increasing the cost per acre. Of the above total expenditure about £1350 was paid directly to the people of Raasay for day's wages and contract and piece work. The cultivation of this farm was continued by Mr Wood for three years at a heavy loss. The grain crops, though heavy, never ripened properly, and had to be cut in a half green state and dried for winter fodder for the cattle. Turnips grew well up to the middle of August, but did not bulb well. Potatoes were a failure, and even now, the shepherd who resides on the farm, though unrestricted in the quantity of ground he may plant, has given up the growing of potatoes altogether, and prefers to buy them of better quality from the low country. There is room to extend the farm to about 200 acres, which was the size Mr Wood at first intended to make it; but the climatic conditions were found to be altogether so unfavourable that the reclamations were not extended beyond 70 acres, and these are now going back into a state of nature again.

Inverness. — James Ross.

About 200 acres of hill ground in the neighbourhood of Suishnish and Oskaig were planted by Mr Wood with forest trees (larch and fir) at a cost, including draining, of about £5 per acre = £1000. Altogether, there are about 1200 acres of wood on the estate.

A tabulated statement, marked No. I, made up from the estate factory accounts, showing the annual expenditure by Mr and Mrs Wood on the different departments of the estate for the 17 years from 1876 to 1893, is produced herewith. (See below, page 1263.)

From the abstract appended to that statement, it will be seen that the total amount of expenditure for that period was £133,736; or an annual average, for the 17 years, of £7867.

To meet that large sum, the gross amount contributed from the estate itself (without making any charge for rent of the sheep and arable farms in the proprietor's own occupation), was only £50,182; leaving £83,554, or an annual average of £4915, which had to be contributed by Mr and Mrs Wood from sources outside the estate altogether.

It should also be noted that the above mentioned expenditure is exclusive of the sum of £14,803 for building additions to mansion house and offices; manager's house; extension of farm buildings, &c., &c. paid direct by Mr Wood, and not passed through the factory accounts of the estate.

There are also produced herewith tables (marked No. II.—see page 1263) showing the rents and arrears at different dates between 1827 and 1893 of the various townships occupied by the crofting tenants of Raasay. From the first of these tables it will be observed that the crofting rents of the townships remained practically unchanged between 1827 and 1870, and also that the increase in the rents was made between 1870 and 1876 by Mr G. G. Mackay as before mentioned. Apart from the temporary deduction of one-third, which was made by Mr Wood in 1882, the table also (in the column for 1884) shows the permanent reduction made by him in the following year of about 15½ per cent. on the crofting rental of the estate.

In 1889, prior to fair rents being fixed by the Crofters Commission, there were 84 small tenants (crofters and cottars) on the estate paying a total gross rental of £368, 11s. 6d., showing an average of £4, 9s. 2d. each.

Of the crofters on the estate, 50 applied to the Commission to have fair rents fixed. The old rents of these 50 amounted to £248, 7s.

The fair rents fixed were £153, 4s., being a reduction of about 38 per cent.

Immediately after the fair rents had been fixed, Mrs Wood applied the same principle to the reduction of the rents of those crofters who had not gone before the Commission, and, of course, the whole rents at present remain the same as in 1889 after the Crofters Commission decisions had been issued.

The second statement in table No. II gives the arrears due by the crofting townships on various dates between 1827 and Martinmas 1893. (See page 1263.)

Notwithstanding the temporary and permanent reductions of rent made by Mr Wood in 1882 and 1883, the arrears of the 50 applicants to the Crofters Commission amounted to £677, 16s. 10d. Of this sum £448, 2s. 3d. was cancelled, leaving £229, 14s. 7d. ordered to be paid, a reduction of 66 per cent.

The arrears due by the remaining small tenants on the estate were immediately reduced by Mrs Wood on

STATEMENT shewing Expenditure by Mr and Mrs Wood of Raasay, on various heads for 17 years from 1876 to 1893 :—From Estate Factory Accounts.

TABLE No. I.—RAASAY ESTATE.

Heads of Expenditure.	1876–77.	1877–78.	1878–79.	1879–80.	1880–81.	1881–82.	1882–83.	1883–84.	1884–85.	1885–86.	1886–87.	1887–88.	1888–89.	1889–90.	1890–91.	1891–92.	1892–93.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1. Game,	589	1189	993	1240	943	668	1006	1073	1106	1275	657	407	450	463	466	223	...
2. Garden,	237	290	276	297	303	298	343	394	345	340	301	385	367	307	319	160	...
3. Woods and Nursery,	64	441	162	338	437	300	370	285	144	129	50	88	83	34	49	42	27
4. Roads,	135	284	251	282	412	186	150	198	132	132	100	82	69	66	102	18	37
5. New Works and Repairs,	341	1847	675	842	762	1018	884	541	229	616	245	183	159	132	181	91	481
6. Meliorations and Improvements,	68	415	686	1850	1945	1060	876	1064	761	737	214	261	193	117	67	35	98
7. Emigration (1883–84),	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	163	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
8. Salaries, Stipends, and Taxes,	120	469	493	495	792	589	626	610	658	648	606	628	568	545	480	510	476
9. Annuities and Gratuities,	...	36	2	7	2	1	282	30	107	160	82	99	100	95	95	80	76
10. Raasay House,	340	937	1023	1070	954	1079	1029	1106	1149	1153	1064	1117	1003	791	922	432	8
11. Marine Establishment,	299	688	910	887	593	865	540	873	848	1001	92	44	20	27	27	39	9
12. General and Miscellaneous,	265	101	31	37	32	34	269	122	116	178	131	27	33	39	50	45	80
13. Home Farm,	1443	1828	1239	1398	1695	1375	1636	1771	1990	1520	511	538	590	659	523	492	601
14. Salishnish Sheep Farm,	7877	967	1071	1045	975	1676	887	1168	1638	1193	1541	828	1239	1244	977	1199	798
15. Salmon Fishings,	184	228	176	165	231	255	234	234	243	227	161	...	23	23	23	27	23
16. Stores,	2	173	139	587	388	646	398	595	715	592	637	425	536	419	466	415	368
17. Fishery Stores,	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	22	33	18	6	1	...	...
	11,909	9883	8127	10,040	10,414	10,050	9530	10,227	10,430	9906	6414	4995	5411	4967	4658	3898	2877

Abstract of Totals.

Year	1876–77,	£11,909.	
,,	1877–78,	9883.	
,,	1878–79,	8127.	
,,	1879–80,	10,040.	
,,	1880–81,	10,414.	
,,	1881–82,	10,050.	
,,	1882–83,	9530.	
,,	1883–84,	10,227.	
,,	1884–85,	10,430.	
,,	1885–86,	9906.	
Year	1886–87,	£6414.	
,,	1887–88,	4995.	
,,	1888–89,	5411.	
,,	1889–90,	4967.	
,,	1890–91,	4658.	
,,	1891–92,	3898.	
,,	1892–93,	2877.	
Gross Total, £133,736.			

TABLE No. II.—RAASAY ESTATE

1. STATEMENT shewing Crofters' Rents at various dates between 1827 and 1893.

Townships.	Rents in 1827.	Rents in 1870.	Ren i n 18$_{76}$.	Rents in 1884.	Rents in 1889.	Rents in 1893.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Arnish, .	21 0 0	19 18 0	35 0 0	31 0 0	19 10 0	19 10 0
Torran, .	10 5 6	10 5 8	15 0 0	12 0 0	6 0 0	6 0 0
Fladda, .	22 15 6	22 17 0	31 0 0	24 0 0	12 0 0	12 0 0
Umachan, .	12 6 0	12 6 0	15 0 0	13 0 0	7 19 6	7 19 6
Island Tigh,	6 1 6	8 0 0	10 0 0	8 0 0	4 10 0	4 10 0
Kyle Rona, .	31 15 0	26 14 0	30 0 0	30 0 0	19 14 0	19 14 0
Dornaguilla,	17 17 6	17 17 6	25 0 0	20 0 0	12 0 0	12 0 0
Big Harbour,	17 14 6	17 17 6	12 0 0	15 0 0	9 0 0	9 0 0
Dry Harbour,	59 14 6	50 10 0	79 1 6	63 10 0	35 10 0	35 10 0
	199 10 0	186 5 8	252 1 6	216 10 0	126 3 6	126 3 6
Balechourn,	...	27 1 0	33 1 0	33 1 0	22 16 0	22 16 0
Oskaig, .	...	...	...	37 10 0	29 10 0	29 10 0
	199 10 0	213 6 8	285 2 6	287 1 0	178 9 6	178 9 6

2. STATEMENT shewing Arrears of Rents at various dates between 1827 and 1893.

Townships.	1827.	1831.	1876.	1884.	1889. Ordered to be paid by Commission.	Marts. 1893.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Arnish, .	12 1 8	21 1 8		30 11 10	33 0 0	31 15 0
Torran, .	8 15 0	12 4 4	No	10 5 10	8 0 0	2 0 0
Fladda, .	18 3 2	40 13 6	arrears	18 10 8	12 0 0	9 18 6
Umachan, .	16 7 8	16 9 11	carried	14 5 3	6 0 0	12 3 3
Kyle Rona, .	32 10 7	62 1 11	forward	22 15 6	25 0 0	20 16 6
Dornaguilla,	20 18 6	32 6 5	by	20 0 3	17 0 0	15 10 0
Big Harbour,	16 17 6	27 16 6	Mr	...	6 9 4	...
Dry Harbour,	51 1 5	101 13 5	Wood.	69 17 7	50 0 0	55 9 0
Isle Tigh, .	...	...		10 5 10	4 10 0	10 6 3
	176 15 6	314 7 8		196 12 9	161 19 4	157 18 6

3. STATEMENT shewing Rents and Arrears of Old Townships included in Sheep Farm since 1853–54.

Townships.	Rents in 1827.	Arrears in 1827.	Arrears in 1831.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Suishnish, . . .	53 6 8	50 9 8	48 19 2
Eyre, . . .	76 5 9	33 7 8	52 3 7
Fearns, . . .	126 5 6	80 3 11	154 13 4
Leac, . . .	21 12 0	29 0 0	51 15 2
Hallaig, . . .	77 1 8	57 7 7	151 11 10
Screpidaile, . . .	65 19 6	34 17 4	96 7 11
Castle, . . .	51 0 0	36 10 4	78 12 4
Manish, . . .	24 7 6	29 18 10	36 8 1
	495 18 7	351 15 4	680 11 5

the same principle. At present the total arrears of the whole of the small tenants amount to £353, 1s. 1d.

The third statement in table No. II, gives the amount of the rents at 1827 of the townships which were included in the sheep farm in 1853–54, and of the arrears due by the crofters in these townships at 1827 and 1831.

No removals have taken place at the instance of the proprietor since the late Mr Wood acquired the estate in 1876, and difficulties or differences with the crofters have been exceedingly few during the same period. The Raasay sheep farm comprises a high rocky ridge running north and south, the western slope of which, with the exception of Glaum, is bare moorland. Along the south and east sides lie the patches of old arable land, at one time in the occupation of those crofters

who emigrated in 1851 and 1853, and to whom reference has already been made. To the north by Castle and Manish are several patches of low-lying pasture land, intersected by rocky ridges more suitable for deer and black cattle than for sheep.

Such being the nature and configuration of the lands comprising the sheep farm, it will be seen that if the scattered patches of old arable and low-lying pasture land were taken from it, its value as a sheep farm would be wholly destroyed.

There is no exclusive deer forest on Raasay estate; sheep and deer are on the same ground, which is completely fenced off from the crofters' holdings, with the exception of the common pasture of Oskaig township.

The farm would carry a stock of 3000 sheep and 50 cattle. For personal reasons the late Mr Wood transferred part of the sheep stock to his English estate, thus reducing considerably the stock on Raasay. Since that time the stock has been gradually brought up again, the present number being 1800 sheep and 50 cattle, but the present and future prospects of sheep farming are not such as to warrant the expenditure of the large sum of money required to bring up the stock all at once to its full limit. The climate of Raasay, where the annual rainfall sometimes exceeds 70 inches, and the average is about 62, makes arable farming where pursued as an occupation by itself, altogether unprofitable, even with the assistance of the best modern appliances for reaping and securing the crops, while low prices of farm stock and produce, occasioned by foreign competition have to be contended with just the same as by the arable farmer in more highly favoured localities.

The distance from market increases the cost of all purchases, and reduces the profits on all sales of stock or produce taken from or sent to market. The crofter or small cultivator is likewise affected by the foregoing adverse conditions and that in proportion as he relies on the produce of his land for a livelihood.

(Signed) JAMES ROSS.

51,674. *Mr Gordon.*—In reference to this large outlay, amounting to a very considerable sum, I think you stated in connection with the farm of Glaum that only 70 acres had been reclaimed?—Yes. It was intended to take in 200, but it proved such a losing matter that we stopped at 70 acres.

51,675. I need not ask you how that land is now occupied?—It has gone all back to the condition of nature; it would not pay the reclamation.

51,676. May I ask how long you have been connected with the island?—Eighteen years.

51,677. Then the improvements were carried out in your time?—I may tell you at once that I was averse to these improvements,—I opposed them, and it was the opinion of the manager, and Mr Wood, that carried the day there.

51,678. You have made upon a farm of 70 acres an outlay of £3942?—Yes, most unfortunately that is true.

51,679. We in this part of the country consider it rather extravagant when we go beyond eight years' rent of a farm in the erection of buildings; but I find that in this case you have only 70 acres, which I suppose you would not even in the dearest time value at more than £70 a year?—I do not value it at all.

51,680. But assuming that that is the case, that would mean that there has been an outlay of over twenty years' rent of the farm on buildings alone?—The ground upon which the expenditure was made was this. Competent parties were of opinion that about 200 acres could be taken in with advantage to the estate. They not only meant to take it in, but to drain it and put it into such a condition as to grow crops. Climatic influences were against them, and I may say the opinion was a wrong one. But that expenditure was made, and a large portion of it went into the pockets of the people in the island, as wages for work performed.

51,681. How was the land reclaimed,—by trenching or ploughing?—By trenching and draining.

51,682. Was any ploughing done there?—There was ploughing done afterwards, but not for the purposes of the reclamation.

51,683. You say that the stock has been gradually improving?—Yes, decidedly.

51,684. Is it better than it was some years ago?—Such is our opinion. The fresh blood which was imported into the country is believed to have improved the stock.

51,685. Is it not the fact that the sheep on that farm were at one time noted for their excellence?—That is quite true.

51,686. Is that the case at present?—We have had them in the market here, and got the highest prices for them.

51,687. The whole lands on the island of Raasay are at present in the hands of the proprietrix?—No, there is a large proportion of it in the hands of crofters.

51,688. The island of Rona is in the hands of crofters?—Yes, but a large portion of Raasay as well. Rona is entirely in the hands of crofters.

51,689. The best part of the island of Raasay is at present wholly in Mr Wood's own hands?—If you include the Home Farm, yes.

51,690. I include more than the farm; I include up to that neck. Does that not include almost the whole value for pastoral purposes?—I should not say the whole value, but I would say the better part.

51,691. Now, along the southern end of the island there were a good many old holdings?—Yes.

51,692. Which are at present either in ruins or unoccupied?—Well, I went over it the other day, and I could see very few traces even of foundations, but there were a number there.

51,693. The places speak for themselves: we saw a good many ruins, but the whole of the townships in the south end of the island with one or two exceptions are at present occupied as a Home Farm or as grazings by Mrs Wood?—Yes.

51,694. Do you think that any part of these lands could again be occupied profitably by crofters?—I do not think profitably; you have several elements to consider. You would have to rebuild your houses and you would have to take a certain time to bring the land into proper cultivation; and in addition to that you would have to give a bit of hill grazing as well. The arable land is limited in extent, and I hardly think a crofter would care to do it.

51,695. Was there not, at one time, a fishing population on Raasay?—As I say in my statement a great number of the tenants made their living not only by land but on the sea, by fishing.

51,696. Then in regard to the expenditure, that is a matter which may now be described as ancient history; and the profits arising from the labour have now ceased to exist?—There is no doubt that is the case, except where we made permanent improvements in the shape of roads and bridle paths which yield a return.

51,697. There are not many labourers employed on the estate at present?—No.

51,698. In fact, labour on the estate is practically stopped?—Except for domestic requirements that is so.

51,699. You say you are of opinion that this part of the island which was formerly peopled could not now be advantageously re-occupied?—No, I think not. I consider that any man of energy who is capable of going down there and erecting a house and getting a croft into cultivation would go somewhere else and get a better place. I don't think a plucky man would think of settling there.

51,700. But you know that part of the island is very much congested?—We have got about 710 of a population on the whole place.

51,701. You will also admit that there is a considerable demand for land?—That is so, all over the west coast.

51,702. Where would you send the surplus population?—Really, I think that is rather a question for the Commissioners to decide and not for me.

51,703. Do you not think that a portion of them could be accommodated on the island of Raasay?—I

think it would be a mistake, first for the island of Raasay, and second for the people themselves.

51,704. Are there any harbours near the south of the island?—No. There are three harbours, one a particularly good one; Isle Tigh, Dornaguaille, Big Harbour, and Dry Harbour, at the north end of the island.

51,705. Would you suggest the advisability of forming small fishing townships in or near these places?—I think decidedly it would be a very good thing if you could improve the fishing; I think it would be the first thing that would lead to a radical benefit for the people of that island if you could improve their harbours. For one thing, I consider the very first thing that ought to be done is to improve the lighting of these harbours. At present, in the short days, fishermen are obliged to run to the ports two hours before the sun sets, simply because there are no lights to steer by after dark. If lights were put up at the various harbours, it would add two hours a day to the fishermen's time.

51,706. That is a matter that is rather outside the remit to this Commission; I have no doubt that these facilities may yet be given. But do you not think it would be possible to improve the position of a number of crofters in the north of Raasay and in the island of Rona by the construction of one or more fishing villages at the south end of Raasay?—Do I understand that you want to do away with what you call the congested places in the north and remove people to the south, making fishing stations there?

51,707. Certainly?—I would answer the first part of the question by saying that whatever relieves the congested part of the island must be improving it; but I do not know whether you could make a harbour on the south with any possibility of success. There is not a single place on the south or east that is suitable; it is one severe coast line, thoroughly exposed all the way.

51,708. Are the places you have mentioned near any part of the old arable land of the island; or is there any old arable land near them?—Do you mean the north end of the island?

51,709. Yes?—They have got arable land of their own as well as the hill land.

51,710. But going a little southwards: are any of the places you have mentioned near the centre or south of the island?—There is no possible harbour in the south.

51,711. There is a harbour in the centre, where the steamer calls?—That is not the south; it is the west. The only harbour we have is the bay of Raasay, where you land.

51,712. Is there not a bay of Hallaig?—That is further north; but they could not make a pier there, the coast line is so severe.

51,713. Would you recommend that the congestion in the northern part of the island should be relieved by the formation of fishing villages on some part of the south end?—I would recommend the construction of fishing villages where they could be made in such a place as to have the benefit of a good harbour.

51,714. If a harbour could be found for them in the south, you would recommend it?—I would.

51,715. And would you also recommend that in the cases where these crofting fishermen's townships might be formed, the holdings should be small, suited for those who follow the fishing,—I mean small fishermen's crofts?—Where would you put them exactly?

51,716. I would put them near some place where a harbour could be formed; that is the general principle. —If you take the point where the steamer calls, then you could not give them crofts, because that is surrounded by the Home Farm and all the arable land,—you have to pass through all that, and through the woods.

51,717. I could quite understand that that would be an objection: I don't want to be too specific, but to get a general answer, either an admission or a denial, that small crofts for fishermen, if they could be got, would be an advantage in the way of relieving the distress in the north end?—I quite admit that if you could get small fishing stations where each man would have a little croft, it would be a very wise proceeding.

51,718. *Mr Sutherland.*—I think your statement comes to this, that you would be very glad to give the people holdings, provided the present arrangements would not be touched?—Raasay is a somewhat peculiar place, and—

51,719. You have no theoretical objection to enlarging the holdings of the crofters provided the present distribution of the land were maintained,—do I fairly state your position?—I am just thinking it over for one moment.

51,720. You admitted to Mr Gordon that you would like to see the people getting larger holdings, but you objected to every proposal he made, because it would interfere with the present arrangements; is that your position?—My position is this, that if you give a crofter such an amount of ground as will take up his time very much in the working, then he cannot follow the fishing.

51,721. You stated to Mr Gordon that you would have no objection to these people getting larger holdings provided the present arrangement of the land in Raasay were left as it is?—I should have no objections to that, if the land were left as it is.

51,722. Do I correctly describe your position when I say that?—That so long as the present arrangement of land is not interfered with I have no possible objection to what you propose.

51,723. Then, of course, that amounts to this, that you want matters to be left as they are?—I think we are doing as much as we possibly can for them.

51,724. Now, I would like to ask you some questions with regard to the very interesting historical statement you have made. You stated, I think, that what happened since 1776 was within your own knowledge?—Since 1876, I said.

51,725. I thought you could speak with authority from documents regarding that period?—Oh, no. I went back beyond 1876 on documents: of course, I could not say what took place before I had anything to do with the estate.

51,726. But you quoted from documents long prior to that?—Yes, I made up information from the old ledgers, &c.; and on the subject of the destitution and the supplies and so on, I examined old witnesses and satisfied myself on the point.

51,727. Do you find any evidence of destitution that required special provision before 1847?—Well, I heard a very strange instance of how hardly the people lived, when I was there the other day, from an old inhabitant, I think it was in the case of Fearns. The people were so poor that they lived for a considerable time on limpets or shell-fish taken off the rocks, with a sprinkling of meal on it; that is all they had to eat.

51,728. Where was that?—Fearns or Leac.

51,729. When did it happen?—Previous to the destitution in 1847.

51,730. It was just a part of the destitution that was all over the country?—It was coming at that time.

51,731. That was an incident of the destitution known as the 1847 destitution?—Yes.

51,732. But you know that the destitution was general, all over the country,—it was not confined to Raasay?—No, nor to Skye; it was all over.

51,733. It was a year of destitution in Scotland and even in Ireland?—Yes.

51,734. You gave us very interesting information, with regard to the people who existed there before: but the distribution of the people on the land was very different then from what it is now?—I say so in my paper.

51,735. You did not deny that there was congestion in the island of Raasay?—There is no doubt about it, and the consequence was this proposal to emigrate.

51,736. Of course, congestion will depend upon the acreage of the land, and upon the population?—The means of supply, and the population.

51,737. There may be a large population in a small area, and yet a large area near without any people at all?—Yes.

Inverness. — James Ross.

51,738. Is not that what you have got in Raasay at present? What congestion of population is there in the south end of Raasay?—There is none in the south.

51,739. It is all in the north?—It is all in the north.

51,740. Are the people there of their own accord?—As far as I know, they are.

51,741. How can you call an island congested which has an area of 18,000 acres and a population of 700?—It depends, as far as I can see, on what the supply of the island is. Of course, if you take the whole of the Home Farm and cut it up you would doubtless make these people much more comfortable and able to earn their living; that is self-evident.

51,742. Is it not the case that congestion arises from the manner in which the population is distributed?—Partly.

51,743. I think you candidly admitted that the experiment in reclamation failed because certain things were not suitable?—Quite so.

51,744. But you can easily imagine a state of matters where experiments in reclamation could be skilfully conducted, and adapted to the circumstances?—Yes.

51,745. We had instances of the kind to-day?—But the difficulty we have is that of climate. We had splendid crops up to a certain point, but they would not ripen, owing to the climate. That was where we made the mistake.

51,746. And did it not also strike you that it was in one of the most exposed places in the island?—Yes, we found that out from experience; the steading was blown down twice before we got it up.

51,747. I think the most casual observer would have found that out?—There is no doubt about it.

51,748. But even in the island of Raasay if experiments were made in the reclamation of land with a due regard to the circumstances of the case, do you not think they would be successful?—We have not found it so. Even in our own Home Farm, which is quite close to the sea, we have always a difficulty in getting the crops ripened; it is always uncertain.

51,749. You also quoted the amount of arrears that small tenants have in the island of Raasay. Did you refer to the rents before the reductions, or after?—Both. I put in large arrears before the Commissioners reduced the rents. Only a certain proportion of the crofters went to the Commission, and we thought it was only fair to reduce the others in proportion: but still, after all that was done, the arrears have been running up again.

51,750. But still does it amount altogether to two year's rent in arrear?—No, I don't think it amounts to two years.

51,751. Does it include any arrears carried forward from the time before the reduction of rent?—No.

51,752. Are all the arrears of rent adjudicated upon by the Crofters Commission paid up?—No, there is an arrear going forward that was adjudicated upon; but a large amount was swept away; and twice, I think, in my experience, the arrears were entirely swept away by Mr Wood.

51,753. I think you said the rents of these people were reduced by the Crofters Commission to the extent of 38 per cent.?—Yes.

51,754. Had they any arrears before that?—Oh, yes, very large arrears, but we swept them off. We never pressed the people for them, but just humoured them and tried to make the most of them.

51,755. Did not the Crofters Commission order some arrears to be paid?—Yes: they only struck off a certain proportion of the arrears.

51,556. And those arrears so ordered to be paid are included in what is in arrear now?—Yes.

51,757. You spoke about the rainfall, which is a subject we have very often had before us. Can you tell me how much of your annual rainfall falls in winter and how much in summer?—No, I cannot say.

51,758. Do you see the important bearing that has on the case?—I do.

51,759. Without that information, what value do you attach to the statement of the rainfall?—Well, the climate of Raasay is naturally a moist climate.

51,760. A moist climate all the year round?—Yes.

51,761. Does not the larger proportion fall in winter and in autumn?—In spring particularly, I should think.

51,762. So the greater part of the rain falls at a time when there is no crop on the ground?—It falls pretty well over the year, as I have found to my cost pretty often.

51,763. Does not the greater part fall when the crop is not on the ground?—The greater part falls in spring.

51,764. And in winter and autumn?—Yes, and a large portion in summer too.

51,765. I was rather surprised to hear what you said regarding the inhospitable nature of the sea-coast of Raasay. Are you sure you did not over-estimate that aspect of it?—I did not intend to do so.

51,766. Did we not see some grand indentations on the west coast?—I mentioned those I knew of; there is one very fine harbour on the north end, which is considered a very good harbour of refuge.

51,767. A large amount of the expenditure on the estate you say is unremunerative?—I daresay a good deal of it could have been saved, but the object of the proprietor was to deal liberally with the people and to employ them as largely as possible.

51,768. Do you think it fair to hold the climate and the people responsible for the result?—I do not say it was altogether a wise expenditure; I say he might have saved a good deal by exercising economy.

51,769. But if that large expenditure of money were made in a way suitable to the circumstances of the island, is it not possible,—nay, is it not probable that there would be an adequate return, remunerative to both parties?—I doubt it; it is a very large sum,—£133,000 less £50,000,—upwards of £80,000.

51,770. Very well: take a smaller sum wisely spent,—would that not have been better, granting that the motive was perfectly good?—Supposing you restrict it in every way and brought tradesmen from this part of the world to do all the work, the local people would not have the benefit of the expenditure.

51,771. That is a very small detail in connection with it: but when you adduce a large expenditure of money on an estate of this size, and say that there has been no adequate return on it, is not that rather an impeachment of the system under which that was done, than the local circumstances?—My own notion is that supposing you only spent £50,000, I don't see how you can get any return for it in the shape of rent. The interest on £50,000 at 4 per cent. would be £2000 a year; and I don't see how it would be possible to get an additional return of £2000 a year by any expenditure I might make.

51,772. Supposing the money were given to the people to reclaim the land, as was done up at Loch-Garthside, and 5 per cent. charged upon it,—is not 5 per cent. a fair return?—I frankly confess to you this that if any proprietor was going to do anything for the crofters, I should like to see the crofter expend the money himself. I don't think it is wise to lend money.

51,773. But the fault that in this case there was no adequate return upon this large expenditure on the island of Raasay cannot be laid to the people at all?—No, and we did not anticipate a money return; it was not made with that object.

51,774. So that the fact that occurred here does not in any way prejudice any rational attempt that may be made?—No; nor am I imputing anything to the people.

51,775. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You were questioned about the rainfall. Is it the case that a good deal of the rain falls before the crops are reaped?—Yes.

51,776. Is that one of the drawbacks to farming in the island of Raasay?—A very great drawback. A farmer knows quite well that if it rains incessantly, the crop is injured and will not ripen. Take the case of Glaum where we manured and did everything as liberally as we could. We had magnificent crops up to a certain point, but the rain came on and everything went bad, and we had to cut the crop for fodder. Our turnips looked very well up to a certain stage, but the bulb never developed itself, simply because of the constant wet.

51,777. So that the rainfall which does the most damage is that which falls in July and August?—Yes.

51,778. Does it frequently happen that there is a heavy rainfall in those months?—Oh, yes.

51,779. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—As a matter of estate management, you did not, I think, expect a return for the outlay you made on the estate?—No; the intention was to improve as best we could, and to give the people work. Of course, there is a return in this sense that if we give them money for work done, they will pay their rent.

51,780. The expenditure was incurred not altogether to make the place more productive, but to make it more beautiful from a residential and sporting point of view?—Round about Raasay house, undoubtedly; but in Glaum there was no such intention: it was purely for the sake of getting farm supplies. That is four or five miles distant from the mansion-house.

51,781. But a great deal of the money which you have spoken of here has been spent on purposes which had nothing to do with the productiveness of the land?—That is quite true.

51,782. And which were of no permanent benefit, and sometimes just simply to give the people employment?—To some extent. For instance, we put up fences separating the various crofters' settlements; well, that did them good, for, of course, it saved them herding; and we made roadways, which also did them good. I admit that the payment was a large one.

51,783. The object of the management was not to make the expenditure productive?—I must demur to that; what we want to do is to make the best return within our means.

51,784. Now, you have by far the best land in your own hands, and still it is not half stocked?—Do you mean the sheep farms?

51,785. Yes.—But you must bear in mind that we have a certain number of deer there. We have about 100 deer altogether, and we could not have the same number of sheep and the same number of deer on a small farm. Our intention is to work up the stock by-and-bye.

51,786. But still you said the sheep reared on it fetched the highest price?—At the last two or three markets, the sales of Macdonald, Fraser & Co., we topped the market for some of them.

51,787. And still that farm is overrun with rabbits?—There is a large number of rabbits.

51,788. In fact, the island is in an insanitary condition from the dead rabbits that are to be seen all over it?—I have not seen that.

51,789. We saw the carcases ourselves when we went over the place. Do you still think it is putting the land to the best use, to allow the rabbits to run all over the island?—No, it is a mistake to do that, but you must bear in mind that we have a large amount of the rental from a shooting tenant at this moment,—it is let on a three years' shooting lease.

51,790. Then, you would not describe it as a sheep farm at all, I suppose?—Oh, yes, it is a sheep farm from which we draw supplies and sell them to the shooting tenant.

51,791. Is it mainly a sheep farm, or mainly a forest?—I give you the facts. I look upon it as a sheep farm, and also as a small forest,—the two combined.

51,792. Is it returned in the Valuation Roll as a forest?—It is returned as a shooting, not as a forest.

51,793. You have also shown this, that the best land is not with the crofters; and surely if they manage to make a living at all upon the barren island of Rona, they would make a much better living on the south of Raasay, where the good land is?—A man ought surely to make a better living on good land than on bad; that is quite undoubted.

51,794. So that it would be undoubtedly an improvement for them to be removed to Raasay?—Oh, yes; and it would be an improvement for them, I think, to come to the neighbourhood of this country.

51,795. You have made a long statement giving various reasons why there should be no interference with the present condition of affairs in Raasay; but you end with a statement which, if it can be taken as reliable, would be sufficient and would render all the rest of the statement unnecessary, for you say. 'The 'climate of Raasay where the annual rainfall sometimes 'exceeds 70 inches, and the average is about 62 inches, 'makes arable farming where pursued as an occupation 'by itself, altogether unprofitable, even with the 'assistance of the best modern appliances for reaping 'and securing the crops.' Well, of course, if the climate is so bad that no arable farming can go on, there is no need of the rest of the statement,—the climate endsthe whole thing?—We simply say that you cannot make it pay.

51,796. On account of the climate; so that you have that as one sufficient argument, making all the other arguments unnecessary?—I am simply saying that you cannot look upon arable land in Raasay as a thing that you could cultivate, and make pay, as you could look upon arable land on the east coast where the rainfall is not anything like so large.

51,797. But you say 'makes arable farming where 'pursued as an occupation by itself altogether unprofitable'?—Yes.

51,798. That is a very sweeping statement?—Yes.

51,798A. And one which, of course, does away with putting forward other reasons?—I said you must take all the circumstances into account. We have to compete with foreign production, we have to compete with transit of cattle, and these together with the climate make it unprofitable.

51,799. How can you state, as a fact, that the climate of Raasay is so much wetter than that say of Renfrew?—Well, I don't know about Renfrew.

51,800. You have heard of Greenock on the west coast?—No.

51,801. Do you not know that Greenock is noted for being wet?—No.

51,802. How much do you know of the west coast of Scotland at all? Can you compare it with any other part?—I have been going to the west coast for the last 18 or 19 years, and I have just expressed an opinion on the subject: of course, I may be wrong.

51,803. Do you know the climate in Ayrshire? Is the rainfall there much lower?—I cannot tell you.

51,804. Do you know Campbeltown and that district?—I don't know that part of the country at all so far as that is concerned, I have simply travelled through it.

51,805. Have you any reason to suppose that Raasay is wetter than these places I have mentioned where agriculture is successfully prosecuted?—I have no reason as far as that is concerned; but I found my reasoning upon the experience of the last 16 years. Our manager is the son of an Aberdeenshire farmer, and no money has been spared to make that place a success; and yet we find that he cannot work it to satisfaction, and certainly not to profit.

51,806. Don't you think some west coast men have managed to make a living by agriculture?—You are asking me a very critical question. I don't think agriculture on the west coast is in a very first class position,—I mean the cultivation of the land and ploughing it.

51,807. Then, with regard to Raasay, is not there a beautiful garden on the island?—Yes.

51,808. Where fruit is grown?—The fruit is not very successful; the apples and pears are not very successful; but it has got a large hothouse which grows beautiful grapes and hothouse flowers and vegetables: perhaps that is what you refer to. The flowers outside are of a more hardy character.

51,809. We have seen ourselves that it is quite possible to have a most beautiful garden?—Oh, so it is; I hope it is.

51,810. *Mr Macleod.*—I would like this question of the amount of arrears due cleared up. Would you give us first the present crofter rental of the island?—The crofter rental at last Martinmas was £262, 5s. 6d.

51,811. Then the amount of arrears?—Payments made at Martinmas last were £101, 5s., which would leave about £150 roughly.

51,812. A little more than half a year's rent?—Just about that, I should think.

Inverness. — James Ross.

51,813. Then as to the improvements at Glaum;—apart from the buildings and road-making and fencing, I think you were able to give us a figure for the reclamation of 70 acres,—what it cost actually to reclaim it. Would you kindly give the amount again?—For making roads £151, 7s.; ploughing and trenching 70 acres £482; draining ditto, including cost of drains, tiles, and carting, £592; fencing £85, 14s. 6d.

51,814. What I want to get at is the actual cost of the reclamation of the land. As you can understand, the buildings were put up for a 200 acre farm, and probably there was a considerable amount of fencing and road-making that would not have been gone about for a smaller holding?—The items for reclamation were:—

Ploughing and trenching 70 acres, . . .	£482
Draining, including cost of drain tiles and carriage, ...	592
Wages to day labourers apart from contract and piece-work, ...	462
Total, .	£1536

The wages to day labourers we paid ourselves.

51,815. For what kind of work?—I could not say without looking up the ledger.

51,816. Does the amount set down there for draining include the wages of the workmen who made the drains?—Yes, it does.

51,817. Roughly, the land cost £1000 for ploughing, trenching, and draining, or about £15 per acre?—Yes.

51,818. That is not an excessive sum for the reclamation of land?—Not putting it that way.

51,819. Did you give us the present sheep stock?—Yes, 1700.

51,820. What would you say is the full stocking?—We paid for 3500 when we went in.

51,821. Then is the difference repaid by the deer you have upon the ground?—At this moment it is. I don't say that we might not put a larger sheep stock on it; I think possibly we could.

51,822. How many stags are shot annually?—Eighteen; I have been told there are about 50 stags and the rest hinds, making up nearly 100 between them on the island altogether.

51,823. So that the difference between 1700 sheep and 3500 is represented by 100 deer?—Actually it is; but I did not say we could not put more sheep stock on; I simply say that is a part of the consideration.

51,824. Can you tell us how many rabbits are killed annually?—Last year about 9000, and one former year about 11,000.

51,825. So that you would have to take into account their food as well?—No doubt; they eat up what would otherwise go to the sheep.

51,826. Then, I suppose, it is not open to argument but that the southern portion of the island is better than the northern?—No doubt it is; it looks better, at any rate, and I have no doubt it is. We have got all our policies and our Home Farm as good as we can possibly make them, and naturally we would have chosen, or the people before us would have chosen as good a place as possible.

51,827. Then with regard to growing a crop on the Home Farm, do you find any difficulty in getting it to ripen?—Yes. Some years we do very well indeed, but other years we have difficulty,—we make the best of it by housing it and leaving it open to the air and doing what we can; but we have to import an immense quantity of hay and everything we want from the east country.

51,828. You have heard of variable seasons in other parts?—Yes. They have had a bad time of it this year here.

51,829. But on the whole would you say that there are very fair crops grown on the Home Farm?—Fair crops, yes.

51,830. *Mr Munro.*—Going back for a moment to this question of the reclamation of land on the farm of Glaum, I think you stated that the late Mr Wood expended a sum of £3942 in trying to reclaim land which resulted in failure?—Yes.

Inverness. — James Ross.

51,831. I suppose that the deduction you make from that is, and you wish us also to infer from it, that similar results would attend the attempt to reclaim land by crofters?—Of course, that is the contention.

51,832. The late Mr Wood bore the reputation, and I believe justly so of being a very generous man, and I suppose he would be governed by the same generous principles in his well-meant efforts to reclaim this land?—Yes, and I would add this much more, that it has always been the wish both of Mr and Mrs Wood to do everything that could possibly be done to promote the happiness and welfare of the people in the island, and anything that they ask, if reasonable, is granted.

51,833. So that, to a large extent, the reclamation works were entered upon to provide a certain number of people with employment?—Largely.

51,834. Were these reclamations carried on in your time as Commissioner?—Yes, under Mr Stewart who is present.

51,835. But, I suppose, I may take it that supposing similar works had been done by the crofters themselves at their own expense, more thrifty methods would have governed them?—I have not the slightest doubt about that; that is self-evident.

51,836. But the sum total of this experiment of yours in the farm of Glaum is this, that after spending that large sum of money you have allowed the land to go back into a wild state?—That is so.

51,837. So that if the reclamation of the land had cost you as many pence as it has cost you thousands of pounds the position would have been exactly the same?—That is so. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Is the pasture not better?—It is better at this moment, but it is going back to the exact position it was in before we touched it.]

51,838. How do the crops ripen in the island of Raasay?—Sometimes we get on very well; at other times it is a very anxious and uncertain matter. It gets wet, and the turnips and the crop get bad, and we have sometimes to use a portion of it as fodder instead of threshing it out.

51,839. I think you said that you had 76 crofters in all, on the island?—Yes, about that number.

51,840. Have any of these crofters themselves ever made application to you or to the late Mr Wood to increase the size of their holdings?—Not to me; I do not remember any case of it. I have had an application made when I was collecting rents—I cannot remember by whom—for an increased hill grazing, but that is the only case I can remember. It comes back to my mind that such an application was made, but I do not remember the name. The manager informs me that no such application was ever received.

51,841. Do the same cordial relations exist between the proprietrix of the island as formerly existed under the late Mr Wood?—Oh yes.

51,842. Supposing that these crofters made application to Mrs Wood for more land, do you think she would be disposed to comply with the request, provided she thought it would be attended with advantage to themselves, and not disadvantageous to her?—I have not the slightest doubt she would give her very favourable consideration.

51,843. Do many of the crofters on the island follow the fishing?—Nominally they do, but they do not really work very hard at it. They have so many local difficulties that I always feel inclined to excuse them. We have no telegraphic communication; sometimes it is so stormy that a steamer cannot land passengers for days. These men are living in an out-of-the-way place; supposing there is good fishing at one point they may not know for a week afterwards, whereas if they had telegraphic communication they would know of it immediately. Their work is thus rendered very uncertain, and they must just find out as best they can where to go.

51,844. You say you have no telegraphic communication. Have you ever tried to get it?—Three times we applied to Government for it. There was a

Inverness. — James Ross.

man sent down two years ago, who laid out a scheme of telegraphic communication, but nothing further was done. Mr Wood was very anxious indeed to have the communication established, both on account of the facilities for fishing, and because there is no resident doctor in the island. When Mr Wood came first, he made a bargain with a medical man in Portree to come to the island once a week, and paid him £50 for this, without any charge to the people.

51,845. So that the lack of telegraphic communication operates against the prosecution of the fishing industry?—It puts it to serious disadvantages.

51,846. Do you think the crofters can pay attention to the crofts and follow the fishing successfully at the same time?—No; I think a man must be either a fisherman or a crofter.

51,847. *The Chairman.*—How many crofters are in Rona as distinct from Raasay?—About sixteen.

51,848. The arable part of their holdings consists largely of discontiguous patches, pockets in the rock?—Yes.

51,849. And the cultivation of these patches is attended with a great deal of difficulty?—Yes; they have to carry the sea-ware on their backs.

51,850. In short, the island of Rona, on the whole, is not a very suitable place for habitation?—No.

51,851. You have been on it, I suppose?—Often.

51,852. You would be in favour, I daresay, of a well-considered scheme of migration for removing these crofters to some other more suitable locality?—As far as Mrs Wood is concerned, I would advise her to consider very favourably anything that will tend to reduce the unhappiness on the island at large, including what you have stated.

51,853. The island of Raasay is a more suitable place for a crofting population than the island of Rona?—There is no doubt it is richer.

51,854. And the crofters of Rona could be settled on terms much more favourable to themselves in Raasay, under some well-considered scheme of migration, than they are at present?—In that way it might be done.

[Adjourned.]

SIXTIETH SITTING.

Inverness. —

INVERNESS, August 31, 1894.

Present:—

David Brand, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
Michael Hugh Shaw Stewart, Esq., M.P.
Angus Sutherland, Esq., M.P.
James Noel Müller Forsyth, Esq.
George Gordon, Esq.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
John Macleod, Esq.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

Donald Cameron. — Donald Cameron of Lochiel [59]—*examined.*

51,855. *The Chairman.*—We shall be glad to hear your statement, Lochiel?—My lord, before I read the statement which I have prepared, which is not long, I am happy to say, I should like to ask permission to make a few observations upon certain evidence which was given when the Commission sat at Fort-William. I have no written statement on the subject, and I do not propose to go into the general question of the management of my estate, because I feel that if I had wished to do so, the proper place would have been at Fort-William. But some statements were made at that meeting which were not within the cognisance of those who represented me, and I should wish to say a few words upon these statements. Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

I would first say that I do not believe that if I had been present at Fort-William, the evidence which was there led would have been adduced; and my reason for saying so is this. The other day, when Mr Commissioner Hosack of the Crofters Commission sat there with the view of fixing fair rents, I made a full statement of the way in which my property had been managed. On that occasion, the crofters were represented by two very able lawyers, Mr Macphee and a gentleman from Oban, Mr Campbell, I think, and it is a remarkable fact that in cross-examination on the whole of that full statement I was only asked one question. That question was rather a remarkable one, and I should like to mention it, as it bears upon the inquiry you are now conducting. In my statement I had made a point of the fact that for a certain rent,—£5 I think I mentioned—the position of the crofter on my estate who had work was very much superior to that of his fellow-labourer in the same trade who occupied a back room in Fort-William for the same sum. I quoted the case of two brothers who were both engaged in the tailoring trade, one of whom was a crofter on my estate, who for a rent of £5 had a house, two cows and followers, the right to keep sheep, and all the rest of it; while the other, for the same rent, £5, had a back room in Fort-William. Mr Macphee in cross-examination put this one question to me:—'Is it not the fact,' he asked, 'that the scarcity of room in the town of 'Fort-William is owing to the disinclination on the part 'of the proprietors to feu their land for building pur-'poses?' Of course, that had really nothing to do with the matter; it was the effect, not the cause, that I was pointing to. It did not matter how it was brought about; it was the result that constituted the point I was making. Of course, I was able to answer that it was totally untrue, and that I and the neighbouring proprietor, Mrs Cameron-Campbell, were perfectly willing to grant feus of land, whether for building or for other purposes. In point of fact, Mr Macphee might have known that, for he was occupying one of the feus himself. When your Commission sat at Fort-William, Mr Macphee made it a complaint that I did feu land; thus depriving crofters of the use of it; and yet before the Crofters Commission he complained that I did not. Really, there is no pleasing Mr Macphee.

I could not quite make out from the evidence which was forwarded to me whether Mr Macphee appeared as an agent for the crofters, or as a witness by himself. I observe he did not say who had appointed him, and he gave no account of any meeting which he represented: he appeared to represent the crofters, and then he proceeded to give a great deal of evidence on his own account. Now, I would like to refer very briefly to some of the remarks he makes. 'On Lochiel's estate, 'on the south side of Loch Linnhe, witnesses will be 'adduced to show that at Drumarbyn, Onich, and Bal-'lachulish numerous hamlets existed; which have been 'cleared off.' Now, to me that is hardly intelligible, because these hamlets of Drumarbyn, Onich, and Ballachulish are crofting townships which still exist. They could not have been cleared off, because they exist at the present moment. Then he afterwards made a reference to feuing, which I have already alluded to. The next two or three points I simply mention to show the absolute and entire ignorance of Mr Macphee on the subject he is talking about. He was asked the following question by yourself, my lord:—'You referred 'particularly to the lands of Glen-Dessary and Glen-'Pean; are they grazing farms?' and his answer is 'No, 'they are deer forests.' As a matter of fact, they are not, and never were deer forests. I would like to say in that connection, that although these two places would make deer forests, and I may have had proposals to turn them into a deer forest, I have always steadily refused to do so, for two reasons; first of all, I thought it would be a hardship to the shepherds, who would all have to be turned out,—they have been very faith-

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

ful servants, and I would not like to do anything to dispossess them; and the second reason is that I am one of those who think that it is not desirable in the present state of public opinion to add to the number of deer forests. I think there are quite enough of deer forests, and except for very special reasons, which may exist, and which have existed, no doubt, I think it is far better that proprietors of land suitable for deer forests should keep them in farms, and should not, if I may use the expression, outrage public opinion by turning them into deer forests. Those opinions I have a right to hold, because, I think, no one has done more to defend deer forests than I have when I was in Parliament. I risked my seat by taking up a line in defence of deer forests, and, therefore, I have perhaps a right to say so much,—that I think it is inexpedient to turn into a deer forest lands especially that would carry a good breeding stock of sheep. That is one reason why I have not done it. Then Mr Macphee is asked another question by your lordship, whether he is aware that the lands on the north side of Loch-Arkaig are at present in the hands of the proprietor as grazing farms, or what; and he answers:—'Clunes Farm is, I understand, 'in the hands of the proprietor; I think it is about 'half a mile from the east end of the loch. Part of it 'is a deer forest.' It is three and a half miles, not half a mile, from the end of the loch, and no part of it is deer forest, or ever was. Then you ask him:—'Have you 'a personal acquaintance with the lands on the north 'bank of Loch-Arkaig?' and he answers:—'No, I have 'not. I have been to the loch, but have not travelled 'up.' And yet in spite of that, he afterwards says:—'I should say generally'—although he has just admitted that he has never been there—'I should say generally 'with regard to Loch-Arkaig and the other lands on 'the Lochiel estate, that they are admirably suited for 'maintaining a large number of additional holdings.'

I shall deal no more with Mr Macphee himself, but he brings forward Mr Macmillan, a very old and somewhat eccentric gentleman, who has a farm at Moy, and this gentleman writes a letter which he gives to Mr Macphee to read. He has not the courage, apparently, to come and be cross-examined upon his letter; but his letter seems to have been read,—I don't know, my lord, whether it is down in your notes or not.

51,856. *Mr Sutherland.*—Might I ask a question before you proceed further? What report is that from which you are quoting as to what was said at Fort-William, because I cannot recall at the present moment that Mr Macphee said that Glen-Dessary and Glen-Pean were deer forests; it may be that my memory is at fault, but I have certainly no recollection of that statement having been made by Mr Macphee?—I am reading from the transcript of a shorthand note which was sent to me by my factor as a portion of the evidence taken by you.

51,857. I do not say that Mr Macphee did not say what is there ascribed to him, but I have no recollection of his having said so, and I think it was rather assumed all through his evidence, that these places were sheep farms?—I can only say that this was sent to me by my factor as containing the evidence of Mr Macphee and of two other witnesses who made references to my estate.

51,858. *The Chairman.*—Our own shorthand writer can satisfy us as to what Mr Macphee really did say, by referring to his notes of the Fort-William evidence. [*Witness*].—Then as to Mr Macmillan, who is a tenant of mine at Moy, and who holds what I may call the best farm on the Lochiel estate: he comes forward but not, apparently, as a representative of the crofters, and he makes a rather unwarrantable attack on me, in regard to the manner in which his sheep get into the forest, and are not got out. Now, that is absolutely untrue. For every hundred sheep Mr Macmillan has bordering on that forest, I have a thousand, and I would ask any man of common sense, is it likely in these days that I should allow my sheep to go wandering into the forest and never get them out either for clipping, or for the sales in September, or for other purposes. The fact is that Mr Macmillan's sheep wander along the high road, and get into the forest from the road. I hardly ever drive along the road without seeing sixty, eighty, or a hundred of his sheep straying there. They thrive very well in that forest; they are never disturbed; I have never pointed them; I have never hunted them with dogs. They are perfectly contented, and when the time for clipping comes they are gathered along with my sheep and they are clipped. Again, in September I do what no other proprietor of a deer forest does; I make a stipulation in my shooting tenant's lease that he is to allow the sheep farmers to have a gathering actually during the shooting season, so that they may have their sheep sent off to market in September. I think a more unwarranted attack was never made upon any person, considering that Mr Macmillan's sheep enjoy this peace and quietness; and anybody who knows anything about sheep knows that they thrive the best upon clean land which has not been grazed. I observed that particularly about the lambs in my forest. He then brings in an old story about a keeper taking an old gouty Englishman for sport, and driving the deer past him. Really I think that does not affect the question which the Commissioners have to dispose of; but I suppose he means by that that the deer are driven in the forest, and not stalked in the usual way. That is absolutely untrue. My forest is not large enough to permit deer to be driven, and they are shot in the usual way by sportsmen, not driven. I suppose the reason he introduced himself in this way was that having this very nice little farm, and knowing that the Commissioners were going to pass along the road, he very likely thought they would cast 'sheep's eyes' on his farm, and try and fill it with crofters, and perhaps thinking of the parable of the unjust judge he thought it would be well to pose as the crofter's friend, in order that it might not be taken for crofters. At least, that is the only reason I can think of.

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

51,859. Before you pass from the subject, I should like to say that the letter of Macmillan was demurred to at the time, on account of the absence of the writer, and I had some little difficulty about accepting it; but Mr Macphee said he would adopt the letter as his own, and on that understanding, I allowed him to read it.—I thought it was hardly likely that it could have been accepted as evidence without something of the kind.

51,860. It has been our custom to decline to receive any document unless supported by the presence of the writer, and we have again and again rejected such evidence; but Mr Macphee said he was in a position to adopt the letter as his own, and that removed the difficulty in this case?—Then comes Donald Cameron, an old blacksmith at Roy-Bridge. Well, I am informed that in cross-examination Mr Donald Cameron admitted that he had been discharged for misconduct. Of course, I do not want to say anything about that; I do not owe the man a grudge, and I do not want to do him any harm. But, he states that when he was first in Glenloy, that glen was populated by crofters, I suppose he meant, although I rather think in cross-examination he said, that the population he referred to were shepherds. Well, I succeeded to the estate in 1860; at that time a lease had just expired, not only of Glenloy, but of a vast tract of country besides. That was all let to one man, a Dumfriesshire man, Kennedy of Kirkland. He held an enormous tract of country, which carried 20,000 sheep, on a nineteen years' lease, which came to an end in 1860; so that as far back as 1841, at all events, Glenloy was not only occupied as it is now, but occupied by one man, instead of three. Prior to 1841 the old family of Camerons of Strone occupied that farm, and the south side of the glen was occupied by two farmers, at Achnanean and Inverskilivullin. It is therefore impossible that that man's memory can go back far enough to entitle him to say that Glenloy was occupied by crofters.

Lastly, there comes a witness from Balluchulish, Mr William Macphee, who speaks of certain so-called 'evictions' at Ballachulish. If the paper which I hold in my hand is correct, it appears that he began by stating that there were twenty evictions, including an

aunt of his own. He then came down to four or five, and eventually, he admitted that in the ordinary sense of the word evictions, there were none at all.

I should like to add one thing about the demand for additional land on my own estate. I have never had any single application made for additional land, on the scale which is generally understood, by any of the crofters on my estate. The average rent of the crofts on my estate, as shown in the appendix to the Report of Lord Napier's Commission, was £6. It is almost impossible to conceive that crofters who occupy holdings of that size, and who are comfortably off, as they are, with plenty of labour going, would wish to be banished to any of these out-of-the-way, inaccessible glens which were alluded to in the evidence tendered at Fort-William.

51,861. Have you had any applications for land from any of your crofters, say within the last fifteen or twenty years?—No, none; it was stated at Fort-William that the only application even alleged to have been made was an application from some crofters at Kinlocheil, and when Mr Hosack was there the other day, that was arranged. It was settled, and no other application has been made for more land.

51,862. Have you had any reason to suppose, whether there were applications or not, that at any time a desire existed among your crofters to obtain more land, either in the form of new holdings, or for extension of existing holdings?—No, and I have reason to believe such a thing is impossible, because my crofters have very large areas of hill grazing. Every crofting township has a very large hill grazing at the back, where the crofters put their cattle and sheep; and if they have not sheep, they take in wintering, which returns them one-third of their rent.

51,863. Is each crofter entitled to put stock on his own land according to his own arbitrary discretion, or is the amount of stock regulated?—It is all regulated. I do not say that there are not crofters who put on more than their proper stock.

51,864. Have you not had any applications for arable land to form additions to the smaller holdings?—No, I have only had one application, and that I granted. Some of the crofters in Muirshalloch, the village you passed before you came to the farm of Moy, asked for some arable land between the canal and the river. I gave it to them, we fixed the rent, and they were satisfied. That is the only application I have ever had.

51,865. And, I understand you to say there has been only one application for enlargement of holdings?—Well, even that was not exactly an application for enlargement of holdings; it was rather a disputed march, and rather than have any trouble about it we arranged the matter.

51,866. It was amicably arranged?—It was amicably arranged.

51,867. Is that the case where there was a joint-minute adjusted by parties?—Yes. But my contention is that from the size of the holdings it is impossible to conceive,—it is almost grotesque to suppose, that these people, who have got all the best land on my property, the land nearest the sea, both at Loch-Linnhe and Loch-Eil, and the Caledonian Canal, should want to migrate to these distant and inaccessible places.

I now beg to submit the statement which I have prepared on the general subject of your inquiry, which is as follows:—

'I was a member of the Royal Commission appointed 'to inquire into the condition of the crofters and 'cottars in the Western Highlands and Islands in '1883, and had thus an opportunity of making myself 'acquainted with the circumstances of the people in 'most of the districts embraced in our inquiry.

'Prior to this, I had many opportunities when 'representing the county of Inverness, of visiting 'all parts of the county and informing myself as to 'the condition of the people.

'I took part in the discussion and adjustment of 'the Report of the Commission of which I was a 'member, but found myself unable to agree with the 'Chairman's proposal on the chief branch of that 'Report. I would have stretched a point to meet 'Lord Napier's views, as I feel that unless unanimity 'is obtained, or something like it, the labours of 'such a Commission as ours are practically thrown 'away. But I considered for the reasons given in 'my own memorandum, pp. 121–129, Lord Napier's 'scheme, though well intentioned and ingenious, was 'far too complicated, and would prove in practice 'unworkable. This was, I believe, the view taken 'by the Government of the day, and indeed in all 'the discussions which have since taken place on the 'subject, I have never heard of these proposals being 'seriously referred to by any one.

'I may say at once, that no one is more willing to 'see land given to small tenants than myself, provided 'I am satisfied that this can be done with advantage 'to the crofters and without injustice to others.

'On the question of whether land should be taken 'compulsorily, I do not propose to say anything. I 'am strongly opposed to forcing any one to accept a 'tenant for his land against his will, but this is a 'point which every one must think out for himself, 'and my evidence here is no better than that of any 'other educated person.

'I would lay down some general conditions which 'should, I think, be complied with, if land is to be 'taken from farms or forests and converted into 'small holdings. These conditions would apply equally 'whether such land is taken compulsorily or not.

'I would suggest that any recommendations which 'may be made should apply to districts where the 'average crofters' holdings are small, and where the 'population is what is called congested. There is, 'I know, a natural feeling, in which I personally 'share, that it would be desirable to re-people the 'glens, which are now depopulated, with crofters 'and cottars taken from places where they have been 'allowed to increase unduly. But I feel that it is 'impossible to carry out this benevolent idea, to 'recommend immigration on a large scale, as a leading 'feature in the Report would, I fear, be open to such 'well founded objection as might lessen the value of 'the Report taken as a whole. On the other hand, 'if the operations recommended by this Commission 'were limited to congested districts, the whole process 'would become more manageable. I do not think 'that any one acquainted with the people would say 'that a wholesale transference of cottars or crofters 'from the Lews to Badenoch or even to Sutherland, 'would be popular either in the one place or the 'other. Whether a transference of crofters from exist-'ing townships to other places should apply to estates, 'or to parishes, or to both, is a question for con-'sideration.

'I would also suggest that such transferences should 'be conditional on the vacated crofts being added 'to adjacent holdings, and that in the case of cottars 'the houses should be pulled down.

'It would be, in my opinion, necessary that when 'land now held by a farmer or as part of a deer forest, 'is taken for the formation of small holdings, such 'land should embrace the whole farm or deer forest. 'Otherwise, if the arrangement be a voluntary one, 'it would not be possible, and if compulsory it would 'not be fair. A sufficient number of crofters to occupy 'the lands proposed to be taken should be assured. It 'would never do to allocate the best portion of a farm 'to a few crofters. This would interfere with the 'working of the remainder of the farm.

'One objection which must occur to every one who 'has considered the subject is, that the power of taking 'land (if compulsion is thought necessary) must operate 'prejudicially on all existing or future tenants who 'hold or who might hold land which, under any Act of 'Parliament, might be made subject to appropriation 'for small holdings. This objection might, to some 'extent, be removed by limiting the period within 'which such land is to be dealt with to a year from 'the passing of such Act. Otherwise the uncertainty 'of tenure must prove highly disadvantageous to those

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

Inverness.

Donald Cameron.

'in possession. The above are the conditions which, I 'think, should be fulfilled, and probably will be recommended by the Commission.

'But I see difficulties in the way of planting crofters 'and cottars on existing farms or forests, which do not 'admit of easy solution. First among these is the 'question of stocking the new holding. At present on 'most estates the incoming tenant, or failing him the 'landlord, is held bound to take over the sheep by 'valuation. These valuation prices run extremely 'high, and would add considerably to the outlay 'required by the crofter on entering his new holding.

'In the case of a deer forest, some consideration 'must be allowed for the shooting lodge with its 'accompaniments, such as outlay on stables and offices 'or gardens and pleasure grounds, to say nothing of 'miles of deer fences in some cases. But besides, and 'independent of these difficulties, there remains the 'large question of who is to pay for the stock required 'to equip a holding of £30 annual value. I shall deal 'with the question of building, trenching, draining, 'and fencing a little later. These might where neces- 'sary be met by loans guaranteed by Government, but 'Parliament is not likely to advance money or give 'security for live stock. In the first place, if this were 'done, persons in other positions in life who are unable 'to commence business on their own account, might 'not unfairly ask that similar provision of their stock 'in trade should be made. Again, live stock cannot 'in any sense of the word be regarded as an available 'security for a loan of money. I have myself repeatedly 'offered to hand over my sheep stock as security for 'the large sums of money which I have had to find 'from time to time. The offer has been invariably 'declined, the lender intimating that it would afford 'him no advantage over a simple note of hand. As 'Parliament could not therefore consent to the taking 'over by the State of a security which is no security, 'it follows that the new tenants must themselves stock 'the lands. As to whether they are able to do this, I 'must refer to my memorandum, p. 128, and the 'marginal note. Of course, I do not know what 'evidence may have been tendered to this Commission 'on the point, but I know that the impression left on 'the minds of every member of the Napier Commission 'was that only in a very few cases could any crofter, 'and certainly no cottar, hope to find capital sufficient 'to stock a £30 holding.

'I now come to the question how far, omitting the 'difficulty of the sheep stock, a farm of £30 rent may 'be profitably occupied.

'In my memorandum already referred to (p. 133 of 'the Report) I have given an imaginary balance-sheet 'for a farm of this size. I believe that at the time, 'and under conditions which were a part of my scheme, 'that balance-sheet was fairly accurate though it was 'even then admitted to afford but a narrow margin of 'profit to the crofter. But the following alterations 'have now to be made. On the debit side, an addition 'of £5 a year must be allowed in order to arrive at an 'exact estimate of the whole liability of the tenant. 'Prices have fallen to an extent which compels me to 'modify my calculation of the receipts. £1 is now far 'too much to expect for slack ewes; 14s. is nearer the 'mark, and even that is high if the average of the last 'three years is taken as the test. Wedder lambs 'ought to be put at 8s. instead of 12s., and ewe lambs 'at 10s. Wool may be left at 2s. per sheep, though 'that is somewhat high; but I fear stirks will not now 'fetch more than £4 each.

'There would thus fall to be deducted from the 'receipts of the farm, about £24, 8s., leaving them at '£81 instead of £105, 8s., against an expenditure of '£78,10s. instead of £73, 10s. The margin of receipts 'over expenditure is thus reduced to about £3. I must 'here emphasise my remark that £600 to equip the farm 'is not an extravagant figure, and it may be as well to 'go a little into detail on this point. I assume it is 'not suggested that fields now under a regular rotation 'of crops and occupied by a farmer for the purpose of 'growing straw and turnips for his milk cows, or for 'wintering a few tups, would be taken from him and 'given to others. Such a proposal would be unreason- 'able and would defeat its own object.

Inverness.

Donald Cameron.

'I imagine that the sort of land which crofters are 'anxious to obtain, is the old arable and pasture which 'were at one time occupied by small tenants, and 'which are found scattered about all over the High- 'lands. In my calculation of outlay for reclamation I 'have not assumed that the whole of this land will require 'trenching and draining. By taking this item last in 'the following estimate it will be seen what a com- 'paratively small margin is left to be applied under 'that heading. The capital outlay would stand 'thus:—

'Slated house, ...	£200
'Barn, byre, and stable, . .	120
'Fencing, 1000 yards at 1s., .	50
'One horse, ...	28
'Six cows and followers, . .	66
'Farm Implements, . . .	20
Total, .	£484
'Trenching and draining, . .	116
Total, .	£600

'It must be remembered that if a Government loan is 'to be obtained, the buildings must be slated, properly 'built, and subject to inspection by a Government 'official; that the drains must be laid out advantage- 'ously and well-constructed, and the fences of a per- 'manent and substantial kind. We must not lose sight 'of the fact that the cost of carriage to the remote 'glens where these works will be mostly required is 'likely to be heavy, and that skilled labour is just now 'high, owing to the construction, actual (and I hope 'prospective) of so many railways in the north.

'Taking all these things into consideration, my 'estimate of the capital required is, I think, 'moderate.

'But I must return for a moment to the sheep, 'which are likely after all to form the most profitable 'part of the venture. These sheep must be paid for 'somehow, and it will certainly take 30s. a head, or £300 'in all to acquire a flock of 200. If the pasture land is 'occupied individually and not by a common stock, a 'heavy amount of fencing will be required, and even 'then the sheep can never thrive, as they will be unable 'to shift from one side of the hill to the other according 'to the direction of the storm. If they are to be under 'a common mark, I foresee great difficulties in a newly 'created township.

'Regulations, management, and other matters in- 'cidental to a common ownership are not always un- 'attended with some friction, even in communities of 'old standing. In a newly established township, com- 'posed perhaps of crofters and cottars who are un- 'acquainted with each other, I do not see how that 'perfect harmony, which in such a case is so essential, 'can be expected to prevail. It is true that regulations 'may be forced upon any community by Act of Parlia- 'ment but acquiescence in the decision of the majority 'cannot be enforced, and it is to be feared that the 'minority would show their sense of what might 'perhaps be real injustice, by refusing to pay rent.

'I would here mention that these and other diffi- 'culties could not occur if, as recommended in my 'memorandum, the co-operation of the landlord was in- 'vited. If he made a mistake in his selection of 'tenants he would be the chief sufferer and the 'knowledge of this fact would make him extremely 'careful.

'We have now left the crofter only £3 to pay 'interest on £300 (the value of the sheep stock), to 'provide for any hill fencing that may be necessary, 'and quoting from my memorandum, "to provide so '"far as his arable land does not suffice, for himself and '"family, his horse and cows, to pay his rates and taxes '"and to purchase seeds."

'The above figures must, of course, give rise to a 'difference of opinion, and it may be well to apply

'another and a simpler test to the question whether a 'holding of the kind suggested can be profitably 'occupied.

'It will not be denied that in the Highlands while 'it is now impossible to find tenants for large farms, 'there is not the same difficulty in letting those of 'moderate dimensions. No one will now take a sheep-'run of 3000 sheep, while in a farm of the value of £80 'to £120, the same difficulty is not experienced. The 'reason for this state of matters is not that the larger 'farm is less profitable but men are not to be found who 'care to lose the interest on the larger capital required 'to stock it. In the case of a small farm, a tenant can 'be secured who is satisfied if he can pay his rent and 'working expenses, find himself in dairy and other 'produce and perhaps in a favourable year have a small 'balance left to the good. He has probably been 'brought up to farming and likes the life and the 'occupation which it affords, and makes up his mind 'not to look for any actual return on the capital invested 'in the stock.

'But the crofter established (as I consider he must 'be with a large capital outlay) is in this position. He 'has to pay, as it were, two rents, one to the person or 'public body from whom the money was borrowed by 'means of which his holding was made available for 'occupation, and a further rent to the landlord. It is 'difficult to see how this can be done. In my memor-'andum, which was written perhaps unconsciously in a 'spirit too favourable to the crofter, a balance of profit 'of £32 is left to the tenant and that is admitted to be 'bare enough. According to the present calculation, if 'you omit rent altogether and give him the land for 'nothing, his profit would only come to £33. It will 'no doubt be asked; if all this is true what can be 'done? Is there no way of distributing crofters more 'evenly throughout the Highlands? My answer is still 'that this can only be done effectively and without a 'risk of loss through the co-operation of the landlord as 'proposed in the memorandum so often referred to. 'That such co-operation might not be so readily afforded 'as would have been the case ten years ago, must I fear 'be admitted, both on account of the subsequent failure 'of similar experiments, and also in consequence of the 'fall in prices. But if money be advanced by the 'Government at a low rate of interest to form small 'holdings, I am not without hope that in districts 'where a crying necessity for extended holdings exists 'and where there is a genuine desire on the part of 'crofters to embark on farming operations on a more 'extended scale, there may be found proprietors who, 'in their own interests as well as for the sake of their 'people, will consent to devote some suitable land to 'work out the experiment.

'There remains one alternative which I would 'venture humbly to suggest for the consideration of the 'Commission. If it is for the national interest that 'certain lands in the Highlands should be occupied by 'small tenants, does it not seem to follow that the risk 'of the experiment should be undertaken by the State? 'Why should not the Government purchase some 'estate or some suitable farm, of which there are many 'in the market, and let it to tenants at a rent which 'would include the interest on cost of building and 'reclamation payable along with instalments of capital 'during a fixed period of years, when the holding with 'all the buildings and improvements would become the 'property of the tenant? If the Government is to 'advance the necessary capital for establishing all over 'the Highlands a special class of small tenants, it would 'embark on a more dangerous experiment financially 'than that above suggested. The latter, at any rate, 'avoids the risk of inflicting serious injuiry on pro-'prietors, farmers, and other classes of the community.'

(Signed) 'DONALD CAMERON.'

51,868. Lochiel, you said, I think, in the opening part of your statement, that you did not think it desirable to add to deer forests. Now, you are aware that between the years 1872 and 1883 there has been a very considerable increase of deer forests?—There has; I have seen that in the returns. Most of the forests that have been added to, I am afraid, consisted of land which it was absolutely impossible to let for other purposes; they are what we call wedder farms, high land.

51,869. It is said, and probably the figures are correct, that between 1872 and 1883 there were no fewer than thirty new deer forests made; and you may agree with me in believing that since 1883 there has been a further considerable afforestment of land?—I am afraid that that is so, and the reason is that these lands which have been turned into forest were absolutely unlettable. I will not, of course, mention names, but a friend of mine turned a farm of his into a forest, and I said to him very much what I have just said to the Commission,—that I thought it was a pity. He told me that he had advertised the farm for two years, and could not let it; it was out of lease, and if he took over the stock himself it would cost him £10,000, and he did not know where to turn to raise the money. He said he could not find the £10,000, and did not know where to borrow it; and he could not manage the stock even if he got it; so as the place was absolutely unlettable, he was obliged to turn it into forest.

51,870. At the same time, I think I may take it that your sympathy and your feelings are against this additional afforestment of land, if it could be stayed in any way?—Most distinctly.

51,871. Are you aware that there are proposals for further afforestment of land under consideration at the present moment on some estates?—I believe that to be so.

51,872. Whether to be carried out or not, remains to be seen. Now, you referred particularly to congested districts; you know, of course, that in some of the Western Islands there are very seriously congested districts?—Unfortunately, that is too true.

51,873. And you admit, I daresay, that the land question there, if I may so express it, is at present in an acute form?—It is so, and has been for some years, —for the last ten or twelve years.

51,874. It is, indeed, gradually becoming worse instead of better, from the over-population in certain localities?—I believe that in the island of Lewis, the population is increasing very rapidly.

51,875. It was the island of Lewis I had particularly in view. I think your paper suggests that if reasonable and feasible means could be devised for the relief of that congestion by some process of migration, it would be well to make an experiment in that direction?—No one would be better pleased than myself if that could be done.

51,876. And you would be in favour of such an experiment, assuming that it could be carried out on reasonable lines, rather than emigration?—Subject to the conditions mentioned in my memorandum, I should be very much in favour of such an experiment. In the concluding portion of my statement, I suggested that that should be undertaken by the Government, which, I think, is a very fair proposal; but as to comparing it with emigration, I really would not like to give an opinion, because emigration must depend so entirely for its success or failure upon the individual inclination of the man who goes. Nobody suggests compulsory emigration, but if a man wishes to go to New Zealand or Canada, I don't know why he should not go if he likes. I think you can hardly compare the one thing with the other; they are two separate things.

51,877. I have not read your memorandum quite recently, though I did before, and therefore I ask you to what extent do you propose co-operation on the part of the landlord?—The proposal was, so far as I remember, that he should have the selection of the tenants: that one-sixth of the capital sum required to establish the crofter should be found by the crofter, but that it might be found partly in money, and partly in labour, such as building his house: and that the other five-sixths should be provided by Government loan, for the payment of interest on which the landlord should be responsible.

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

51,878. And is that mentioned in your memorandum?—Yes, I think it is. In that way, I would throw upon the landlord the *onus* of safeguarding the Government, and in return for that, I would give him a voice in the selection of the tenants.

51,879. You are aware that in Lewis there are very many who could not be expected to find even so small a proportion of the capital required as one-sixth; they are in a state of a chronic poverty?—I am afraid that in the case of the cottars in Lewis, they could not pay anything at all.

51,880. And even some of the crofters there are in what appears to be a very serious state?—They are very poor; but my idea was that probably the crofter must have some stock, and although it might not be sufficient for a £30 holding, yet he would move that stock, and it would represent perhaps part of the £100 that I contemplated. But as regards the cottar, I did not contemplate any contribution at all from him.

51,881. You are aware, of course, that the cottar question in Lewis is a very serious one?—I am aware of that. But the difficulty is as to the stock of the cottars.

51,882. Some of the cottars have stock, but very many of them have no stock?—Yes, that is so.

51,883. *Mr Sutherland.*—The statement you have made, Lochiel, is practically and in substance the memorandum which we find attached to the Report by Lord Napier's Commission?—Well, substantially,—I adhere to that memorandum, subject to the altered conditions in regard to prices. I am afraid that times are not now so favourable as when I wrote that memorandum, and the difficulties in the way of carrying out my ideas would be certainly somewhat increased.

51,884. You found yourself able to sign the general report of that Commission, notwithstanding this memorandum?—No, I did not sign the land portion of the report; the portion containing Lord Napier's land proposals I could not sign.

51,885. Is your name not adhibited to the general report?—Yes, but the general report embraced other things besides; it deals with postal communications, and railway schemes, and deer forests, and other things.

51,886. But, I think, you admitted in your statement here to-day that in your memorandum you traversed the principal and essential part of the general report?—Yes; that was intended, otherwise I should not have written the memorandum separately.

51,887. I need not ask, therefore, whether you were in favour of the legislation that followed upon that report,—I may take it for granted that you did not look with favour on the subsequent legislation?—That is going back to what is past; I am rather looking forward to the future.

51,888. But I wish to define exactly your position with regard to our inquiry?—I was not in Parliament when the Crofters Act was passed.

51,889. I was under a misapprehension, then; I thought you were, and I was going to ask you how you voted in regard to that measure?—No, I was not in Parliament at the time.

51,890. But is it an unfair way to state your position, that you were not favourable to the legislation that succeeded upon that report?—Well, I do not exactly feel disposed to give my own private views upon the legislation which has passed. I think that the Crofters Act contains some things which are good, and also same things which I should like to see different.

51,891. You stated, Lochiel, that no one was more willing to give small holdings, if it could be done with benefit to the crofters and loss to nobody,—I presume to the landlord and the present tenants of the land that might be given. May I ask as a practical question, do you see no way to its being done without much loss to any person?—Well, when you say do I see no way in which it can be done without loss, it depends what you mean by 'it;' there are so many different ways of settling crofters upon the land. There are some lands which are suitable for crofters: those lands I referred to, and the lands which I consider suitable for crofters might, I think, be given to them in the way suggested in my memorandum. The real difficulty lies in the matter of providing the stock; that is the *crux* of the whole matter. I do not believe that many proprietors would refuse to give lands at a fair rent to crofters which are now occupied either as sheep farms or as deer forests, if they saw their way to do it with a possibility of the crofters being in a position [however willing they might be] to pay their rents when the time came round. But the difficulty of the stock is an immense one, and I should be only too glad if I saw my way out of it, but I don't.

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

51,892. Have new small holdings been formed to any extent before now?—I believe some experiments have been made, and I am afraid they have not been very successful, in Skye; I do not know them personally, but I have been told so.

51,893. How were the present crofters, whom we find up and down through the country, located first in the places we now find them?—I suppose they have been there for a great many years.

51,894. Yes, but they had a commencement, a beginning?—Everybody had a commencement; that is going back into the dim past.

51,895. What was done in the past might be done in the present, or in the future. They were placed upon new holdings without any stock; how do the present holdings come to be?—I suppose they were gradually increased,—first a small patch, and then a gradual increase in the usual way. I suppose the whole country of England and Scotland was originally what you call a virgin forest, or prairie, or something, and I fancy holdings in the Highlands would not differ in that respect from what was found in other parts of the country.

51,896. It points to a system of natural development of holdings,—small patches to begin with, aided by the natural increase of stock, and the reclamation of land?—Probably, and when the crofter found he had got as much as he wanted, he stopped improving.

51,897. Could what was done then not be done now?—Times are so changed now.

51,898. There is no change in the natural increase of stock?—Change in the manner of living, and the comforts of life. You could not expect crofters to put themselves into the position they were in a hundred years ago, and why should you?

51,899. I do not enter into that question,—I perhaps may be found to agree with you in that; but stock will increase as naturally as it did before, and my point is that what was done before can surely be done again. Is not that a reasonable assumption?—It is obvious that it could, if you choose to go through the same hardships and sufferings and discomforts, and to put yourself back as you were a hundred years ago. There is no doubt the land can be ploughed, but how is the crofter to live while he is doing it?

51,900. But there would be this essential difference, I take it, that in any experiment that might be made now, the people should be put upon the best land, not upon the worst, as before. Would not that make a most material difference?—I understood the idea was to put them on the lands they had before.

51,901. Which they say is the best land?—In some cases it may be, and in some cases it may not be. But, of course, it is perfectly true. I quite agree with you that if you think it is desirable, or if it is thought desirable, to put crofters on a spot of ground, and say, now cultivate that for yourself, and let them alone, of course it can be done; but the question is, would the crofter go on those conditions?

51,902. We have his own evidence on that point?—He would not go and pay £30 of rent for it.

51,903. The rent would be subject to arrangement, of course?—I assume that the land is worth £30 now to a farmer or some one else.

51,904. Then in continuation of that same subject, you took for granted that Parliament would not give money for such a purpose, and you founded an argument upon their refusal. It is within your own experience as a Member of Parliament, I presume, that there is a great disinclination on the part of the Imperial

Exchequer to give money for any local purpose?—Yes, there is a disinclination; but the money is somehow screwed out of them in the long run, I think.

51,905. And do you not think that money for this purpose might also be screwed out of them in the long run?—No, I don't think so, because there is no security for it at all.

51,906. Have you not seen subventions in relief of local taxation considerably increased in your day?—Yes, but they have got the security of the rates for that.

51,907. But there is no security required; the money is not returned at all; it is a free gift?—That is another thing; I never contemplated a free gift.

51,908. But if Parliament give a free gift, much more might they give a loan that would be repaid with interest?—No, I think not; I think it would be much better to give a free gift than a loan that they may never get any return for. I think you are more likely to get a gift than a loan, certainly.

51,909. Is that your experience of the Treasury?—You put it to me as a comparison with gifts to public bodies. My answer is that it is possible that by dint of successful pressure on the part of members of Parliament, you might perhaps get the Government to give the crofters a gift of money to enable them to stock their lands. It might be done,—I should think it is extremely improbable, but it might be done as a gift; but, as a matter of business, and as a loan, I do not think that any pressure could ever obtain it from the Chancellor of the Exchequer in that shape, because of the trouble there would be in getting the interest on the money, and the little likelihood there would be of ever getting back the principal. That, in my opinion, would prevent such a thing ever being thought of in Parliament.

51,910. But you surely forget your own proposal, Lochiel, that the landlord should become security for such an advance. Is he not a good enough security?—No. In the first place, the landlord is better security than the tenant, I should think, because he has got the land.

51,911. That, then, would overcome the objection? If the landlord were made security for the money, it would surely be perfectly good?—But then you put it to me that the money should be lent to the crofter, and not to the landlord.

51,912. For the purposes of the crofter?—That makes the whole difference.

51,913. It could be safely given as a gift, and it could be safely given as a loan to the landlord but not to the crofter?—If it is given as a gift, there is no question of safety; but if it is given as a loan, then, I say, it is safer to lend it through the landlord, because he has the security of the land.

51,914. Then, it is your deliberate opinion that the money could be more easily got as a gift than as a loan?—No, I don't believe it could be got either way. As you put it to me, I said that was the likelier way of the two; but I don't think it would be an easy matter to get it at all.

51,915. Is that the only alternative for an advance,—to the landlord direct, or to the landlord for the crofter? Have you never thought of a public representative body?—No, I don't think I have. But I don't see how a public representative body would be any better off in the way of getting security than the Government; it would simply throw the possible loss from the Government to the representative body.

51,916. You think it would be a loss in any case?—It would be a loss in any case.

51,917. If that is your opinion, of course, your position is quite intelligible. You said, if I remember aright, that it would be necessary for a man to have a capital of £200 in order to stock a holding?—A capital of £600.

51,918. But for sheep alone?—For sheep alone,—yes, £200.

51,919. And £600 altogether?—And £600 besides the sheep, I am afraid.

51,920. But in the case of holdings such as we see already formed, I suppose the people who began them had not anything like £200 altogether?—No, I should not think they had anything at all.

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

59,921. And yet they pay high rents now,—higher than the big farmer?—I imagine that the people who have stock now, got stock from their predecessors, who in turn got it from their predecessors, and so on. There is no difficulty there: the man is on the farm, and he has got his stock; if he does not meet with any misfortune he keeps his stock, and pays his rent from the produce of his stock.

51,922. I refer rather to places with which you must be perfectly familiar, places throughout the Highlands where the people were put off land and had to sell off their stock and begin the world afresh and anew; they had not £200 of capital altogether, or anything like it?—I suppose they had the value of their stock.

51,923. Whatever it fetched?—Whatever it fetched.

51,924. And no more?—I suppose not; I would think not.

51,925. And they now pay sufficient rents,—rents which, on the whole, have been considerably reduced by the Crofters Commission?—I thought you were referring to people who were evicted.

51,926. Yes, quite so?—But if they were evicted, there was an end of them, they had no more rents to pay.

51,927. But they had to begin life somewhere again?—I suppose they had.

51,928. And yet they now pay considerable rents for their holdings?—Whom do you mean by 'they'?

51,929. The crofters who were evicted.—But the crofters if evicted went away, and left.

51,930. But those who did not? Some of them are there still; others were evicted or transferred to new places, and these had to make new homes after they were evicted?—Are you referring to cases like what are called the Sutherland evictions, where they went away from a glen and down to the sea coast; is that what you refer to?

51,931. Yes.—And what is it you wish to ask me about them?

51,932. You stated in your evidence that the great obstacle to the formation of new holdings was that the people had not sufficient stock. I refer you to cases where the people had to begin making new holdings under adverse conditions, who had no capital of £200, and were not asked to produce it, and who yet have made new holdings, and new holdings for which they now pay a high rent?—But if the crofters who were removed from one part of the estate to another were allowed to take their stock with them, the initial difficulty of stocking would be removed. In the case you suggest, no difficulty would occur, because the people would go over the glen to the sea coast, or wherever it was, with their stock.

51,933. As a matter of fact, in the new holdings they had no land for their stock, and they had to dispose of their stock under the most unfavourable conditions?—Then they got out of the difficulty altogether; the difficulty is to get stock, and if you say they required no stock, the difficulty vanishes.

51,934. It is an easy way to get out of difficulties, to dispose of stock?—I am not at all justifying it; I am merely answering your point.

51,935. My questions, as you will understand, are directed to the point that you have, I think, exaggerated the difficulties of forming new holdings, unconsciously, no doubt; I do not for a moment suggest that you consciously over-estimate them. But I am pointing to the fact that the difficulties were overcome before, under the most unfavourable conditions; and why should they not be overcome again, if any re-distribution of the land is made, seeing the people would be much more favourably situated?—But the difficulty of the stocking in the case you point at could not have occurred, because if the new holdings required very little or no stock, that difficulty no longer exists.

51,936. Stock was got sufficient for the holding, in the state in which it then was?—That would be a

portion of the old stock, I suppose; and the rest would be sold at the market price.

51,937. Yes.—Then, again the difficulty of stocking the new ground, which required fewer cattle and sheep, disappeared, because they took a portion of the old stock of cattle and sheep, and only sold what they did not require.

51,938. And they have increased the stock, and paid higher rents, gradually, ever since?—They may or may not; I cannot answer as to that; it is the stocking difficulty that I wish particularly to refer to.

51,939. The proposal in your memorandum, and your proposal to-day, is that the landlord should have the selection of the tenant; that the tenant himself should pay one-sixth of the necessary capital, and the State should provide the remaining five-sixths; that is to say, the tenant and the State between them were to have all the money to pay, and the landlord was to have the patronage?—He was to have the selection of the tenants.

51,940. Do you consider that is a fair arrangement to all parties concerned?—I think it is very fair, because the landlord has to incur all the risk of the tenant's misfortune, or inability to pay, and in return for that I think he should have some voice in the selection of the tenants.

51,941. And do you think that the very great power of selecting the tenant should be left in his hands, and the capital provided by other parties, because he undertakes that risk?—And because he knows best the circumstances of the tenants, and who are most likely to prove capable farmers. He must know better than any other person who are the best people on his estate.

51,942. He must know that best?—I think so.

51,943. And you see no objection to such a patronage as that being put in the hands of a private individual?—No, I do not see any objection at all.

51,944. And do you think that Parliament would be inclined to look favourably on such a proposal as that?—I really do not know what Parliament might do.

51,945. You have told us very decidedly already to-day what Parliament would do.—The weak point in the scheme, I am afraid, is that instead of having to exercise this patronage so largely, the landlord would have some difficulty in finding a sufficient number of people qualified to occupy the land, who would satisfy the requirements. That would be owing to this same old story of the stock.

51,946. Supposing the matter was vested in a public body like the Parish Council, or the District Committee of the County Council, could not they take the same part as the landlord?—No, I do not think so. I do not think they would have the same opportunity of judging of the character of the tenants as the landlord.

51,947. In the statement which you made here to-day, you were kind enough to submit for our consideration recommendations of a general character. You, no doubt, are aware of the exact scope of our inquiry?—Yes, I have seen the terms of the reference.

51,948. And you have taken for granted that we are going to make general recommendations?—I have taken for granted that you will make some recommendations, certainly; but I don't know what you mean by 'general recommendations.'

51,949. You say you know the scope of the reference laid down in the Royal Warrant?—Yes, as to what places crofters could be established on profitably. [*The Chairman.*—Or advantageously.]—Or advantageously.

51,950. And you have been good enough to give us evidence. You have changed your mind, evidently, with regard to this Commission, since its appointment?—I have changed my mind? No. How do you mean?

51,951. We have had the benefit of some attention from you at the time of the appointment of this Commission, have we not?—In what way?

51,952. At a meeting held in this town?—Oh, a meeting of landlords; yes.

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

51,953. At that time, you had some doubts whether you would appear before us and give us evidence at all?—On the contrary, I suggested at that meeting that it would be very desirable that the landlords should not ignore the Commission, but do their best to assist it.

51,954. You had some doubts in your mind as to recognising the Commission at all?—No, I never had any doubts.

51,955. My recollection of your position on that occasion is that you had?—No. I criticised the composition of the Commission: but I should hardly think that is a subject that it is desirable to go into now.

51,956. It is the only opportunity we will have of asking you any questions about it. I understood you had grave doubts at that time as to whether the Queen's Commission ought to be recognised?—No, I never had any such doubts. I distinctly remember that at that meeting I criticised the composition of the Commission, as I had a perfect right to do; and I perhaps blamed the Ministry for appointing that Commission, or for the formation of it; but I never held that the Commission should be ignored.

51,957. I may be misinformed, and I would be very glad to know that I have been misinformed; but as reported here, you ask the question 'Are we to 'recognise the Commission, and give it assistance in 'the task which lies before it?' And that implies a doubt in your mind as to whether you ought to recognise the Commission?—No, it implies no doubt at all. It is a question put to my brother landlords, on which they have a right to express an opinion as well as myself. My opinion was distinctly that we ought to recognise the Commission; I said so, and they followed my advice.

51,958. The sentence I have quoted, then, is wrongly reported?—Not at all.

51,959. No doubt ever entered into your mind as to the recognition of the Queen's Commission?—In my mind, never. I always intended that it should be recognised, and I would recommend my brother landlords to recognise it; and it was with that intention that I called the meeting, in order that I might recommend them to acknowledge the Commission, and tender evidence.

51,960. My recollection of it was that the meeting was influenced by the sound and sensible advice of The Mackintosh, that they should act towards the Commission just as they would towards any other of Her Majesty's subjects?—That was my view too.

51,961. I am glad of it; you must have been misreported.

51,962. *Mr Forsyth.*—In giving your evidence, Lochiel, as to the possibility of the formation of new holdings, you made some mention as to the selection of suitable people for emigration, but when it came to the question of migration, I did not hear any view from you. By migration, I mean either the bringing of tenants from a congested district to a place where there might be room, or simply the formation of new holdings. Now, can you give us any assistance or advice as to the method of selection of tenants for new holdings?—My answer to that question is very simple. Assuming that a crofter has a good character, and so on, it would depend entirely on his ability to provide stock for the new holding. That would be the first and the most essential element, in my opinion, because that is the great difficulty in the whole question.

51,963. The difficulty that I see before me at the moment is this; that one man may succeed well in a newly formed holding, while another man from the same district (say a congested district) might fail; and it would be a very important matter that there should be some proper selection of suitable tenants for a scheme such as that which you have shadowed forth. How would you propose to meet that? Simply as a question of the capability to stock?—The question of the capability to stock is the main thing to be considered; and, of course, whoever had the selection of the tenants would require to see that a certain number

of people would go together. I mean that, if possible, it would be desirable to take crofters and cottars from places where they were accustomed to live together, where they were acquainted with each other, so that they should work harmoniously upon the new holdings; not to take one man from one village, and put him down beside a stranger from another, where the same harmony could not be expected to prevail as if they were all brought from the one township. That, I think, would be an element of some importance in the selection.

51,964. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You made some observations with regard to the evidence led before us at Fort-William, and I would like to refer to that first of all. Now, were you not represented, Lochiel, at our Fort-William sitting?—I was represented, yes.

51,965. By your factor?—Yes.

51,966. But still you think it is necessary for you to come here and combat what was led before us then?—I have already explained, in asking the Chairman's leave to deal with that matter, that my reason was that facts, most of which I have alluded to, could not be known to my factor, and, therefore, I wished to supplement. There is that matter about the sheep, for instance.

51,967. But does your factor not know very well about your estate, and is he not a very able lawyer?—He may be a very able lawyer, but he would not know anything about those particular matters that I have referred to.

51,968. Would he not know everything about the estate management?—No, he lives at Fort-William, and would not know anything about it.

51,969. That is not very far from your estate, is it?—Yes, but he does not know all about my sheep arrangements.

51,970. Then, I was very sorry to hear your reflections upon your old tenant, Mr Macmillan, whose letter was read to us at Fort-William. You stated that he had not the courage to come before us?—Yes.

51,971. Do you think that that is altogether fair towards an absent man, to accuse him of want of courage?—I think it is just as fair as writing a letter of that character against an absent man who is his landlord, and who has never done him any harm.

51,972. But think of this, Lochiel; did he ask that letter to be read? Was it his motion at all that it should have been read?—Mr Macphee stated that he had permission to read it.

51,973. That he asked permission: that shows that the letter was not sent there at his own motion?—But it was sent; and for what purpose could it have been sent?

51,974. It was a correspondence between himself and Mr Macphee: in fact, Mr Macmillan said he had no thought when he wrote it that it was to appear before us, and he only gave permission that it should be read after he was asked by Mr Macphee to do so, seeing he could not appear himself?—On the face of it, if that letter was not intended for the Commission, I cannot imagine for what purpose it was written.

51,975. But he states distinctly himself that it was not written for that purpose?—Well, I should think Mr Macphee and Mr Macmillan would have something else in the world to do than to write a correspondence of that kind for their own private amusement, and not for your benefit.

51,976. Do you think that letters written upon that important subject can only be regarded as written for amusement?—Well, for their own private interest.

51,977. Might it not be important enough, although it should not be for this Commission?—My impression is that that letter was written for the purpose of being shown to the Commission or read before the Commission; I cannot conceive for what other purpose it was written. Whether the idea originated with Mr Macmillan or with Mr Macphee I cannot say, but the letter was written evidently for the Commission; no person reading it could think otherwise for one moment.

51,978. Was it not written rather for information to Mr Macphee himself in reply to a letter? Was it not for Mr Macphee?—But it contained no information at all, except an attack upon me about the sheep.

51,979. Did it not say that he had reclaimed land?—The second letter said something about reclaiming land, but I could not follow what he meant by that.

51,980. He was willing to point that out to us, and anxious that we should see the reclamations. Now, you also make another reflection on this gentleman, who, you say, has one of the best farms on your estate, that he wrote the letter to safeguard his own interests there, that the only reason you can imagine for his writing the letter was that, thinking of the parable of the unjust judge, he thought it would be well to pose as the crofters' friend, in order that his farm might not be taken for crofters?—It looks very like it.

51,981. Is it very generous to impute such a motive as that?—It is just as generous as his writing this letter about me.

51,982. But supposing him to be the most ungenerous person that could be, should we attribute such motives to him?—That is a moral question, on which you are more capable of giving an opinion than I am.

51,983. Well, my opinion is that it is very ungenerous to attribute such motives, if you think I am an authority upon that.—Well, perhaps I was wrong; I will absolutely withdraw any imputation of that kind. I cannot do more than that.

51,984. Now, with regard to the evidence which Mr Macphee gave us about Glen-Dessary, he did not profess to have gone through or to have seen the land himself?—No, he said no.

51,985. But from what he had heard about it, and from what he had read about it, he thought it would be suitable for new holdings. That was his evidence, and he did not seek to deceive us in any way in regard to it?—No, I never said he sought to deceive you; what I said was that he admitted he had never been at Glen-Dessary, and then he lays down the law about the holdings as from his own opinion, as if he had been there; and I said that was not consistent. He spoke of the ground as only one could speak who knew it from personal acquaintance.

51,986. But you can speak of many lands that you may not have seen?—Well, hardly in giving evidence before this Commission.

51,987. But this is what he says according to you:—'I should say generally with regard to Loch-Arkaig 'and the other lands on the Lochiel estate, that they 'are admirably suited for maintaining a large number 'of additional holdings.'—That is a very dogmatic statement to make, and if it had been based on personal knowledge might have been quite right; but as he admitted he never was there, I do not think the statement is worth much. That is all I want to say; I have no wish to accuse Mr Macphee of any wilful mis-statement, but I think I have shown that his statement cannot be worth much.

51,988. The evidence here shows quite well the lines upon which Mr Macphee was proceeding, for it goes on to say that Mr Macphee then read a statement from the rental previously referred to giving the tenants on Lochiel's estate, a century ago. Is it not fair enough to conclude that if the land was occupied in former times, it might be occupied again? Is there not some force in that?—Oh, Mr Macphee had a perfect right to the opinion; I don't dispute his right to the opinion; what I dispute is the weight that should be attached to it by the Commission, considering that he admitted he had never been on the lands he was talking about.

51,989. Then, with regard to Glen-Dessary, you say that he fell into the mistake of saying that it was a deer forest, whereas?—Whereas, it has never been a deer forest, and is not now.

51,990. Is it surrounded by a deer forest?—Not surrounded; there is a deer forest in the neighbourhood.

51,991. And, I suppose, there are deer on it?—Yes, deer traverse it, as you would say, occasionally.

51,992. And deer are shot there, I suppose?—No, as a matter of fact, they are not.

51,993. They are not shot there at all?—No.

51,994. If the deer are there, why is the ground not shot over?—Because it is so inaccessible that nobody can get at it. That is the real fact of the matter. It is a long way to it.

51,995. Is there not a road to it?—There is only a road for two miles up.

51,996. Is that the only reason why it is not shot?—There is nobody lives near it to get at the shooting; my tenant at Achnacarry has a right of shooting over it if he likes.

51,997. Would it not be quite correct to say that it is a sanctuary for deer?—It cannot be a sanctuary for the deer, because it is occupied by sheep, and shepherds are going over it constantly.

51,998. But a sanctuary would be a place where the deer are never shot, never troubled?—This is certainly not a sanctuary.

51,999. But it is in the neighbourhood of your deer forest, which is shot over; there are numerous deer there which are never troubled in any way, and what is that but a sanctuary for the deer?—You cannot call a sheep farm a sanctuary for the deer, because your shepherds are constantly traversing the place, and the deer can have no rest. A sanctuary implies peace and rest for the deer, and they cannot get that if the shepherds are continually going over a place.

52,000. You have just said it is very inaccessible; is it not then the very ideal of a sanctuary?—But people do pass through it; my shepherds pass through it going to their sheep.

52,001. But with that exception, is it not very admirably suited, in your point of view, for a sanctuary?—That is a very large exception.

52,002. Then, with regard to the statement which you read before the Crofters Commission, and which you referred to to-day, you made a point of the fact that it was read before two able lawyers, who appeared in the interests of the crofters, and that only one question, I think you said, was asked in cross-examination on it. So, I suppose, you wish us to receive it as a statement which cannot be in any way invalidated?—No, I do not wish you to receive it as a statement that cannot be in any way invalidated, but I use that as an argument to show, that if I had been at Fort-William, present at your sitting and able to contradict some of the statements that were made there, very likely the statements would not have been made.

52,003. But I refer to your statement before the Crofters Commission; you said you were only cross-examined on one particular point?—Yes, that is so.

52,004. And you referred to the two lawyers being present on behalf of the crofters, from which we are to conclude, of course, that you could not be examined, in fact, on the remainder,—that it was to be received as undoubted fact?—Well, I cannot fathom their minds: they did not do it, that is all I say.

52,005. Then, with regard to the crofts on your estate, you say that the rents have not been raised, and that the people hold the same land that they had from the very commencement; there has been no curtailment, I think you say, and no increase of rent, but there has been consolidation, of course?—Yes.

52,006. I state the matter correctly, do I not?—Yes, that is so.

52,007. The number of crofters has been reduced very considerably?—The number of crofters has been reduced, yes; by the process of consolidation.

52,008. They have been consolidated at the expense of the crofter holdings; why was nothing done to increase them from the large farms which you hold, or would it not be advantageous that that should have been done?—It would have been advantageous neither to the crofter nor to the farmer; you cannot take a slice out of a farm and add it to a croft: why should you?

52,009. Supposing you took the whole farm, and shifted some crofters to that farm, might not that be an advantageous experiment?—But why should I make the experiment? What is the reason for making the experiment? The consolidation that you speak of took place when there was a vacancy; instead of a small vacant croft being given to a new comer, it was added to an existing croft. In that case, the occasion arose for the change; but if you suggest that I should add part of a farm to a croft, the occasion does not arise at all.

52,010. Is it not practicable sometimes to increase holdings from a large farm when it becomes vacant?—But why should a holding be increased if there was no opportunity?

52,011. But there is opportunity, when a large farm becomes vacant?—Oh, if a large farm of say £300 or £400 is vacant, is it not the natural thing to let it to another farmer? Why should I go out of my way to take a crofter from another place, and put him on to that farm? What is the object of it? I do not quite see what you should do it for.

52,012. Could you not extend the holdings of the present crofters from such a farm?—The whole position on my estate is that there is no congestion of population; the crofts are all large and labour is abundant, and there is no need or demand for extension. The extension has, in fact, taken place through a series of many years as crofts were vacated; but as for extension, such as is suggested in Skye, or Lewis, or elsewhere, the case is quite different: there is no demand for it here.

52,013. But you have some small crofts, have you not?—Yes, I have some small crofts.

52,014. £1 crofts?—Yes, I have a few £1 crofts still.

52,015. Large farms are not very successful just now, but you have never tried an experiment of turning these into small holdings, although the small holding's system has been so successful on your estate?—No, I have never suggested to any of these small holders with one cow, to go on to a farm that carries five or six thousand sheep, certainly.

52,016. Then with regard to the curtailment of the crofter holdings, do you state to us that there has been no curtailment at all? The townships that were represented before the Crofters Commission were, I think, Banavie and Corpach; do you say that there was no curtailment of their lands?—Well, no serious curtailment of their lands; and no lands have been taken from any of my crofters to add to sheep farms.

52,017. Is it not a virtual curtailment when you put say a few additional crofters into an existing township and give these a share in the common? Has there been no instance of that?—Putting a few crofters among whom?

52,018. For instance, at Banavie-Bridge, were two or three crofts formed there, and did these crofters get a share in the common?—I cannot recollect of that; I cannot answer that. I said 'on a large scale'; I cannot tell you off-hand without books of reference, about every individual crofter. On a large scale, I maintain that no crofts have been added to sheep farms.

52,019. You limit it in that way to a large scale, but still it might be a serious enough thing for them. Then, in regard to Ballachulish, a number of crofts have been extinguished there, have they not?—In the Ballachulish case what happened was this: there was an hotel there, which had no proper arable ground, and the hotel-keeper was very anxious to get some arable land. There were four or five crofters, who were mostly old people, and who voluntarily gave up their holdings, they being allowed to remain in the houses they occupied. For the most part they were not able to work their crofts, and these holdings were given up by them and added to the hotel. There were only four or five small crofts altogether.

52,020. We had distinct evidence at Fort-William that at least ten holdings were taken, from time to time, and given to the hotel for a farm?—In any case, the matter was one of voluntary arrangement, and no one was prejudiced by it.

52,021. That was a case where land was added to an hotel, not to neighbouring crofters; and the extinction of ten or eleven crofts is surely not a very small thing?—I maintain that there were not ten or eleven.

52,022. I only say that that is the evidence which we distinctly had at Fort-William, and that your own factor was there, and was not in a position to contradict that evidence?—My impression was that the witness started by saying twenty, then came down to four or five, and eventually admitted that there were none.

52,023. No, sir, that was not the evidence; it was never admitted that there was no addition made.—That there were no evictions, in the ordinary sense of the word.

52,024. I am not speaking of evictions; I did not use the word. I am speaking of crofter holdings to the number of eleven being added to the hotel farm?—Well, I believe four or five were added.

52,025. Then was any land taken from crofters and added to the distillery at Fort-William?—The distillery is not on my land at all; it is on Lord Abinger's.

52,026. Is there no distillery on your property?—No.

52,027. Then you represent to us that the crofters on your estate have been treated in a very generous and fatherly manner; but with regard to these two townships, did you hear of their having been fined for heather burning?—Oh, yes, I heard of that.

52,028. A rather serious fine, was it not?—I think that was explained to Mr Hosack of the Crofters Commission, and he was quite satisfied.

52,029. That may be; but you referred to the statement which you made there; is it the case that these crofters were to blame for the burning for which they were fined?—The crofters were 'fined,' if you choose to call it a fine; it was rather damages.

52,030. I will take any word you may suggest.—The crofters paid the damage done by excessive heather burning, exactly in the same way as the farmers in their leases by voluntary consent pay for the damage when excessive heather is burnt.

52,031. But the question is this; did these crofters burn that heather?—Certainly, they burnt it.

52,032. Have you any proof that they burnt it?—Certainly, they burnt it, or somebody burnt it for them.

52,033. But do you think it is fair to fine the crofters for what 'somebody' did?—But if it was done for their benefit, by their own shepherd.

52,034. Is it for their own benefit to excessively burn?—I believe they got two wintering rents that year for the ground. It certainly did bring up the grass in rather an extraordinary way.

52,035. Then you fined them for what improved the land?—I made them pay up a great deal less than the damage that was caused to me; I could not let the shooting on that ground for three years, for anything like the rent I got before.

52,036. But if it improved the ground, would it not in the long run improve also the grouse shooting?—In the long run; but while it was running, I was losing rent all the time.

52,037. But seeing that it improved the land for grazing, would it not also improve it for grouse?—I am quite aware of that.

52,038. Now, consider the fine that was paid,—£50 for two years, and £25 for another; that is as bad as an increase of rent, is it not?—No, I don't think it was as bad as increasing the rent: I think many people would be glad to pay rent for two years, and get their farms free for the rest of their lives.

52,039. I wonder at that, because it appears to me to be in some ways worse than an increase of rent?—As a matter of fact, they only paid one year's rent; they were let off the other two.

52,040. They hold themselves that they paid two?—I am under the impression it was one. Anyhow, it was a very small portion of the loss which I suffered; that is all I have to say.

52,041. They had to pay, at any rate, for this improvement of their land?—For the destruction of my property.

52,042. Which you never brought home to the real culprit; you wished to recover it from somebody because you lost it?—I lost it, for their benefit.

52,043. Why not punish the real culprit, if there was any damage done?—But they were the real culprits.

52,044. That was never proved?—Well, we did not prove it in a court of law, but, as a matter of fact, it was perfectly well recognised.

52,045. By whom?—By everybody.

52,046. Who are 'everybody'?—Well, the crofters, and myself, and everybody else.

52,047. They did not admit it?—They knew perfectly well it was done for their benefit.

52,048. How did they know it?—Because it was done by their shepherds.

52,049. Why not punish the shepherds if you knew that, or if you could prove it?—I leave you to answer that question yourself.

52,050. Then you speak of the hogg wintering as if that were a benefit which the crofters obtained without any outlay or labour on their own part. Do you think it is fair so to represent it?—I think so.

52,051. Do they not get a rent for wintering, because they cultivate their land?—No.

52,052. Is it not so? How then is it that the farmers do not keep the hoggs on their own land?—Because they cannot; their own lands won't keep them.

52,053. They send them to places which are cultivated, because the grazing there is better?—They send them to places which are partly cultivated and partly hill, but the hoggs spend most of the time on the hill. It is because the country to which they send them is low and is suitable for wintering sheep; and they run over the fields too.

52,054. But you overlook the fact of the benefit to that land from the crofters' cultivation?—The benefit to the grazing?

52,055. Yes?—Of course, the crofter cultivates his fields, but he pays me rent for the whole,—for the hill and for the cultivated land. Before the system of wintering hoggs was introduced, the crofter got nothing but what he produced out of the soil: now he cultivates his land in the same way, there is no more labour on his part, but by means of hogg wintering he gets one-third of his rent back.

52,056. He gets one-third of his rent back?—Well, practically,—one-third or one-fourth or something like that, from the farmers who send their sheep there.

52,057. It is one of the ways in which they are enabled to pay their rents; and it is a thing for which they work; it is the reward of their own labour, for if they did not cultivate, they would not have hogg wintering?—Of course they would not. But they cultivated it before hogg wintering was introduced, and this return is extra,—it is all additional. That is my point.

52,058. But the point which I wish to put before you is that that is one of the benefits of small holdings—that they make the ground valuable for sheep wintering?—If it is in a suitable part of the country, and has a suitable climate, and does not stand too high.

52,059. And do you say it is not the result of labour, of good husbandry? Of course, if there was not labour and good husbandry there would be no hogg wintering. Then, in the statement which you submitted to the Crofters Commission, you paint the benefits enjoyed by the crofters in very glowing colours. Would it not be advisable now to extend that system, which has worked so beautifully there?—To extend what system?

52,060. The system of crofting. You say, for instance:—'If, therefore, the crofter on this estate 'is better off than (1) agricultural labourers elsewhere, '(2) artisans in large towns, and (3) crofters in the 'remoter parts of the Highlands, it is difficult to 'discover in any part of the United Kingdom a spot 'where the corresponding class among the Queen's 'subjects enjoy the same advantages and are equally 'free from the ordinary anxieties of life.' It is a perfect Elysium, apparently. Now, would it not be well in that district to extend the system of crofting, which

Inverness.
Donald Cameron.

is so happy and so prosperous?—Do you mean to extend the system to existing crofters?

52,061–2. To introduce new ones. You take pity on the poor people at Fort-William; is not this a chance for them?—You spoil the whole thing if you introduce too many crofters, because that labour value which is one of the principal elements would disappear; and the crofters themselves would be the first to object to new people being brought in among them.

52,063. But Fort-William is in the district now, and you take pity on the people of Fort-William, and show us how very much better off the crofters are. You say 'Without going out of Lochaber a startling 'comparison can be found between the position of a 'labourer living in Fort-William, and one of my 'crofters, who may possibly be found engaged in the 'very same employment. Thus for £5 a year, a crofter 'gets a house, four or five acres of arable land, and 'grazing for two cows: for the same rent, his fellow-'workman has the privilege of occupying two small 'rooms in a back street in Fort-William,' and you then go on to say that you know cases of the very same thing. Now, in the case of the two brothers you refer to, one of whom is a crofter, and the other in Fort-William, would it not be desirable to try and do something for the Fort-William brother?—I daresay it would be very nice for him, but I don't think it is my business to find out everybody who lives in a certain degree of hardship in Fort-William, and plant them among my own crofters.

52,064. Don't plant them among your own crofters, but take some of the large farms and settle them there?—No, I don't think I am called upon in the least to do it.

52,065. I don't say you are called upon to do it, but I only point out to you this, that your representation here is an argument in favour of extending the crofter system. There are large farms near Fort-William; you have plenty people in Fort-William who have no land, and who would be much better off, according to your own representations, if they had crofts such as exist on your estate at present. It is a very strong argument, is it not, for making an attempt to do something for Fort-William?—The Fort-William people are taking uncommonly good care of themselves just now. With the opening of the West Highland Railway, money is pouring in there by the sackful, and I don't think they want you or me or anyone else to help them.

52,066. You yourself speak of them, and speak of them disparagingly?—No, I don't speak of them disparagingly; I speak disparagingly of the accommodation they have, and of the miserable rooms they have.

52,067. But you have farms in the neighbourhood that might be experimented upon in that way. Do you think now that that comparison between the rent which is paid for a house in Fort-William and the rent which is paid for a croft is altogether fair, or that the inference which you seek to draw from it is a fair inference?—Yes, I think so.

52,068. In the case of the house at Fort-William, the proprietor who receives the rent has built the house, and is bound to keep it in repair?—Yes.

52,069. Now, with regard to the crofter, some of these crofters at Corpach are, I suppose, descendants of those who were removed from Glen-Dessary?—Yes, some of them.

52,070. They came there, and settled on a peat moss?—I don't know what it was; I was not alive at that time.

52,071. But you can see that it is a peat moss?—No, I do not at all admit that it is a peat moss.

52,072. Are they not on the Corpach moss, in reality? There is no use denying what any person can see.—No, they are not on the Corpach moss.

52,073. The land was not worth much when they came there?—I cannot answer that question.

52,074. But it is perfectly obvious to anyone that the land could not be much worth when they got it?—How could anybody know what it is worth?

52,075. You can see the land about them, and that is not much worth. You have the Corpach moss there, and people can judge from what they see with their own eyes?—Corpach moss lies by itself; it is an absolutely flat surface. These crofters, however, are situated along the slope of the hill, with the exception of those who are situated along the side of Loch-Lochy.

52,076. Have you any idea of the value of the land, when the crofters were settled there?—No.

52,077. Have you reason to suppose that it was worth more than a shilling an acre?—Some of it is probably worth a shilling an acre, and some worth more; and some very likely less.

52,078. And did these people not build their own houses?—That I do not know; I should think they very likely did.

52,079. Surely you cannot compare a rent paid by a man who built his own house, with a rent paid by a man living in a house which was built for him?—The comparison was not made in that way at all the comparison was made to show that a man who has a house and two cows, and the right of wintering or grazing sheep, is in a superior position, as a matter of fact, and independently of what the landlord did or does, to another man who is living in a small room in a back street in Fort-William. It is the fact of the superiority that I pointed to, it has nothing to do with the origin of the croft, or the liabilities of the landlord.

52,080. And the conclusion from that, of course, would be that you ought to try and get more of these. But I want also to see whether it is not fair enough to charge less on people who have reclaimed the land, who have built the houses, who have erected the fences, and who have virtually put all the value into the place that it now possesses. Is it not fair that these people should be charged a lower rent?—Well, the Commissioner before whom all that was discussed will probably form his own opinion as to what was done.

52,081. But it is not fair, Lochiel, to rent people upon their own improvements?—It is generally considered not fair.

52,082. So that it is no wonder to find that these crofts are low-rented, considering all that the crofters have done to improve the crofts?—The present crofters did not do much; it was their great-grandfathers, if anybody.

52,083. Your great point is that the rents of your crofters were not raised. But you also expressed the opinion that when the matter should come before the Crofters Commission the rents would be raised. Has that prophecy of yours been realised?—As a matter of fact, the decisions of the Commissioner have practically left the rents where they were, if you omit certain cases where rents were undoubtedly high, and where I offered before the arrival of the Commission to reduce them, which offer was refused; and if you also omit certain other cases where I have deemed it my duty in consequence of erroneous information to appeal to the three Commissioners.

52,084. I think you say that in a few cases where the rents were thought to be higher than the run of the neighbouring crofts, a re-valuation was offered, and declined. You do not take notice that they are too high, but that they are 'higher than the remainder.' 'The remainder of the applicants, will, I venture to 'think, find their rents raised by the Commissioners.' Have these rents been raised by the Commissioners?—No, they have not; I was wrong in my forecast.

52,085. Can you tell us by what rate per cent. they have been lowered, on the whole?—Really I have only seen the newspaper account, and I think the figure there given was 13 or 14 per cent.,—which, I believe, is lower than almost any other case dealt with; except the Sutherland estates.

52,086. I may be wrong, but I had a conversation with an official on your own estate, and I got it from him as 20 per cent.?—I don't think it is as much as that: I am sure it is not. But if you wish to ask me about that matter, I would repeat what I said just now, —that if you deduct from those decisions of Mr Hosack's the cases of crofts which were undoubtedly

high, and which have been reduced far more than 20 per cent.,—perhaps 30, 40 or 50 per cent. and deduct also, as I have a right to do, those still under appeal, the rest of the crofts have merely a few shillings of addition.

52,087. Have some of the rents been lowered 30 or 40 per cent.?—In some of the cases where I had already offered to lower the rents before the Commission came. If you deduct these—

52,088. Why should we deduct these?—Because I think it is only fair to deduct them.

52,089. What I wish to point out is that my information is that the rents were reduced about 20 per cent. altogether.—Including those that were under appeal?

52,090. Yes. Is it not 20 per cent.?—No, I don't think it is as much.

52,091. Well, I only point out to you that I have that from an official on your estate, that the reduction on the whole was about 20 per cent. However, some of the cases, you say, are under appeal; who is it that has appealed?—Well, nobody has appealed as yet, but I intend to appeal, in a few cases.

52,092. May I now direct your attention to a correspondence which you had with the crofters who appeared before you to get relief from their grievances. You say in reply to them:—'Every one must judge for 'himself, and no one can bind another. Should you 'or any one of your friends take this course,'—*i.e.*, to come before the Commission,—'I shall not complain, 'nor throw any obstacle in your way. I shall look 'upon the decision of the Commission as fair and 'equitable, in just the same way as I would on the 'decision of valuators appointed by myself.' And still you have appealed?—The Commissioners have not given their decision yet. One member of the Commission has given his decision, but I have a right to appeal, and in certain cases where I think the information brought before Mr Hosack was not correct, I intend to appeal. When the Commission as a whole have given their decision, then that sentence which you have read will apply.

52,093. It will; but I would point out to you that after appearing before one branch of the Commission, you are putting them to the trouble of appearing again before the whole Commission, and that, after expressing yourself so confidently that you will accept the Commissioners' decision. Then with regard to crofters on your own estate, you say that they have built new houses, &c., and that this 'shows that on this estate, 'at any rate, the smaller tenants enjoy a perfect sense 'of security, both from the fear of eviction and con- 'fiscation of their property, as well as from the possi- 'bility of having their rents raised in consequence of 'these improvements.' So that it is your opinion that without such a feeling of security, no improvements would go on?—No, I don't say that at all; but I think a person is more likely to build a house for himself when he feels he is not going to be evicted.

52,094. You attribute it to that, you know?—Yes, in a great measure.

52,095. For you say 'that shows that they had a 'perfect sense of security'?—Certainly.

52,096. The natural conclusion from that is that without such security, no improvements would be made?—Without that security, not so many improvements would be made.

52,097. That will account for the inferior houses on other estates where they do not have that sense of security?—No, I don't think that accounts for it, by any means; it is the want of money. They are better off in my part of the world than in Skye or Lewis, or these other places; they have more labour, and they are enabled to accumulate money and to build houses. How can a crofter in Lewis or in Skye build houses? It is impossible.

52,098. But has not the security of tenure produced the same effect in Skye?—I have not been in Skye lately.

52,099. It has also produced the same effect in Tiree?—I am delighted to hear it.

52,100. I would direct your attention, for instance, to the Third Annual Report on the health and sanitary condition of the county of Argyll, by Dr Roger Macneill, in which he says:—'In the district of Mull 'great improvement has been carried out in the im- 'provement of dwelling-houses in the island of Tiree. 'During the past three years about thirty houses have 'been almost entirely rebuilt. This has been volun- 'tarily done by the crofters, cottars, and others, on the 'strength of the security afforded under the Crofters 'Act.'—That rather tallies with my views.

52,101. I take it it is in perfect accordance with you, and I would point out the benefits which have arisen from extending that security to other places and that it has that effect in the poorer places as well as in the more favoured districts of Lochaber. Then with reference to the paper which you have read on deer forests before us to-day, you say that you have not been in favour of more afforestment, and one of the reasons which you give is the present position of public opinion,—not because further afforestment would be an injury, but because public opinion would be against it. Is not that in your statement?—Yes, that is so.

52,102. You would bow to public opinion, whether right or wrong, in a matter of that kind?—I think, as I have stated already twice, that it is not desirable, except in very special circumstances, to add to the number of deer forests.

52,103. Don't you think that this public opinion that has been formed against it is well-founded?—No certainly not. If I were to say it was well-founded, you would have out every thing that I had ever said and prove that I was wrong. I cannot possibly say that.

52,104. I admit that you have always defended it, and you only give in now because public opinion is against you?—I don't think that is very illegitimate.

52,105. Mr Sutherland was asking you about the difficulties under which crofters made their holdings in the past, and that without having the money which you now think is necessary, for setting up new holdings. You know that crofters have actually begun life upon very inferior land, have improved the land, stocked it, and built houses?—Yes.

52,106. In the period of distress in the Highlands in 1843, for example, many of them were removed from the holdings which they had on better lands, to make way for sheep; when they had fallen into arrear on account of the bad times, they were removed to very unsuitable places, and still without any security for the labour they spent upon it, and the money they invested they made homes for themselves. Now, don't you think that with the very much more favourable position in which they are placed, with security of tenure, they would be quite as able now to make homes for themselves in the lands that are now under pasture and under deer?—They could make homes for themselves, but they could not afford to take the land at what would be fixed at a fair rent, which rent the land now yields. Many years must elapse while they are making this home, and how can they afford to pay a fair rent for the farm during the process of improving the land and increasing their stock?

52,107. But don't you see, Lochiel, that the large farms do not pay just now: you get nothing at all for them,—the very large farms,—so that a fair rent would not be very high just now, if they were divided among crofters?—You cannot get crofters to take such a farm. The class of farm which I say is so large as to be unlettable, I maintain it is impossible to get crofters to take; and if you only take small portions of a farm, that does no good at all.

52,108. I would like to know why you think they would not occupy these large farms?—How are the crofters to graze farms of 3000 sheep, such as I mentioned in my statement? Cattle cannot graze on these farms; the crofters must have sheep.

52,109. We are told that cattle graze much higher than sheep?—That is a mistake.

52,110. I think it is in Mr Malcolm's statement about deer forests that cattle grazed higher than sheep. [*Mr Malcolm.*—No, not cattle].—They do not occupy

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

the land as sheep do: they occupy a portion of the land, but not the whole, and they cannot stay on the hill in winter, as the sheep do.

52,111. Why should not crofters occupy these hills as a club farm?—Because they have not got the money to stock it.

52,112. That is the great obstacle, then?—Of course it is the great obstacle, certainly.

52,113. And if that were got over, do you think it quite possible that the lands could be advantageously occupied by crofters?—If that could be got over, and a fair rent fixed, the whole difficulty would be solved.

52,114. *Mr Munro.*—Lochiel, you have been a considerable time under examination already, and I am sorry to detain you for one or two minutes.—Pray don't apologize; I am at your service.

52,115. Your opinion is well worth having on the points that I wish to put before you. In addition to being proprietor of your estates, you have had considerable experience in sheep farming, I think?—I have.

52,116. During the past few years I understand that a considerable number of farms have fallen into your own hands?—They have.

52,117. Now, I have no right to pry into your private affairs, but if you have no objection to inform us what has been the result of your experiments in that direction we should be very glad to hear it.—I have no objection to tell you, to the best of my ability, as far as I can without reference to documents. In good years such as we had three or four years ago, I paid my rent, and, of course, my expenses; and in a very good year I have made as much, I think, as 2½ per cent. on the large capital which was invested. In bad years such as last year, and the year before, I think you won't ask me to tell what happened.

52,118. That is, that on some of your farms, after debiting yourself, I presume, with the rent which the previous tenant paid, and paying all expenses, you have realised about 2½ per cent. on the investment?—I have done as much as that.

52,119. But upon the sheep farms you took into your own hands at a later period, you have not been so successful, I suppose?—No; the last farm I took, I am afraid, has not been a very great success; but, of course, we do not like to reduce the rent in the Valuation Roll,—it always looks bad; otherwise I should reduce my own rent, I think.

52,120. And, I presume, Lochiel, that that applies to farms which other proprietors, as well as you, have taken into their own hands in recent years?—That is so; but with the exception of Macleod of Macleod, I do not think many proprietors have taken to sheep farming on the same large scale as I have. I began it at an early age, and it is a subject of interest to me. I happen to be blest with a most able and faithful manager, the most faithful servant a man could possibly have, and some very good shepherds; and I think if it had not been for that, I would not have come through so well as I have.

52,121. Does not the result of your experiments in taking large sheep farms into your hands recently point to the advisability of in future dividing these farms into smaller holdings?—Well, no, I cannot say that with regard to sheep farms. I find that when you asked me first of all about the profits on sheep farming, I ought to have said that although I have not found it profitable as a farmer, I have as a proprietor. If these farms which I now have in hand had been divided into five or six farms, they would still have been large farms, and I know quite well that at the end of every break in the leases I should have been expected to do something to the buildings. The buildings cost a very great deal in repair; the fanks fall into disuse; very often farmers like to have more sheep draining done than perhaps the proprietor cares to effect; and there are all sorts of improvements. Fencing is now a very prominent feature in sheep farming. All these things would be made matter of bargain in renewing leases with tenants. I got rid of all that, because I simply keep up the buildings required for the shepherd, and where a fank tumbles down, of course it is replaced; but the outlay is not at all heavy, and it is therein that I reap the benefit,—not as a farmer but as a proprietor, in having very few houses to look after.

Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

52,122. But the question of erecting suitable buildings for small holdings is only a matter of accounting, and if that difficulty could be got over, I think you would be disposed to admit that it would be advisable to have many of the larger class of farms divided into smaller holdings?—I was referring just now not to £30 holdings, but to farms of moderate size. Of course, the case of £30 holdings is quite a different matter, because there the idea is that the house and buildings should be erected and maintained by the tenant, he getting compensation on leaving. Then, of course, the proprietor would lose nothing; he would not be liable for the buildings, which would be kept up by the tenants, and the rent would, I presume, be fixed in accordance with that principle. The proprietor would not be the loser to the same extent; the crofters on my estate really cost me very little indeed, because they keep their own houses in order.

52,123. I am not confining myself to holdings within the limit of £30; by small holdings, I mean farms of £50, £60, up to £100, and I think you indicated in the statement with which you favoured the Commission to-day that there was a much greater probability of a man succeeding in a farm of that sort, where he wrought himself with the assistance of his family, than a man with a larger holding would have?—I said the man was more willing to take a farm even when prices were low and there was not much chance of his getting any great return from it, on account of the smaller capital required to enter upon it.

52,124. In your note to the Report of Lord Napier's Commission, you submitted some scheme for advancing money to crofters, to enable them to take enlarged holdings, but, I think, you made it a condition there that they should hold the land on lease, a thirty years' lease?—Yes, I think so.

52,125. You say on p. 132 'That the new tenants 'shall be taken from the estate belonging to the 'proprietor, and that their holdings, if vacated, shall be 'partitioned among or apportioned among or allotted 'to the remaining crofters in the same township; that 'leases of thirty years be granted to the tenants in a 'new township, and that their holdings shall be of not 'less value than £30 yearly rent,' and then you go on to propose a scheme of advancing £600 to enable crofters to acquire such holdings, £500 of which should be provided by the State, and the remaining £100 by the tenant?—Yes.

52,126. You accompany that suggestion with the precaution that the free choice of the tenants should be left to the landlord himself?—Yes.

52,127. Now, Lochiel, is not that condition occasionally attended with some disadvantages, allowing the landlord to have the sole choice of the tenants?—Well, I think, as I said before, that if the landlord is made responsible for the punctual payment of the liabilities of the tenant, he must have a voice in the selection. There might be disadvantages in that, and I daresay there are; there are a great many disadvantages, I am afraid, in any scheme connected with the establishment of crofters in such places.

52,128. I do not for a moment suggest that you would do it yourself, Lochiel, but have you never known a case where a landlord wished to get rid of a tenant for political reasons, or refused to give him land because he did not agree with him in politics?—But he need not agree with him by giving him land on his estate.

52,129. Have you never known of a case where a landlord wished to get rid of a tenant?—I never knew of a case, but I have heard of it—I never heard of a case, but I have no doubt that there are cases. Is that in connection with new holdings?

52,130. I will put the question to you in this way. Giving the landlord the sole choice of a tenant is occasionally attended with some disadvantages. He would very naturally prefer a man who would agree with him on political and social questions, is not that

so in many cases?—Not in this case, I think, because suppose the man were a Conservative: if he took away a Conservative tenant from an existing township and put him on another township, the man would still be a Conservative and have his vote, and I do not see how the landlord could gain by it. I quite admit it is possible for favour to be shown to persons who share your own political views, in the same way that people who are Conservatives may sometimes be found to employ Conservative bakers and butchers, and Liberals to employ Liberal bakers and butchers; but in this case I don't see how it would apply.

52,131. I will illustrate the point in this manner. I have myself seen a letter from the Commissioner on a certain large estate in Scotland, written in reply to an application for a farm, containing these words: '—I think it right to add that his Grace will not give 'a farm to a man who is a Radical in politics.' I have seen that letter myself, and I can tell you privately, Lochiel, who the letter came from?—Thank you, but I don't want to know. I could make several guesses about that, but if you will allow me to say so, I quite admit all that is possible, but I do not see how it applies in the case of my proposal in the memorandum, to shift a Conservative voter from one township to another, because he would retain his vote, and have still the same influence as before; and whether he voted in one place or in another would not matter.

52,132. Passing now from that point to the question of the advance of money to crofters to enable them to stock their holdings: you are aware, no doubt, that the State has in past years and very recently advanced very considerable sums of money for purposes of emigration, and I have no doubt you will also admit that those schemes have sometimes been of very questionable success, if not attended with disastrous failure?—I have not gone into the question of disastrous failures, but I am aware that emigration schemes have been promoted by the aid of Government money.

52,133. Now, if so much money has been employed in sending people out of the country, don't you think that it might with advantage be employed to keep them in the country, by some well-devised scheme?—I decidedly think so, and I think that very likely there would not be any difficulty in regard to borrowing money on favourable terms for the purpose of creating new holdings. But, as I said before, that can only affect improvements in buildings, and I am afraid it cannot affect stock. I draw a great distinction between permanent improvements which remain in the land and have a value which can be taken possession of by a creditor, and stock which may be sold off by the tenant, or may be carried off by disease; you cannot make stock into a good security.

52,134. But supposing a scheme were devised to enable crofters to purchase their crofts, would your objections then apply?—That would not get over the difficulty about the stock, would it? I am all in favour of purchasing; I am all in favour of having terminable payments, with the result of the whole croft being handed over at the end of the thirty or thirty-five years to the tenant; but I cannot get over the difficulty of the stock.

52,135. Your objection there applies under the law as it at present stands; but supposing some change in the law were devised by which a crofter could hypothecate his stock in part security for the redemption of a loan, would you then be disposed to welcome the change?—If that can be done, my difficulty vanishes, but I do not see how any law could possibly be passed by which that arrangement could be brought into force. Who is to look after the stock? How can you hypothecate stock which may be here to-day and away to-morrow? How can you prevent a man from selling more than the proper cast of his sheep we will say every year, or mortgaging his stock privately, or even disposing of it? How can you prevent the stock dying from disease, or from the effects of a long and coarse winter?

52,136. I merely wish to get your opinion on the point?—I wish I could give a favourable opinion, but I cannot honestly. Inverness. — Donald Cameron.

52,137. You do not believe in giving money as an absolute gift?—I believe very much in it; I have strong faith in that. I do not know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer would look at it in the same light, however.

52,138. Don't you think that would have a tendency to pauperise the crofters?—I don't think it is worth discussing; it is so unlikely that I hardly think it is worth discussing as a matter of possibility.

52,139. The matter was suggested by yourself in the previous part of your examination, and that is why I referred to it.—Yes, that is so, but I am afraid that gifts of that kind are not likely to come from Government.

52,140. I don't think any evictions took place on your property in your time?—No.

52,141. You never evicted any tenant?—No.

52,142. You are no doubt aware, Lochiel, that considerable discontent exists among the crofters and other small tenants in the Highlands at this moment; have you any remedy to suggest by which this discontent could be removed?—One of the honourable Commissioners was asking me a question just now about the condition of the people in Lochaber, and suggested that it must be a paradise, or an Elysium. That perhaps may be somewhat of an exaggeration, but still the people there are in a very comfortable position; what I would like to see is other parts of the Highlands equally comfortable, and made, if possible, more like the crofters and others with us; and I think that can be done only in two ways, independently of this land question. One is, by giving them an opportunity of finding labour,—providing labour for them, and good wages. The other is by consolidating crofts, so as to make them a little larger; and then the only difficulty which would remain would be with regard to the cottars and squatters. Cottars and squatters, so far as my observation went, in Skye and in the Lewis, constitute the great difficulty of the problem in the Highlands, and I am sure I do not know how I can help you about them; I don't know what can be done with them. Of course, the more you can open up the country by means of railways, and thus induce them to go to the south or to other places where they get a chance, the better it will be for them. Bringing work to their doors by means of railways would do them good. Leaving out of view the land question, that is the only way in which you can improve the condition of the poor people in the Highlands,—by giving them an opportunity of earning good wages for their labour, and that can be done by developing the country by means of railway communication.

52,143. In your note to Lord Napier's Commission Report, you use these words, and the sentiment embodied in it does you credit:—'The end of a good 'proprietor in managing his estate is not simply to 'increase its rental, but to add to the prosperity of 'his tenantry, to augment their means, and to raise 'their social status.' I suppose you still adhere to that opinion?—Yes.

52,144. As forming the proper basis to come to an agreement between landlord and tenant?—Certainly.

52,145. You are the bearer of a historic name, Lochiel, and in Inverness here we are always in the habit of associating that name with everything that is brave and chivalrous. Keeping that in view, may I ask you this question; would you be disposed to welcome any well-devised scheme whereby not only your estate, but other estates in the Highlands, might be peopled with a more numerous tenantry than at present, provided it could be done with advantage to themselves and without great detriment to the landlords?—I would be disposed to welcome any scheme which I was convinced would be really beneficial to the people themselves, and which could be carried out without injustice not only to proprietors but to other classes of the community. As I have mentioned in my state-

Inverness. Donald Cameron.

ment, I have very great sympathy with the people who want land and who cannot get land; but there are difficulties in the way of giving people land who are, you may say, penniless, which it is impossible to overlook. There is no use going about saying this ought to be done, and that ought to be done, and I would like to see this done, and I would like to see the other thing done: if you know yourself from your own experience that there are difficulties in the way which are, I won't say insurmountable, but very difficult to surmount, those difficulties must be faced; and it was with the view, or in the hope, that I might in some humble way make some suggestion to the Commission that I came here to-day. But I admit that I have not advanced myself much,—I confess I do not see my way to get over the difficulty about the stocking: but I am willing to answer any more questions or suggestions. I wish very much that I could fall in with your views.

52,146. *Mr Macleod.*—I think in answer to a question by Mr Sutherland you stated that you never took the view that this Commission should not be recognised?—No, I always thought it should; that was my own opinion.

52,147. But I think you did say that "there was a great deal to be said in favour of that course?"—I really do not remember the exact words I used, but I am perfectly certain that my opinion was what I have stated.

52,148. These are the words that you used, as reported in the public prints. I do not ask whether you modify that opinion or not, but I will call your attention to another statement that was made by you upon the same occasion. You there say that "no good 'can be derived from breaking up or dividing these 'farms and forests among the poorest class in our com-'munity." Are you still of that opinion?—The whole bulk of my opinion is that while I am anxious that the crofters and cottars should be benefited, I think there are difficulties in the way: and saying that is practically the same as what you have quoted,—'no 'good.'

52,149. You say "no good" can be derived from breaking up and dividing these farms. With regard to the question of stocking, which I take it is one of your chief difficulties for dividing the large sheep runs that we have in the Highlands, I don't know whether you are aware that in our Colonies there are methods taken by which stock can be hypothecated for advances?—Where?

52,150. In some of our Colonies?—Yes, I understand that that prevails where the land and the stock belong to the same person.

52,151. Admitted that, take the case of a farm where it would be possible to arrange the sheep stock so that it could be held in common, don't you think that in a case like that it would be possible to put a particular mark upon the sheep, and that by legislation it could be made illegal for the tenants to remove any of the stock except at stated times and in certain numbers?—Well, if you were to find the skin of a sheep with a mark upon him, I am afraid that would not be much satisfaction to the person who lent the money,—the skin instead of the sheep. What I mean is that the sheep might die.

52,152. To that extent, of course, it would not be as good a security as houses or other improvements of that kind, but you will admit that the difficulty might be got over so long as the sheep is alive?—It would involve a system of branding which would be somewhat inconvenient for a large number of small holdings.

52,153. But I am assuming that the sheep stock of these holdings would be held in common?—Yes.

52,154. I do not see that there would be any greater difficulty in marking sheep in the way I have indicated than there is in any large farmer at the present time distinguishing his sheep from his neighbour's?—It might possibly be worked in that way, but I doubt whether it would not involve more trouble and more expense than perhaps you contemplate. It would require a Government official to mark the sheep,—it would be like branding a cask of herring.

Inverness. Donald Cameron.

52,155. It would be quite possible to devise some machinery,—I don't say a Government official, but some machinery for the purpose I have indicated?—Yes, you could mark the sheep, but I don't know how you would prevent them from being sold at the wrong time, and at a wrong age.

52,156. But if you made that an offence, you would have every security and precaution?—Well, I am afraid you would increase the number of offences very largely.

52,157. I am sorry to hear you expressing a poor opinion of the people.—I am not expressing a poor opinion; but if a man should have some sheep ready to be sold, and another one that is too young, he may think I will just sell it along with those; I don't think it is any great crime; he may think he will make it up by keeping a lamb or two the next year. But I do not regard it as a system which any practical man would consider as feasible.

52,158. There was a statement made before the Napier Commission by an official very high in the confidence of the Sutherland estate management, in which he expressed himself in favour of some such scheme as I have indicated?—Yes, I remember that.

52,159. He, I think, was a practical man?—Yes, but I remember discussing that with Lord Napier and the other members of that Commission, and we came to the conclusion that it was not feasible in this country. Lord Napier himself took a great interest in the subject, and we discussed it very fully among ourselves. Of course, I could not without referring to my notes give you the reasons for the conclusions we arrived at, but I know that with every disposition to view that gentleman's proposal favourably, we found that it was unworkable in this country, where the land and the stock did not belong to the same individual.

52,160. I only referred to it to-day because you appeared to think that the proposal had not been made by any practical man?—Yes, I recollect it perfectly.

52,161. Then, also in regard to this matter of stocking, you stated that you did not think it was worth considering the possibility of obtaining an absolute gift from the Exchequer of a certain sum to aid in the direction in which this inquiry points. Might I point to the case of a very rich corporation in our midst, the Highland Railway Coy., which has received an absolute gift of £45,000 for the extension of a railway. Might it not be that Parliament, in its wisdom, might also see its way to give some assistance towards re-peopling those farms which admittedly are unlettable at the present time?—Yes, but I think, as I already stated, that Parliament would be more willing to deal liberally in regard to every other feature in the scheme, with the exception of the stock. I think Parliament would say: in order to form a holding, you require so much capital; stock forms one item, improvements and buildings form another item. We, Parliament, will consent to assist you in regard to permanent buildings, but we cannot give the man both his stock-in-trade and his farm, besides being at the expense of putting up the buildings. I think I said in my statement that that would involve a very important principle, and might not other poor people who live in towns come to Parliament also for their stock-in-trade. I may say that I have conversed with many gentlemen whose political opinions I do not share,—who are called advanced Liberals or extreme Radicals, and I have not yet met any one who favoured the idea, even amongst the extremest of them.

52,162. Of course, it has to be borne in view that we have been discussing the poorest classes of the community,—those who are utterly unable to help themselves; but there are a number of men who state that they are prepared to take holdings and that they have the necessary capital for doing so. That, at any rate, has been the evidence that has been laid before

us. Whilst there is undoubtedly a very large class who could not take advantage of small holdings, supposing these were placed at their disposal, there is also a considerable number who could do so. In the case of these people, who are able to stock themselves, you think there would be no difficulty?—No, but I am afraid the number is more limited than is commonly supposed; the people who have money in the 'old stocking' are not very numerous throughout the districts with which I am familiar. We must look at the thing perhaps a little outside of the point from which you and I are apt to regard it. We are Highlanders, and we are naturally anxious that money, whether for a railway, or to stock holdings, should be brought into this country; and we are apt to sympathise with and commiserate people who are poor, and wish that they should be raised to a better position: but, of course, there are other members of the community who are not Highlanders, and we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that when you come to deal with this sort of question in Parliament, you will find the representatives of the larger towns saying that within their municipal boundaries there are a vast number of poor people who really have perhaps no home to go to, and who don't know where to find their next meal,—these people, it may be urged, are in even a worse position than our people. You may depend upon it that these gentlemen will draw public attention to the wants of their own communities; and that is why I think perhaps I am not doing an ill service to a Commission like this sitting in public and occupying a very responsible position, when I call their attention to what is sure to be said on the other side. It would certainly be said that if you go to Parliament and get money to help to provide a stock-in-trade, that would form a precedent for doing the same in other cases.

52,163. But don't you think it would weigh very much with those representatives of other communities, that instead of sending our people to compete with them in towns, we were endeavouring to keep them at home, and promote trade and industry among ourselves?—Yes, but I scarcely think that would be a compensating advantage.

52,164. What I was directing your attention to in my previous question was the fact that there are undoubtedly a certain number of individuals who have come before us on their own behalf and on behalf of others, who have stated that they are prepared to stock holdings of a suitable description for small tenants, and to put up the necessary buildings. In their case, of course, you would have no difficulty?—No, the difficulty would disappear. I am very glad to hear that that is so. I mentioned in my statement that I was not aware what evidence had been brought before you, and I am delighted to hear what you now tell me. Before the Napier Commission I am sorry to say that we found the case very different; I think almost the preponderating evidence was to the effect that there was no money among the people wherewith to stock land.

52,165. Then as I understand your position, you would not be opposed to any legislation which would make it more easy for those who are in a position to take up these holdings with money of their own,—you would rather favour legislation of that character?—Yes, I would favour any legislation which I was convinced would do the crofter good, and could be effected without injuring any other classes in the community.

52,166. In the calculations which you stated were contained in your memorandum,—we need not refer to them particularly now, but you were taking, of course, what you would consider the maximum holding?—I took the £30 holding, as that seems to be the popular one.

52,167. Well, that is the maximum crofter holding at the present time?—Yes.

52,168. That being the case, your figures deal with the most difficult case that you could put before us?—But I was under the impression that a £30 holding was the minimum that is aimed at, the holding that is considered most advisable.

52,169. But, of course, you can quite imagine circumstances where a man would be paying a lower rent than £30, and yet have a self-sustaining holding?—No, if new holdings are created, I did not contemplate a new holding on a farm or forest, of less than £30 of rent.

52,170. I need not ask you then if you are in favour of the system which obtains on your own estate, of crofter holdings of £6,—you think them too small?—Too small to be self-sustaining, certainly; but such a crofter on my estate lives by means of labour outside his croft.

52,171. Then you would be in favour of the same size of crofts for crofters who would live partly by fishing?—Yes, that would work well enough, I think; certainly where there is any labour obtainable, whether fishing, or working on a railway, or any other local labour, a crofter can do with a small croft, but if you put him in a remote glen, he must have a self-supporting croft, and I think a £30 holding is little enough, in that view.

52,172. Supposing the question of stock and buildings were got over, what, in your opinion, is the minimum rent that should be paid for a small pastoral farm?—I think the minimum rent should be double that; but there is no use suggesting the minimum rent, because if you have that difficulty with a £30 holding, you would have double the difficulty with a £60 holding.

52,173. In your memorandum, you favour improving leases of considerable duration?—Yes, thirty years' duration.

52,174. I suppose that I may take it that after the experience we have had of the working of the Crofters Act in the Highlands, you would be quite in favour of the same tenure as is laid down in that Act, for any crofter holdings that might be contemplated?—I think that if the fair rent is fixed, everything else would be laid down absolutely, and no question would arise until the lease came to an end, if it was a lease; but what I am most in favour of is that these holdings should be created, the land reclaimed and trenched, and the buildings erected, if it is to be done at all, by a loan guaranteed by Government, terminable in so many years, after which the land would be the property of the crofter tenant.

52,175. You are, in fact, in favour of peasant proprietorship?—Yes, done in that way.

52,176. *The Chairman.*—There is one other matter to which I would like to direct your attention, and on which I would like to get your opinion if you can give us it. There was a very important proposal made by a very eminent public man in the year 1887; his suggestions appeared in the *Scottish Highlander* of 21st July of that year, and the material parts of the proposal were as follows:—That the Crofters Commission should report from time to time, and declare to be 'congested districts' any townships or groups of townships, or any parish in any of the above named counties [the counties with which we are dealing], in which in consequence of over-population, coupled with the absence of other suitable means of earning a livelihood, the land at present occupied by crofters and cottars is generally insufficient to secure to them a satisfactory subsistence. [I omit everything except what is material to the present inquiry]. In the next place, the Commission are directed to examine into the accuracy of the statement contained in the application, and if satisfied of its truth, and especially (first), that the applicant is willing and able to pay a fair rent, (second), that he is able properly to cultivate the arable land, and stock the pasture land for which he has applied, (third), that the applicant and his family may be expected to derive a fair subsistence from the cultivation of the land applied for, the Commissioners may assign to the applicant a holding on lands purchased by them as hereafter provided at a fair rent, and on such terms and conditions as they may think just. The new holdings are to be not less

Inverness. Donald Cameron.

than 12 nor more than 50 acres arable, with proportionate pasture; the fair rent to be 4 per cent. on the apportioned cost of the holding, and after forty-nine years, the holding to become the property of the tenant subject to certain conditions. To carry out these proposals, the further suggestion is that the Treasury be authorised to issue to the Commission a sum not exceeding £1,000,000 sterling, in payment of estates purchased under the preceding proposals, such sum to bear interest at the rate of 3½ per cent., and to be repaid by a sinking fund in forty-nine years. Now, I daresay you have had your attention called to these proposals before,—probably you noticed them at the time; and they found their way into the public prints in 1887. Do these proposals meet with your approval?—I may say that my attention had not been drawn to these proposals before, but I quite follow them from your reading. They are most excellent proposals, no doubt, but I am afraid the limitations imposed are so great as to render the success of the experiment problematical. The limitations there are very considerable, and I doubt whether any crofter could take advantage of the proposals, hampered by these conditions. It appears to me that these limitations are more strict than those contained in the Act which was passed to enable the Crofters Commission to assign land on application by tenants.

52,177. There is no doubt that these limitations are to some extent taken from the Crofters Act, and to some extent go further?—Yes; I doubt if they would be workable.

52,178. You do not think that is a scheme which would be likely to solve the difficulty which exists?—No, I think not. I think the limitations are too considerable. In the statement which I have made, I lay down certain conditions, but they are not so strict as those. I rather incline to adhere to my own conditions.

52,179. You know, of course, to whom I refer?—No, I do not. [*Reads name on slip handed by Chairman*]. I should hardly regard him as an authority on the subject.

52,180. I said a very eminent public man. May I ask whether you were in Parliament in 1885?—I left in the spring of that year; I left before the General Election which took place in November 1885, on the extension of the Franchise.

52,181. There was a Crofters Bill in 1885, which did not become an Act, and I rather think it contained a proposal for advancing money to purchase stock for new holdings, on the security of the land. Do you recollect that Bill?—No; whose name was on the back of it?

52,182. It was a Government Bill; I think it was introduced by the present Secretary for Scotland?—I do not remember about it.

52,183. *Mr Sutherland.*—With reference to the advancing of money to purchase stock, if the Chairman's impression is correct about this Bill, is it not evident that the Lord Advocate, speaking for the Government of the day, thought the security of tenure that was to be given to the crofter was a sufficient security for the advance of money to him?—I take that for granted, or he would not have introduced the Bill.

52,184. But is the situation not changed now, by the fixity and security of tenure which the crofter enjoys under the Crofters Act?—No, I don't think that makes much difference.

52,185. You are, of course, familiar with the tenure of land in Australia?—No, I am not.

52,186. Are you aware that most of the land in Australia is held on long lease, subject to a land tax?—My attention was called to-day to the statement made before Lord Napier's Commission by a certain witness, and I remember perfectly well that it was stated at that time that the difference between that country and this was that there the owner of the land was also the owner of the stock, which made the matter of an advance easier to deal with.

52,187. But you are aware that under the Act of 1886, the crofter is made to a certain extent the proprietor of his land?—Well, no; there are conditions which he must fulfil.

Inverness. Donald Cameron.

52,188. But the conditions being fulfilled, his security is permanent,—he is always there?—His security is better, no doubt, but I doubt whether a money-lender would look upon him in the same light as an absolute owner. He is a conditional owner, not an absolute owner.

52,189. But he is in a better position as a subject for security than he was before the passing of the Act?—If he has carried out improvements which are available,—*e.g.*, if he has built a house which the landlord is responsible for taking over at valuation; if he has left any permanent improvement on the place, which cannot be carried away, then, of course, his security is better.

52,190. But a crofter having undertaken a responsibility would have less reason to make himself scarce now, if he were called upon to meet that responsibility, than formerly?—Oh, no; I don't think so. If a man wishes to make himself scarce, he will make himself scarce, and he won't care whether he has got fixity of tenure or not.

52,191. Is the holding not worth a great deal more to him now than before?—No, only in respect of any permanent improvements. That is the only additional security you have.

52,192. I am not exactly sure about the position of the stock-holder in Australia, whether he is also owner of the land; I rather think he is a leaseholder; of course, there are a great many men who are both owners and occupiers?—There are two classes of stock-owners in Australia,—there are what are called squatters, and there are free selectors. As far as I can make out, squatters are the people who have the largest holdings.

52,193. And they hold on lease, subject to a land-tax?—They hold on lease, and the others are owners of the land; I don't know which is which, but one is the owner of the land, and the other is a leaseholder.

52,194. And, as a matter of fact, there is no difference made between them as regards advances?—I cannot say as to that.

52,195. Can you give us the acreage of the land that is at present in your own occupation on your estate?—Yes, I daresay I could.

52,196. I only want an approximate idea?—I should think perhaps 80,000 acres.

52,197. Part of it is sheep run, and part deer forest?—No, it is under sheep. I should think I may have more than 80,000,—I never can quite make up the acreage, because if I add the acreage under deer and the acreage under sheep I get a great deal more than is given in the blue-book for the whole estate altogether. I always reckon it as so many sheep to the acre, and multiplying that by the number of sheep gives me the acreage.

52,198. And also so many deer to the acre?—No, I cannot say as to that.

52,199. I was going to ask you a question about part of the forest known as Achnasaul on Loch-Arkaig; is it the fact that some of your sheep are wintered there?—Yes, some of my gimmers go there.

52,200. So that land which is devoted to deer does winter sheep?—It does winter two-year old sheep, but I don't think it would be worth anything to any one else in the community.

52,201. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—About the condition of the crofters in your district, Lochiel, I described them as being in a kind of Elysium, and you somewhat objected to that. Now, what is your own description of it?—No, I don't object to it; I am rather pleased to hear it.

52,202. But it is very important, I think, to get your own description of their condition, and I would like to get it on record in this Commission. I will just read what you say about their condition:—'In 'short, the whole appearance of the country is changed 'so much that, on this side of the Atlantic, I hardly 'think any other rural parish can furnish an example

'to be at all compared with what has been done in 'so short a time.' Then you say further:—'The 'crofter therefore in this district is in a far more 'favourable position than an ordinary agricultural 'labourer in the south, because while receiving equal, 'and in many cases higher wages, he has a home 'to fall back upon, which supplies him with most of the 'necessaries of life—in case of loss of employment or 'temporary illness. The labourer in the south has to 'buy almost everything he requires,—milk, potatoes, 'and coals. The crofter here has almost always two, 'sometimes four, or even six cows: he grows corn and 'potatoes, and gets in most parts of this district his firing 'for the trouble of cutting, drying, and stacking his 'peats.' Further you go on to say:—'As in the parallel 'case of the agricultural labourer, the crofter has a 'home and small farm to fall back on in the event of 'temporary misfortune. Though he may not get 'the same high rate of wages, he need not fear loss 'of employment through bad times (during the 'long depression in trade in the last decade, wages 'remained as high here as ever); nor can he be 'affected by a strike, nor by many other circum-'stances which touch the welfare of operatives in 'large towns.' Now, that being the condition of the crofters there, there is no doubt that if there was room to extend the system it would be most beneficial. May I ask you whether you do not think it is probable that there would be even more work of that description in the future than there has been hitherto? Will not the introduction of the railway to Fort William first of all, increase the work that will be available to crofters?—Yes, obviously: it has done so already, and will do so in future.

52,203. And there is the prospect of the railway being extended to Mallaig?—I hope so.

52,204. So that if room could be found for the people on the land, there is every reason to place them there, because those that are there are so very happy and prosperous?—Yes.

52,205. I might refer also to the way in which crofters respond to any kindness that is shown to them. In a letter which you quote here from the factor who managed the estate before your time, Mr Bett, he says:—'When I took over the management 'from Mr Belford, there was a large arrear due by 'the crofters,—so far as I can recollect, from £2000 'to £3000, but nearer the latter than the former 'sum. I collected as much of it as I could, but 'that was not much, and as it was felt that while 'this arrear hung about the crofters' necks they 'would make no effort to better themselves, I was 'authorised to draw my pen through the whole sum 'outstanding, and begin on a clean sheet. This very 'generous act had a most beneficial effect, for during 'the remaining ten years of my factorship, there was 'not a farthing of arrears on the estate.' So that crofters, when they meet with any kindness, do respond; and in this case, for ten years, although it is not stated that they got any reduction, they paid the full rents, and that in very bad times?—Yes, that is so.

52,206. There is therefore every reason to believe that when crofters are treated in a generous manner, they will respond. I was rather struck, however, with the nature of the generosity in this case. The factor calls it a very generous act; and he afterwards says:—'I collected as much as I could.'—It was his duty to do so, I suppose.

52,207. Quite so; but the curious point is that he calls it a very generous act to cancel what he could not collect?—Then he was generous with other people's money: it was not his money, but my father's.

52,208. It rather struck me as a curiosity, and your comment upon it is:—'The whole incident 'appears equally creditable to the proprietor, factor, 'and tenants;' and the part of the factor is that as he could not collect more of the arrears——?—No, excuse me; allow me one word. What I meant was that the factor recommended that course to my father; and I say it was very creditable to him to take that view; to give that sound and wise advice to the proprietor.

52,209. But he collected all he could; what more could he do?—As I said before, that was his duty: he was paid to do it.

52,210. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Reference was made, Lochiel, during your long examination, to the Royal Commission over which Lord Napier presided in the year 1883. I think that you yourself, Lochiel, recommended to Parliament that an Act should be passed on certain lines, for the benefit of the Highland crofters?—Did I? I made a recommendation which has been often quoted to-day, but I do not think I mentioned any Act.

52,211. The Commission as a Commission unanimously recommended that Parliament should pass an Act?—Lord Napier and four of the Commissioners recommended a land scheme, which I and one of the other Commissioners did not see our way to support.

52,212. They recommended, among other things, improving leases?—Yes, that was one of Lord Napier's recommendations.

52,213. And they did not recommend a judicial rent?—No.

52,214. And what Parliament gave effect to was not what the Royal Commission recommended, but what the people wanted; the Act which was passed was not framed upon the lines recommended by the Royal Commission?—I said so in my statement.

52,215. Then I think, Lochiel, that the Commission unanimously recommended that no more land should be given over to deer?—Yes.

52,216. Have you yourself, Lochiel, added to your deer forest area since you made that recommendation?—No, I have not added to my deer forest area, with the exception of a very small bit which is hardly worth talking about; it was a bit that I was obliged to add to the forest.

52,217. According to a return issued by Parliament in 1891, you there stated that you added 4500 acres?—I was going to explain what that was. There was a farmer occupying part of a farm which I once occupied myself,—the farm of Fassifern; and he came to me and said: 'I have got a lease of this 'farm, but times are so bad that I shall have to go, 'or I shall very likely become bankrupt. I cannot 'afford to pay this, unless you agree to take off a 'certain hill' which he mentioned, 'and give me a 'very large reduction of rent.' Just at the same time, the shooting tenant said to me:—'I am very 'sorry, but I cannot stay here unless you give me 'that hill.' The hill referred to was a very bad hill for sheep; it had a wrong exposure for sheep in the lambing season, and unless I had done what I was asked to do, I should have lost an excellent shooting tenant, and my farmer, according to his own showing, would have had to go bankrupt. Therefore, I regarded that case as an exceptional one.

52,218. Perhaps you are also aware from the return I have quoted, that proprietors of deer forests, yourself included, have added a total 664,950 acres to the land under deer?—No; I saw the return, but I am not aware that it is so. I think Mr Malcolm intends to deal with these figures; I have not gone into them.

52,219. You will pardon me if I say that we do not accept Mr Malcolm or his figures as an authority on these matters?—Still less then would you accept me; I do not pretend to be an authority on the matter.

52,220. I am aware that Mr Malcolm in another place said that only about 140,000 acres were added; but this return says that 664,000 acres were added between the time that Lord Napier's Commission recommended that Parliament should put a stop to extension of deer forests, in 1883 and 1891. Now, I should like to refer to another matter which has been mentioned two or three times already,—the meeting of Highland landlords which was held about the time when this present Royal Commission was appointed. Is it not the fact, Lochiel,—and it is only right that you should get the full credit of it in the most

Inverness. Donald Cameron.

public manner,—that you endeavoured personally and used your influence to get the Highland proprietors generally to come before this Royal Commission with evidence, with the view of assisting this inquiry?—Yes, that is so, and I found them quite willing to do so.

52,221. You were willing, but is it not the fact that your opinion in regard to that matter was over-ruled by that of the majority?—No, precisely the contrary; they took my opinion and that of The Mackintosh, which was quoted by one of the Commissioners a short time ago.

52,222. Now, I have a question to ask with regard to the making of the Caledonian Canal. Could you fix the date when the works began?—Somewhere about the beginning of the century.

52,223. Was it in the year 1803, as far as you know?—I will take it from you.

52,224. That the works did not begin till the year 1803?—I will take it from you.

52,225. Thank you. Now, have you seen a book written in the year 1806, by Sheriff Brown of Fort-William,—a book of thirty pages?—No.

52,226. Are you aware of the existence of such a book?—No.

52,227. The book is 'Strictures and Remarks on 'the Earl of Selkirk's Observations on the present 'condition of the Highlands of Scotland,' and it is stated in that book that in the year 1801, a Mr George Denoon carried two cargoes of emigrants from Fort-William to Pictou. Are you aware of that fact?—No, I was not aware of it.

52,228. And that the same author says later on that in the year 1802, four ships went from Fort-William, and in the year 1803 two more. Now the book was written in 1806; will you accept the statements made by Sheriff Brown in that book in 1806, as statements of fact?—I don't know, I am sure; I have no doubt that ships did leave with emigrants, but I don't know why I should be called on to accept Sheriff Brown, or any other Sheriff, who may have lived in 1806. It is a long time ago, and he may have been misinformed. But I should be delighted to answer any questions addressed to myself.

52,229. Did you not state to the Crofters Commission that the people of Glen-Dessary and Loch-Arkaigside left their holdings with the view of getting employment on the Canal?—There has been some misunderstanding about these removals from Loch-Arkaigside. There is no doubt that the people were removed,—that is absolutely undisputed; but what I said was that a large proportion of them were moved to Corpach and Banavie at the time of the formation of the Caledonian Canal. That statement I adhere to. I heard it from my father, who heard it from his father; and not only that, but I heard the same from old people who are now dead, but who told me with their own lips that their people came from Loch-Arkaigside. I refer to Angus Macphee who lived in Corpach, and Ewen Cameron who also lived in Corpach, and only died four or five years ago. I have often had talks with these crofters, and they have told me a great deal about their old traditions and habits. There is no doubt, whatever, that these people were removed from Glen-Dessary and Loch-Arkaigside, and although some may have emigrated, others got lands in Corpach and Banavie. Nay, a large portion of my examination was in reference to these very people, and the manner in which they built houses and reclaimed the land. It is a truism.

52,230. The reason why I have referred to the matter is that Sheriff Brown speaks of the clearances and of a large number of ships leaving Fort-William with emigrants for the Colonies, three years before the Caledonian Canal Works were begun, while you yourself state that they were removed in order that they might get employment at the Canal Works?—That makes me rather glad that I did not accept Sheriff Brown's statements unreservedly.

52,231. You know Loch-Arkaigside very well?—Yes.

52,232. Is it not a most suitable place for such holdings?—No, most unsuitable.

52,233. Were the tenants who were there not in very comfortable circumstances?—I should think not,—not compared with my crofters at present.

52,234. Is it a fact within your knowledge that Mary Mackellar, the bardess, stated above her signature in the *Celtic Magazine* that the whole of these people had a heavy stock of first-class cattle?—I have the greatest possible respect for Mrs Mary Mackellar, but she was not of an age to speak from personal knowledge of these things. She was not as old as myself, I believe.

52,235. Do you know the two Moys?—I know one Moy.

52,236. Are you aware that these Moys were cleared in the year 1790? Are you acquainted with Mr Alexander Mackenzie's history of the Camerons?—Yes.

52,237. Do you know the two tables at the end, one giving the names of the tenants,—in fact, a copy of the rent roll, an estate document?—Yes.

52,238–39. There it is stated that in the Moys there were twelve Macinneses and four Camerons; is that the fact?—I have no doubt of it.

52,240. How many are there to-day?—There is one Mr Macmillan.

52,241. What does he do?—He farms.

52,242. But there were sixteen farmers in the old times. Now, is it not a fact that the rent was raised at the time of the clearances from £57 to £70?—I really cannot tell you that; I have not got the estate books, and the matter was long before my time; it was in my grandfather's time.

52,243. That statement is bound to be correct, is it not, being taken from an estate document?—If it is an estate document I will accept it as correct, but I cannot say from my own knowledge.

52,244. According to that roll there were eight families of the Clan Cameron in Achnasaul; how many families are there to-day? None at all?—None at all.

52,245. And the rent was raised on the clearance from £35 to £100?—That may be.

52,246. At Kinloch-Arkaig how many tenants are there now?—None.

52,247. There were three tenants of the Clan Cameron there, and when they were removed the rent was raised from £13 to £30. How many tenants are in Glen-Dessary to-day?—None.

52,248. There were formerly ten families of Macphees, four of Macmillans, four of the Cameron Clan,—altogether eighteen that were removed, and the rent raised from £90 to £180. Now, that being so, is it not desirable, in your opinion, from the public point of view and in the national interest, that these glens, Glen-Dessary, Loch-Arkaigside, and the various other glens of the Highlands should be peopled with a small tenantry?—Taken from where?

52,249. From any part of the Highlands?—No.

52,250. Would it not be desirable that the land that is now practically waste under deer in these glens——?—That is not under deer.

52,251. Should be made available by Act of Parliament for the people to take up whatever part of the Highlands they may come upon?—No, I do not think so at all.

52,252. In the event of your having a desire to see more tenants in those places, how would you propose to restrict them? How would you select the area from which they should come, if you object to their coming from so wide an area as any part of the Highlands?—I would take the places where it is required; surely that is the obvious way of selecting them. Where you have a congested population, and people in poor circumstances, surely if anything is to be done, that is where you should go.

52,253. Do you know a place called Dochanassie?—No, I do not.

52,254. Am I to understand your position, Lochiel, to be this, that while you are willing that tenants should be taken into these places if declared suitable and available, still you would object to any tenant being taken for one of these holdings on your estate

except parties living on the estate; that is, Lochiel, for the men of Lochiel?—I do not make any distinction between my estate and other estates. I think one condition of any recommendations this Commission may make should be that the migration of crofters should be confined either to parishes, or estates, or to both; I don't think it would work to take crofters from outside,—in fact, I don't think you could get crofters to go from one part of the country to a far distant part, to be planted down among strangers.

52,255. One question more, and I am done. You referred in your evidence in chief to-day to experiments having been tried on other estates, and gave your opinion that they had failed,—I refer to the experiment of creating small holdings?—Yes.

52,256. Did you speak there from personal knowledge?—No, from hearsay.

52,257. Would you be surprised to know that when this Commission visited Barra a few months ago, Mr Ranald Macdonald, as representing Lady Gordon Cathcart, admitted that at her ladyship's request he broke down two large farms, Bentangaval and Garrygal, and divided them among I think thirty-eight small tenants? Mr Macdonald stated that the experiment was a failure at first, so long as he had the control, but immediately the crofters went to the Crofters Commission and got their fair rents fixed, now some years ago, he has been perfectly satisfied with the result of the experiment, and looked upon it as a complete success?—I am delighted to hear it; it is the best thing I have heard to-day, and I hope that will conclude your questions.

RODERICK MACLEAN, Fasnakyle (51)—*examined.*

52,258. *The Chairman.*—You gave evidence before us at Beauly last year, I am told?—Yes.

52,259. And I am informed you have some complaint to make; tell us what it is?—The Royal Commission promised me that they would protect me if there was any spite shown or if I was put out of employment in consequence of anything I might say. They have shown me nothing but spite since ever I was at the Commission, and I have never got any work from the estate, only I got work from a contractor for a while.

52,260. You complain that you cannot get work on the estate?—I could not get my peats out.

52,261. What prevents you? Do you mean to say that you cannot get peats where you got them before?—There is a wire fence about six feet high erected, and I could not get through it.

52,262. Who put up the wire fence?—Mrs Chisholm of Chisholm.

52,263. Are you in the employment of Mrs Chisholm?—Not now.

52,264. Were you in her employment when we took evidence from you at Beauly?—I was on the ground; I was in the employment of Mr Winans, the shooting tenant.

52,265. Not in Mrs Chisholm's employment?—No.

52,266. And since that date, if I gather your meaning correctly, a wire fence has been run along the ground excluding you from peats?—Yes.

52,267. Who put up that wire fence?—It was through Mrs Chisholm of Chisholm.

52,268. *Mr J. B. Grant, factor for Mrs Chisholm.*—Perhaps I may be allowed to explain that the wire fence in question is a fence erected for about six miles to protect the agricultural tenants from inroads of deer. Mr Winans employed a large number of watchers, who did the work rather inefficiently, and on Mrs Chisholm taking over the ground from Mr Winans she determined to erect this fence. As a matter of fact, I had charge of the erection of the fence, and I was quite unaware that Maclean had any peats inside the line. When I found out that he had cut peats there, I asked him to take the peats out. I am not aware that he was in the habit of cutting peats there when he was in Mr Winans's service, and, of course, he never was in Mrs Chisholm's service, though, as a matter of fact, he has been earning Mrs Chisholm's money, because he has been working for the contractor who is working for her.

52,269. *The Chairman.*—Then what you say is that this wire fence was put up to keep out the deer? [*Mr Grant*].—Certainly, to protect the agricultural tenants' crops from the inroads of deer, of which they complained very much in Mr Winans's time.

52,270. And you did not know that this man cut peats? [*Mr Grant*].—I did not, and, in fact, he would have been prevented from cutting peats if I had known. He is not a tenant of Mrs Chisholm's, and has no right to cut peats on her ground.

52,271. And is this place where he was cutting peats intended to be accessible only to Mrs Chisholm's tenants? [*Mr Grant*].—Certainly, I do not know that it is a peat moss,—I have never seen it, but Maclean himself informed me that he had cut peats there, and I asked him to be good enough to take the peats away.

52,272. Failing his getting peats there, where is he to get peats? [*Mr Grant*].—I don't know; we are not under an obligation to give him peats; he is not our tenant.

52,273. Was he ever in Mrs Chisholm's employment? [*Mr Grant*].—I am not aware that he was.

52,274. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you apply to any of the local gamekeepers on The Chisholm estate since you were before the Royal Commission last year? [*Witness*].—Yes, I applied to the whole of them. I was in the employment of the late Chisholm.

52,275. How many gamekeepers did you apply to?—First to the keeper at Fasnakyle, who promised to give me employment as a gillie. I went then to Sir John, the shooting tenant there, and he told me that he could not deal with the matter till the factor came up; and I never heard any word since.

52,276. Did any of the gamekeepers except the one you spoke of promise you work?—Yes, there is another in Glen-Cannich, Macgillivray; he promised me work.

52,277. Did you get the work that was promised?—I did not get any work, though I applied to them all.

52,278. You have lived all your life on The Chisholm estate?—Not all my life, but I was born and brought up on The Chisholm estate; my father paid rent to them for thirty-four years.

52,279. And do people from other estates get employment on The Chisholm estate as gillies?—There are twenty-four, I think, on this part of The Chisholm estate from other parts; and only nine belong to our own district.

52,280. What parts do these twenty-four come from?—Some of them from the Isle of Skye and from Lochbroom and Lochalsh.

52,281. Did you ascertain some time ago that you would not get employment on the estate?—Yes: the forester told my wife that I made the devil of myself to go to the Commission; that is the word he used; when I would be clear of Mr Winans' service I would not get a day's work on the estate.

52,282. Who said this to your wife?—The forester. [*The Chairman.*—Was that statement made in your presence?—No, my lord, it was told to my wife.]

52,283. Are you perfectly satisfied in your own mind that work is denied to you on the estate because you went before the Royal Commission?—Yes, I am quite satisfied: I tried everything I could do, but could get no work.

52,284. Were you afraid when you came before the Royal Commission of coming forward and stating the condition of the estate?—No, I was not afraid. [*The Chairman.*—You did come, and I see you gave very full evidence.]

52,285. Were you afraid that something would happen to you for coming forward, although you did come forward?—I was told that there was a spite at me.

52,286. Who told you that?—The forester told me; and every one.

52,287. What is his name?—Alexander Macdonald.

52,288. *The Chairman.*—I see that at the previous

Inverness.

Roderick Maclean.

examination I put this question to you. 'Have you 'any reason whatever to anticipate any harm to your- 'self or to your employment from having come here 'and given evidence?—Well, I believe they would 'not be pleased at me to give evidence. But have 'you any reason to anticipate any harm? I could 'not tell you: it might.' Then I add 'Mr Suther- 'land mentioned yesterday, and I was much obliged 'to him, and I beg to repeat it, that there is an Act 'of Parliament passed very recently which affords 'special protection to a person giving evidence in 'similar circumstances to yours.'

52,289. *Mr Macrae.*—How many years have you been using the peat banks from which you are excluded by this fence?—Five years.

52,290. Were others cutting peats there?—Yes, before I went there.

52,291. *Mr Grant.*—Did you come and ask for work when you were out of the employment of Mr Winans?—Yes, I went to Erchless, and you told me that I would get my chance of work like any one else, but that I would not be required as a watcher.

52,292. Did I not say that there would be some work in connection with the river and that you might get into the contractor's service?—No, you did not say anything of that kind.

52,293. But you were in the contractor's service all the summer time?—I was just a little over two months at it.

52,294. And they did not require you at Fasnakyle, when you made application?—No, they did not.

52,295. *Mr Sutherland.*—May I ask you, Mr Grant, if you are aware of the terms of the Act of 1891 alluded to? [*Mr Grant*].—Perfectly, Mr Sutherland. I am rather indignant that such a thing should be said: I have not the slightest desire in the world to keep anybody who likes, from giving evidence.

George Malcolm.

GEORGE MALCOLM, Invergarry (55)—*examined.*

52,296. My lord, I wish, with the permission of the Commissioners, to read first a short statement which has reference exclusively to the estates under my own management, and afterwards to submit a much longer statement with reference to the questions which are being dealt with by the Commission generally. I am sorry that the second statement is so very long, and I am afraid I shall have to bespeak the patience of the Commissioners in listening to it. The statement dealing with the estates of Glengarry and Glenquoich is as follows:—

To The Honourable The Royal Commissioners (Highlands and Islands, 1892).

'Gentlemen,—I have the honour of laying before 'you the following particulars regarding the estates of 'Glengarry and Glenquoich, upon which I have been 'factor for the past thirty years.

'These estates extend to very nearly 100,000 acres, 'of which only about 743 are arable, the remainder 'being pastoral, but consisting largely on the higher 'altitudes of exposed rock. Numerous parts of the 'estates, especially at Glenquoich, attain to more than '3000 feet above sea-level.

'These estates, which were for many generations 'part of the possessions of the Macdonells of Glengarry, 'were acquired by purchase by the late Right Honour- 'able Edward Ellice, in whose family they still are. 'Glenquoich was acquired in 1842 and Glengarry in '1861. The population now is 657, and has varied 'little since the estates were acquired by the present 'owners. Nor has there been much change, beyond 'the conversion of a portion of the pastoral area from 'sheep farm to deer forest, in the use or distribution 'of the land.

'The rental of the estates is £7743, contributed by '87 occupiers. There are two deer forests (one of 'which is in the personal occupation of the present 'proprietrix), one grouse moor, one salmon fishing, six- 'teen sheep farms, and sixty-seven crofters, and other Inverness. 'tenants whose rents do not individually exceed £30. George Malcolm. 'Only one farm is rented as high as £500; the next is 'only £280; the next £165; and there are ten between '£30 and £100. The smaller holdings range from 1s. 'to £30 in rent. Labourers' rents vary from 15s. to '£3 per annum, which includes a good slated cottage, 'garden and potato ground. The whole area of the 'estates, except the small deer forest and Home Farm, 'in the personal occupation of the proprietrix, is in 'the hands of tenants, generally upon lease.

'It has been found that this gradation of size and 'rent of holdings is best suited to the circumstances 'of the estates. Every able-bodied person upon the 'estates has employment within his or her reach, and, 'as a matter of fact, is employed at good and unbroken 'wages. Every crofter keeps a horse, in addition to 'four to six cows, and a varying number of sheep; 'and they all possess first-rate stone and lime and 'slated houses and steadings provided by the estate. 'Their crofts are all provided with sub-dividing fences; 'and their outlying pasture is protected by high 'fences. The possession of a horse and cart is a very 'valuable aid to every crofter here, not only in the 'working of his land, but in enabling him to undertake 'employment in connection with the woods and shoot- 'ings of the estates, by which many of them realise 'from £15 to £40 a year.

'The condition of the tenantry, more especially 'the smaller tenants, and of the people generally 'upon these estates, was not so prosperous when the 'estates came into possession of the present owners 'as it is now, and has been for many years. The 'reason of this is found in a fortunate conjunction 'of circumstances. On one side ability and inclination 'of the late proprietors, the Right Honourable E. 'Ellice and his son Edward Ellice, as well as the 'present proprietrix, Mrs Ellice, to carry out extensive 'estate improvements, and on the other such a con- 'dition of the population, as regards numbers and 'distribution, as best fits them to be the instruments 'and beneficiaries of this. During a residence of 'twenty years or thereby of the late proprietors at 'Glenquoich, a large expenditure upon such works 'of improvement as were practicable in that situation 'was steadily carried on. In the benefits of this the 'local population most largely participated.

'Since 1864 the whole expenditure, both at Glen- 'garry and Glenquoich, has passed through my own 'hands.

'At Glengarry, during the earliest part of this 'period, the capital expenditure largely exceeded 'the income of the estates, but it may be stated 'generally that all the revenue of the estates has been 're-expended upon them in one way or another; and 'that this is still being done by Mrs Ellice, the present 'possessor of the estates. Of this expenditure, by 'far the larger part has been received, and is still 'being received, for services rendered, of course, by 'tradesmen and labourers in the Highlands. During 'these thirty years the proprietors have expended 'in this way no less than £274,749; and have contri- 'buted £28,207 to local rates and taxes.

'Since 1873 a still larger expenditure, considering 'the period, has been made by Lord Burton. This 'may be considered the more remarkable, in respect 'that Lord Burton is not the proprietor but only 'the tenant under a long lease of this place. During 'the past twenty years his expenditure has been '£225,272; or £11,263 a year. This includes rents, 'rates, and taxes and household expenses, but after 'deduction of these a very large amount remains, 'which has been received by the resident and local 'population, as wages and for materials for extensive 'works carried on by his lordship. Not less than '130 miles of roads and paths, 50 miles of fences, 'and many new houses and other buildings have been 'constructed, which have afforded well paid employ- 'ment to a large number of work people, chiefly of 'the crofter class. These works, it may be stated, 'are still going on.

'A few words may be added regarding the general 'management of the estates, and the social condition 'of the people upon them. The factor resides upon 'the estates and among the people all the year round. 'The proprietrix, Mrs Ellice, also lives at Inver- 'garry throughout that period of the year which the 'state of her health permits; and, while there, she is 'in constant touch with the people. The estates are 'provided with a branch bank, post, telegraph, 'and money order offices, and there is a daily post. 'There are three regular places of worship and several 'mission stations in the outlying parts. There are 'six schools planted in the various districts of the 'estates. At Invergarry there is a cottage hospital, 'built and maintained by Mrs Ellice, an estate 'savings bank managed by the minister, school- 'master, and factor; and a lending library. During 'the winter lectures, penny-readings, and such like 'are occasionally conducted in the Invergarry school- 'room. These are generally managed and taken 'part in by persons residing in the village. Prizes 'are given once a year by the proprietrix of the 'estates for the best kept cottages, and for garden 'and other native products, of which an annual 'exhibition is held; and it may be stated that these 'competitions have been most successful in fostering 'and extending a taste among the cottagers for the 'embellishment of their houses, and cultivation of 'flowers and vegetables, &c. The contribution of 'the estates to the rate for the support of the poor 'of the parishes in which these estates are situated 'is 60 per cent. more than is required for the mainten- 'ance of the paupers—a few aged people on the 'estates—whose united drawings from the parish 'rate does not exceed £92. The public allowance to 'these is supplemented from Mrs Ellice's private 'funds. Every family and individual upon the estates 'is well known to, and is visited several times a year 'by Mrs Ellice, and every case of illness or trouble is 'personally attended to by her.

'I think it may be fairly stated that the results of 'this close and constant personal superintendence of 'the affairs of these estates is visible in their con- 'dition, and in the prosperity and contentment of the 'inhabitants. In conclusion, I wish to say, in a 'word, that I feel sure that any occurrence, which 'would disturb the equilibrium of larger and smaller 'tenancies, which has so long obtained here, would 'be a fatal mistake for every class and interest con- 'cerned.'

Respectfully submitted by,
(Signed) Geo. Malcolm.

Invergarry,
31*st August* 1894.

52,297. *The Chairman.*—What do you mean by an 'occurrence which would disturb the equilibrium of 'larger and smaller tenancies?'—Any great enlarge- ment of the smaller tenancies, or on the other hand, any great extension of the larger ones. We think that we have at present the proper gradation of tenancies.

52,298. What is the subsisting gradation?—I have read out the numbers.

52,299. Is this it,—sixteen farms and sixty-seven crofts?—Yes.

52,300. What is the smallest rent paid by a farmer?—I think I stated that we have ten who pay between £30 and £100 of rent.

52,301. And six above £100, I suppose?—Yes. There is one farm rented at £500, another at £280, and a third at £165; but, of course, there are the two deer forests and the grouse moor besides, and the salmon fishing.

52,302. What is the average rent of the 67 crofters' holdings?—I would require to calculate it, because I have not the result here; after taking off the larger rents from the £7743, all the remaining rents go for the smaller occupancies. The crofters' rents are from £10 to £15, and one or two are up to £30.

52,303. Are these holdings of a self-sustaining character, or do the tenants supplement the produce of the crofts by outside labour?—Each of the crofters has a horse and cart, with which he supplements his income largely by carting for the estate and for the shooting tenants.

52,304. Then the crofters live partly by their holdings and partly by labour?—Yes.

52,305. Are the crofters' houses put up by the estate, or by the crofters?—Entirely by the estate.

52,306. And by whom are they kept in repair?—The crofters are supposed to keep them in repair, but, as a matter of fact, the estates does nearly everything.

52,307. Can you tell me the average expenditure per annum by the estate upon the repair and upkeep of crofters' houses and steadings?—No, I have not the particulars at hand.

52,308. But are you able to say that there is a considerable expenditure in that direction every year?—There is not very much expenditure at present, because the houses and steadings are nearly all new, —that is to say, they have been erected within the last fifteen or twenty years.

52,309. Are the houses all slated houses?—Entirely.

52,310. And mostly of two flats?—Yes, they are all houses containing two rooms and a closet below, and two rooms above; some of them are rather larger.

52,311. Has Mrs Ellice had any application, or have you had any application as acting for her, within recent years for additional land?—Not one.

52,312. For arable or grazing?—Nothing of the kind.

52,313. Now, you have on the estate two deer forests; one of these is Glengarry, with 17,730 acres, and the other is Glenquoich, Easter and Wester, with 46,301 acres. I take the figures from a return compiled by the Crown Agent in 1891?—Yes.

52,314. Dealing first of all with Glengarry forest, has any addition been made to that forest within recent years?—A slight addition was made between 1883 and 1891, the dates of the two returns.

52,315. What was the extent of the addition?—About 2500 acres. In 1883 the area was 15,330 acres, and now it is over 17,000 acres. I may mention that in the case of both these returns I furnished the particulars myself.

52,316. How were the 2500 acres occupied previous to the afforestment?—Partly by a sheep farm.

52,317. One farm, or more?—One farm.

52,318. What was the name of it?—The farm of Greenfield; but when that was being done, the whole of the arable land of the farm, and a considerable portion of the low ground surrounding the homestead were excepted, and are now let to a tenant. Not a single scrap of arable land went in that addition to Glengarry Deer Forest.

52,319. But, I suppose, a considerable tract of low ground went to the addition?—Well, taking off the low ground given to the tenant, not much low ground remains; it is nearly all high.

52,320. What was the extent of low ground allocated to this tenant who remained?—I should think from 400 to 500 acres, but I cannot say exactly.

52,321. But, I suppose, the forest was a forest with a sufficiency of high and low ground previous to this afforestment?—There was very little low ground on it.

52,322. Was it in need of this addition?—Yes, it was always considered too small; and I may say the farm was advertised to be let for two years in succession, before it was dealt with in that way. I tried also to let it by dividing it into several small holdings, and advertised it as such.

52,323. Let us have the particulars of that. How many holdings did you propose to turn it into?—About four.

52,324. Of what extent each?—The extent of the whole is about 8000 acres, if I recollect rightly, and we proposed not only to let it in that way but also to provide buildings for the smaller holdings.

52,325. What rent had you in view?—The old rent of the farm was, I think, £430, and, of course, we expected to get something like the same rent

Inverness. George Malcolm.

for it; but, as a matter of fact, we did not get an offer.

52,326. There would have been four holdings of how much each?—About £100 each.

52,327. Is that the farm of Greenfield you are referring to?—Yes.

52,328. Not the farm of South Laggan?—No; South Laggan is still a sheep farm.

52,329. Did you advertise it in the newspapers?—Yes, for two successive years, in the Inverness papers, and I think in the Edinburgh papers too.

52,330. And do you say you never got a single offer?—I never got a single offer. One or two people came and looked at it, but even they did not offer for it.

52,331. I presume you have not a copy of the advertisement?—No, I never keep any of those things.

52,332. Can you tell us what were the terms of the advertisement?—It was just in the usual form,—that the farm was out of lease, and would be re-let as a sheep farm; and by-and-bye the advertisement was varied in the way I have stated, offering to let it in three or four small holdings.

52,333. Were you prepared to do any necessary fencing?—Oh, yes, we have always to do that. The tenant states what requirements he has, and then it is a matter of negotiation to settle about that.

52,334. That would, of course, have necessitated the erection of buildings on each of these four farms?—Yes; of course the buildings would have been on a smaller scale than those for one unbroken holding.

52,335. Something between a crofter's house on Glengarry and a farmer's house?—Yes, a small sheep farm; they would have been something like the £100 farms I have alluded to in my statement.

52,336. Then, is this your position, that the land after the lapse of two years or so was afforested, because you found you could not do anything else with it?—That was the position precisely. In the meantime, matters were getting worse with regard to sheep farming, and as we were likely to lose considerable money over it, ultimately the farm of Greenfield was divided in the way that has been mentioned: part of it went as an addition to Mrs Ellice's deer forest, and the other part went as an addition to Lord Burton's. It lay between the two.

52,337. And a third part of it was kept as a smaller farm?—Yes, all the arable land was reserved, and all the low ground of consequence; and all the farm buildings and the house.

52,338. What is the rent of that holding?—£30.

52,339. Was that farm advertised?—It was part of what was advertised, and when that partition of the hill ground was made, it was then that the letting of the low ground and the arable land was made. The two operations were carried out at the same time.

52,340. And did this tenant come forward in answer to your advertisement?—Well, he was a local man who lived on the west coast, and he came down and took the place.

52,341. Was any addition made to the rent of Glengarry forest after this afforestment?—Yes, the assessor took the addition into account, and raised the valuation of the forest.

52,342. Do you know to what extent?—I think he raised it by about £150, if I recollect rightly. It is now £822.

52,343. What addition was made to the rent paid by Lord Burton?—I think we got £400 additional from him; he got a much larger share of the 8000 acres.

52,344. What is his rent?—For that part it is, as I say, £400, but for Glenquoich, and all he has from us, he pays £3412.

52,345. That includes forest and house?—It includes all he has from us.

52,346. Which, I suppose, his lordship holds on lease?—He holds on a long lease.

52,347. I see that the Parliamentary Return bears that the forest of Glenquoich was partly extended in 1883, but I suppose that refers to the addition made from this farm?—It is the same increase.

Inverness. George Malcolm.

52,348. And these are the only two forests on the estate?—Yes.

52,349. There was additional afforestment at Glenquoich about twenty years ago?—Yes, about eighteen or twenty years ago.

52,350. There was a farm up near Loch-Hourn-head, possessed by a man, Macrostie?—Yes; the farm that Mr Macrostie had was cleared of sheep, and let to Lord Burton.

52,351. And afforested?—Yes.

52,352. What was the extent of that farm?—About 16,000 or 17,000 acres; I think it is about half of the whole Glenquoich estate.

52,353. It had previously been exclusively occupied, as I understand, as a sheep grazing?—Yes, as far as I am aware.

52,354. Do you happen to know,—it is a long time ago,—what rent was paid for that farm by Macrostie?—When he gave it up, he was paying £800 I think, but the original rent was £1000. In fact, it was £1100, and we had to reduce it to that extent before he left.

52,355. That afforestment was made at a time when sheep farming was more profitable than it is now?—Sheep farming had begun to go down even then.

52,356. Possibly, but it was a very much better business than it is now?—Yes.

52,357. And, I suppose, it was made, not so much because farming was going back seriously at that time, as in order to make a more extensive forest?—The tenant, Lord Burton, made an offer to the sheep farmer, or the sheep farmer made an offer to him, to give up the remainder of his lease to him, and that arrangement obtained the sanction of the estate. We did not propose it directly at all.

52,358. The proposal emanated from Lord Burton himself, with the view of extending his forest?—Yes; I believe the sheep farmer himself was the first party to move in the matter.

52,359. And possibly he went out on favourable terms?—Yes.

52,360. *Mr Sutherland.*—What did you say was the total area of the estate?—Very nearly 100,000 acres.

52,361. Of which 64,000 acres are deer forest?—Yes.

52,362. Leaving 36,000 acres for the remaining holdings?—For upwards of eighty holdings.

52,363. I wish to get some idea of the distribution of population on the estate. How many people are there on the 36,000 acres?—There are 657 people on the estate.

52,364. Of the 36,000 acres so held, what is the largest holding?—One at £500.

52,365. Can you give me the area?—No, I cannot state the acreages of the holdings on the Glengarry estate, without measuring them on the map.

52,366. How then did you ascertain the acreages of the deer forests throughout Scotland?—I have a map of the whole estate; and it is also put down in that book of the possessions of all the owners in Great Britain.

52,367. The Domesday book?—Yes. It is put there as 99,000 odd acres.

52,368. But that was got from the proprietors, I presume?—I don't know where it was got; but independently of that, I think, a large map of the estate in my office shows that it is correct.

52,369. Then I cannot get the acreages of the separate holdings from you?—I can give you an approximation of some of them.

52,370. At any rate, we have here two holdings, one of which, I understand, has not got a tenant except the proprietrix,—one of the forests?—Yes, it is in the hands of Mrs Ellice.

52,371. So that out of an estate of 100,000 acres, there are 64,000 acres in the hands of two persons, and the remainder, 36,000 acres, among the sixty-seven; and if I could get the acreages of the large farms, it would very considerably diminish the latter figure?—Of course it would.

52,372. What area do you think each of the sixty-seven crofters has got?—They are not all crofters; they have from 8 to 10 acres of arable land,—some slightly more and some less, and they have got several thousand acres of hill ground between them.

52,373. Has each of them a hundredth part of what the forest has?—It must be more than that; there are 64,000 acres in the forest.

52,374. But I am talking of the sixty-seven, not taking the large farms into account?—It stands in the proportion of 64 to 36, so that the remaining portion of the estate has fully one-third of the whole area.

52,375. But, how many individuals participate in that division?—There are the number of tenants that I have mentioned in my statement; there are about fifteen crofters; there are a number of cottars who have small patches of land; and there are a great many estate servants who have got land, too.

52,376. But is it too much to say that the average of the remainder, particularly of the sixty-seven whose area you have not been able to mention, is a hundredth part of the area under forest?—I do not quite follow your question.

52,377. There are sixty-seven people whom you have denominated crofters. There are two forests with an area of 64,000 acres. Has each of the sixty-seven got a hundredth part of the area under deer?—Not each of them.

52,378. So that you have got then a proportion of a hundred to one, and that is what you call 'an 'equilibrium of holdings'?—Yes; I state that taking the arrangement of tenants as a whole, there is a proper equilibrium.

52,379. Which, in your opinion, ought to be maintained?—Yes.

52,380. And which, *de facto*, is maintained?—Yes.

52,381. You mentioned a sum of money as having been spent on improvements. What did the improvements consist of mostly?—A great deal of it was the making of roads and building of houses.

52,382. What kind of roads?—There were a great many private roads made on the estate.

52,383. Leading to where?—Leading to the various farms and leading from one point of the public road to another.

52,384. Are they maintained as private roads?—Some of them are maintained as private roads.

52,385. Have others been transferred to the public body?—Only one.

52,386. So that the great bulk of them are private roads, I presume for private purposes?—No, they are open to every one on the estate.

52,387. But not to the public?—Some of them are not open to the public; as a matter of fact, no one wanting to go along them is ever refused permission, but the public have no right to go on such roads.

52,388. You also mentioned the expenditure on taxes,—the contribution, I think you said, to taxation?—Yes.

52,389. Was that a voluntary contribution?—No, I merely gave it as a piece of information.

52,390. So it was not a contribution,—it was a statutory impost?—Of course it was.

52,391. Which had to be paid?—It had.

52,392. And any person who possessed the land would have had to pay it?—Certainly.

52,393. So it was not a contribution at all?—In using the word 'contribution' I meant only to show the amount that had been paid in taxes.

52,394. Taxes of which the crofters pay their share?—I don't think that included the tenants' part at all, but only the proprietor's part.

52,395. But it is only a contribution in the same sense in which the crofters' rates are a contribution?—Quite so; it is nothing else.

52,396. You also stated the gross amount of Lord Burton's expenditure. Would you kindly detail what was included in that?—I mentioned rents, rates, taxes, and household expenses of all kinds; and the rest consisted entirely of improvements on the property.

52,397. Can you state which of these it was necessary for him to expend?—He had to pay his share of the rates, he had to pay his rent, and, of course, he had to pay his household expenses. All the rest he had no call at all to make.

52,398. And, as a matter of fact, he did not pay anything beyond what he was called on to pay? He paid what he could not help paying; is not that it?—Oh, no; what he did pay without having any call upon him to pay, very far exceeded what he was bound to pay.

52,399. And is it included in the £3412?—You are talking of the rent just now. The total expenditure was £224,000.

52,400. Out of that £224,000, how much did Lord Burton pay that it was not absolutely necessary for him to pay?—The greater part of it.

52,401. But you cannot specify anything?—No.

52,402. But you say the greater part of it he need not necessarily spend?—The greater part he spent voluntarily on improvements.

52,403. And the people to whom the money was paid left the value of the money in work?—Of course, it was a fair exchange, they gave their labour in return for the money.

52,404. What Lord Burton had in view was the improvement of his own property?—Quite so. I only say it was voluntary; he was under no compulsion to do it.

52,405. So that his expenditure was in exactly the same category as the crofters,—it was necessary for him?—It was not at all necessary.

52,406. Was there any compulsion on him to do it?—No, none. I may state that he did it for the sake of finding employment for the people in his own neighbourhood.

52,407. But for the money received, the people gave full value?—Yes, I claim no special merit for that.

52,408. But why was the fact stated?—As a statement of the expenditure on the estate.

52,409. But no estate can be carried on without expenditure?—We know that there are very few where such an expenditure is made.

52,410. You stated that you had a daily post?—Yes.

52,411. Is that due to the estate?—No, of course not.

52,412. I suppose it is a truism, that any person might say that; it is the post office that establishes the daily post, is it not?—I have not said that the estate did so, or that they provided it.

52,413. You put it in the estate account?—I am merely giving you a little sketch of how we are situated in Invergarry.

52,414. I need not ask you, because I presume it is implied in the whole of your statement, that the equilibrium which you wish to see preserved is, in your opinion, the best possible?—I think so; I think it has proved to be so, upon our estate.

52,415. Is your estate practically what was known in olden times as the Glengarry country?—Part of it.

52,416. How much was outside Glengarry?—Knoydart estate also used to be in the Glengarry country.

52,417. Doubtless you have heard about the Glengarry regiment?—Oh, yes; I have read more or less about it.

52,418. Is that an indication to your mind of a large population having been at one time on the Glengarry district?—There is no doubt there was a larger population, up to about the year 1851 or 1852.

52,419. Now, have you ever contemplated a sudden depreciation in the value of deer forests, such as has occurred in the case of sheep farms?—I do not believe that is likely to occur.

52,420. But I have heard equally confident statements with regard to sheep farms,—I have no doubt you also have,—and they have been falsified by events. Is it not equally probable or possible that they may be falsified in the case of deer forests?—It is possible, but I think it is extremely improbable.

52,421. More improbable than the depreciation in the value of sheep farms would have seemed thirty years ago?—Yes.

Inverness.

George Malcolm.

52,422. What are the elements of stability in the case of deer forests that were absent in the case of the sheep farms?—By far the largest proportion of deer forest land is devoted to the only purpose for which it is suited.

52,423. You have furnished us with a case in point, the farm of Greenfield. His lordship asked you with regard to that farm, was the equilibrium not in existence before the breaking up of the farm?—That is one case, apparently, where the equilibrium had to be altered, because we could not do anything else. I stated that we advertised the farm over and over again, and got no offers; what were we to do?

52,424. Have you got those advertisements with you?—No.

52,425. Are they accessible to you, or would you kindly state about what date they appeared in the newspapers?—It must have been in the 80's, I cannot recollect the exact year, but if you will allow me, I will look it up when I have time. I think it will be found in the files of some of the Inverness papers, but I cannot give you the dates at present.

52,426. Was it a new tenant that you got for the part that was let?—Yes.

52,427. How do you account for the fact that you got a tenant for the remaining part which you did not put into the deer forest, and could not find a tenant for the part you put into the forest?—Because he got the choicest part of the farm, and all the arable land.

52,428-29. The old farm, then, probably had not attained a state of equilibrium?—I do not understand the question.

52,430. It had a certain amount of hill pasture before?—Yes.

52,431. And while it was in that state, you could not get a tenant for it?—No.

52,432. But after the hill part was taken away and added to two deer forests, you then readily got a tenant for it?—Yes.

52,433. Then the equilibrium had been restored?—I suppose you may put it that way.

52,434. You know we have been constantly told that if we disturb the present equilibrium by taking away any part from a sheep farm, the remainder cannot be let?—Yes.

52,435. But your experience has evidently not been in that way at all?—I don't think it has been said that you could not get the other part let for deer forest. I don't deny that if you take choice bits out of a sheep farm or deer forest you could let these choice bits.

52,436. But that is a thing you would not recommend to be done?—No, I certainly would not recommend it.

52,437. But you did it yourself?—Because we could not help it.

52,438. Other people might not be able to help it either?—After all, it is an isolated and single case.

52,439. But would not a public necessity be greater than a private one?—I do not know what other people's experience has been, but that was ours.

52,440. *Mr Munro.*—I think you informed us that you have been factor on the Glengarry estates for the last thirty years?—Yes.

52,441. You are also, I think, agent at Invergarry for one of our most popular institutions, the Caledonian Bank?—Yes, I am.

52,442. You are a member of several Boards, also, I think?—Generally speaking, I am a member of all the local Boards.

52,443. So that your position gives you fair facilities for studying the habits of the people and their condition, and for knowing the persons who would be most likely to make good use of land?—Yes.

52,444. Mrs Ellice, I think you informed us, has a considerable number of crofters upon her estate?—Yes, she has the proportion that I have stated.

52,445. I have heard it said that these crofters were industrious, thrifty, contented, and well-behaved; is that the case?—To a remarkable extent.

52,446. And may I also take it that their presence on the estate gives Mrs Ellice considerable gratification?—It does.

52,447. I am sure you will be disposed to admit that seeing that that is the position of the crofters on the Glengarry estate, a system that produces such a condition of things ought to be extended somewhat?—Yes, if you can get proprietors to do quite as much for them as has been done at Glengarry. I admit that in that case, by taking sheep farms, or deer forests if you like, you could do some good if you could get the proprietors able and willing to do as much at the outset. We have heard a great deal here to-day about the difficulty of finding capital for establishing these holdings. Now, in the case of our crofters, the whole capital, apart from the stock, has been found by the estate.

52,448. Would you mind telling us whether Mrs Ellice has conferred any special privileges or advantages on those crofters, beyond what other landlords have?—I think she has, in the way of providing most excellent dwelling-houses and steadings for them, which in every case have cost upwards of £300. I don't think you will find that usual upon crofting estates.

52,449. So that you attribute their contentment mainly to the fact of what Mrs Ellice has done for them, more than to their own industry?—Oh, no; but that has acted as a stimulus, no doubt, to their industry.

52,450. But you are not prepared to say you would like to see more crofters settled there?—No, I don't think we have room for more.

52,451. Can you tell me off-hand the exact distance we traverse from the moment we leave Invergarry, through the Glengarry and Glenquoich deer forests till we reach Loch-Hourn?—Through the deer forest part alone?

52,452. I understand it is entirely deer forest?—Oh, no; you drive nearly nine miles before you touch deer forest, from Invergarry Inn.

52,453. But how many miles do we traverse through deer forest alone?—About 18 or 20 miles.

52,454. I have gone through that forest lately, and I must say I was struck with the desolate aspect of the place; apart from gillies and others employed on the deer forest, I only met with one inhabitant in the whole of that district. Now, I am sure you are not prepared to defend a state of matters that leads to the desolating of an entire tract of country like that?—You must have been unfortunate that day in not seeing many of the inhabitants, because there are as many inhabitants there now, and even more, than there were before it became a deer forest.

52,455. Your case is that you attribute the depopulation of that district more to sheep farms than to forests?—It took place long before the days of any afforestment there.

52,456. I quite agree with you; I have not the slightest doubt about that.—I may be allowed to add that there is no evidence that in all that district to which you refer there ever was a population living there. There are plenty of documents and evidence to show that nearly the whole population on Glengarry estate lived at the two ends,—at the east end down about Invergarry, and towards the canal, and at the west end about Knoydart estate; and I defy any person to point out any traces of population or residence between these places, even in the days of sheep farming. [*Mr Sutherland.*—But previous to sheep farming?—Or before it. There are no traces of people having been there at any time.]

52,457. The evidence you refer to, would, I presume, be dismantled houses?—Yes, and green patches, marks of old cultivation; you do not find these there.

52,458. Of course, dismantled houses might be entirely removed, and no evidence of them remain?—Well, there are none there, and the other evidences which you usually find in such cases are wanting also.

52,459. Is it not on record that that territory did support a larger population than it does at present?—

As I say, it did support a larger population, at the two ends, after a fashion.

52,460. While talking of this question, I see that in the interesting paper which you submitted to Lord Napier's Commission you gave statistics to prove that the population of the Highland counties had not decreased?—Yes. I do not remember the particulars at present, but I think I did do so, taking the counties as a whole.

52,461. In submitting that information, were you careful to eliminate from your calculations the increase of the population in towns?—I think what I stated was that taking the northern counties rather than the Highland counties, there was a distinct increase; but that if you took the Highland counties, which we may now take to be the crofting counties, there was a decrease of 7 per cent.

52,462. By the northern counties, I presume, you mean such counties as Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, Nairn, Inverness, Caithness, Ross, and Sutherland, and so on?—Yes, I believe I took into account all the counties in which there were deer forests, for it was leading up to a question about deer forests, and I took those counties simply because they contained deer forests. But in counties only which are now crofting counties by Act of Parliament, there was a decrease, I admit.

52,463. But I put it to you in this way:—Is that a strictly fair way to submit a statement of the population in these counties? I put the question to you in that way, because you are perfectly sensible of the fact that the allegation has been made that the rural portions of the counties have been denuded of their population in order to make way for sheep farms and deer forests; you are quite aware of that?—Yes.

52,464. You seek to prove that these counties have not decreased in population, but rather the reverse, and you do it by including the towns in your calculations. Now, you are aware that there has been a very considerable increase in many of the towns situated in the counties which you condescend upon, *e.g.*, Aberdeen, Inverness, and many others?—I admit that; and now I recollect that this was brought out in my examination. But I repeat that I also gave a comparison of the crofting counties, and showed that there was a decrease there, contemporary with a decrease of the rural population all over the country. I wanted to bring out that this state of matters was not confined to the Highlands, but had taken place to a greater extent in some of the southern counties.

52,465. But you admit that a considerable decrease has taken place in the rural parts of the counties, I presume?—Oh, yes, I do.

52,466. Of course to go and include the towns would be entirely misleading in a statement of that sort?—No, I stated it in both ways, so that there could be nothing misleading about it. I gave it both ways, and it was brought out in my examination.

52,467. The statement here is simply limited to the counties, and you are not careful to specify the fact that it covers the increase in the towns as well?—I quite admit what you say, subject to the explanation I have made.

52,468. I am glad you admit frankly that there has been a decrease in the rural parts of the counties?—Yes, in common with the rest of the country.

52,469. Now, in that paper which you read before the Commission, you will excuse my referring to one remark which you make at the conclusion of your paper, where you say:—'What is called fixity of 'tenure would be a gross mistake if applied to High-'land crofts. It would infallibly prove to be a direct 'premium on indolence, and the foe of all enterprise 'and push in the great majority of cases.' Since you made that statement, the Crofters Act has been in existence for a period of over eight years. Now, would you be prepared to defend that statement to-day, and say that it still stands?—I think that if I am to be examined upon the larger statement which I am to read, your question will come more naturally then, for in my other statement I deal with that very point. I shall be very happy to answer questions of a general character after reading the paper which is to follow, and in which the point you refer to is dealt with to a certain extent.

52,470. I admit at once that that is a very fair position for you to take up.—I should perhaps add that I had no idea I was to be examined at the present moment; I thought I should read both papers, and then be examined. I am, of course, quite willing to answer any questions, but I would suggest that any questions of a general character should be deferred until I have laid my views fully before the Commission.

52,471. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Perhaps I may be repeating some questions I have asked you already, but I would like to know how much has been added to the deer forests since the date of the Napier Commission?—That also is a question that I should prefer to deal with later on.

52,472. I would rather have it at present.—I will answer it certainly: 634,000 acres or so.

52,473. But what I want to know is the extent of the addition to Glengarry and Glenquoich forests, since the visit of Lord Napier's Commission?—I think I gave that information to Mr Sutherland. Glengarry forest in 1883 extended to 15,230 acres, and it is now 17,730 acres; difference, 2500 acres. Glenquoich forest in 1883 occupied 34,400 acres, and it now extends to 46,301 acres; difference, 11,901 acres. Total increase, 14,401 acres.

52,474. That is the addition made to the forest since Lord Napier's Commission was here?—It must be.

52,475. Now, if you turn up the report of your evidence, p. 2853, you will find that you there state the total acreage as 100,000 acres?—Yes.

52,476. You were asked the question:—'How 'much of that is under deer forest?' and your reply to that is 'less than half'; so that at that time, according to your evidence, the deer forests occupied less than 50,000 acres?—Yes. The exact figure is 49,630 acres.

52,477. And now there are 64,031 acres, and you say the difference is how much?—I say the difference is 14,401 acres.

52,478. I observe that you also said in your evidence that there was not much more suitable land to be added to deer forests; and yet in the case of your own estate you have added upwards of 14,000 acres?—Yes; well, it is a question of opinion whether that land is suitable or not suitable; I only say we could do nothing else with it.

52,479. But surely you must have had in view your own estate when you made that allegation, that there was not much land suitable for being made into deer forests?—Yes, but it all turns on the word 'suitable,' and also on the fact, which please do not forget, that we did everything we could to continue that land under sheep.

52,480. So that in your own case, that prophecy of yours that there would not be much added to the deer forests, did not hold good, for you have added a good deal since then?—The returns speak for themselves; we certainly added the difference between the returns of the two periods.

52,481. And you acknowledge also that throughout the Highlands generally, great additions have been made to the deer forest area since that time, as well as in your own case?—This return brings out a very large addition. But I would wish to state again that that matter is dealt with fully in the paper I have still to submit.

52,482. I mention it here because there has been a great addition in the case of your own estate, of which you ought to have known at the time you made that statement before the Napier Commission. That is why I bring out the fact in this connection; you must at that time have regarded the land as unsuitable for an addition to the deer forest?—Well, you may make that assumption, but you have not asked me any question about it.

52,483. You have answered the thing yourself. The point is this, that you then said there was not much suitable land to add?—Yes, and I have not admitted that this is suitable land to be added to deer forest.

52,484. Why should you add it, if it were not suitable?—I have explained several times already, that we could not use it for any other purpose.

52,485. You now say it is not suitable, do you?—No; that is a question—

52,486. It must be one or other; I ask you that question?—I am going to answer it if I get an opportunity. That was a question for the tenant to consider; if we found a tenant willing to take it, surely that is enough.

52,487. It is not the tenant's opinion, but your own, that I want. Is it your view that it is not suitable?—It is suitable land for a deer forest, but not so suitable as other lands on the estate and on other estates. I admit that; and I state that it never would have been made deer forest if we could have let it in any other form.

52,487A. Why is it not suitable, then?—Because it is not so high as some other forest ground.

52,488. And, therefore, it is of a character that would make it more suitable for sheep, and for cultivation if possible, than for deer forest if you could get a tenant for it?—There is not one single foot of it suitable for cultivation beyond what is already cultivated and let to an industrious tenant, as I have already stated.

52,489. Nothing on it fit for cultivation?—Not one inch, in my opinion.

52,490. Then you acknowledge that the land held as forest in Glenquoich is very suitable for sheep?—It was for many years under a wedder stock of sheep, and, therefore, is to that extent suitable for sheep grazing; but there is a very large extent of ground in Glenquoich that no sheep ever in this world went upon; and as we all know, wedder stocks have ceased to pay; they have been losing money to everyone connected with them for a good many years back, and that is the reason why that ground was afforested.

52,491. Now, with regard to the expenditure on the two estates, I think it amounts to something like half a million?—Yes, including everything.

52,492. And on the Glenquoich estate there is an expenditure of £11,000 a year?—Yes, including rent, rates, and taxes.

52,493. Does that expenditure add very much to the value of these forests? Are they getting more valuable, seeing that £11,000, or, leaving out the rent, something like £9,000 is spent in Glenquoich every year?—If it is not increasing the value of the estates, it is adding immensely to the comfort of the people, who would be very much poorer if it were not spent.

52,494. So far as the value of the land is concerned, it is not added to?—Oh, no; it is rather a question of increasing the comforts of the people.

52,495. But from the aspect of productiveness, that money is altogether wasted?—Well, I admit there is very little commercial value to be had out of deer,—out of the carcases of deer, if that is what you refer to.

52,496. That is the product of the land; but apart from that, there is £9000 being put into it every year, and no return got?—It is not put into the estates, but it is carried away by the people who are working upon the estates.

52,497. But you told us already that these people left the value of the money they got in the estate; therefore, you see while that money is spent on the estate year after year, if the money were wisely spent the value of the place ought to increase?—It is well spent on permanent improvements,—that is apparently what you are meaning,—because a great many new houses have been built for the people, some new roads have been made, and a great number of paths.

52,498. Is the value being increased in the Valuation Roll?—Yes, immensely, as soon as it was made deer forest.

52,499. But since then this great expenditure has been made upon it?—Well, I don't think there has been any change for a number of years back, but the assessment was raised.

52,500. The valuation has not been increased for many years, although £9000 a year has been spent?—No; but, on the other hand, if that had not been done and if the place had been still under sheep, the valuation would have been a great deal lower than it presently is.

52,501. But I look to the waste of money, and the waste of the services of people on that land, without any increase in the valuation?—What would it have been, if I may be allowed to put it that way, if the land had remained a sheep farm?

52,502. I do not want to enter into that question now, but I would like to bring that aspect of it before your mind,—the waste of money; that these permanent improvements, whatever they are, do not add to the value of the estate, and the ratepayers do not get the benefit of it by an increased valuation of these lands?—I do not regard as wasted anything that goes into the pockets of the poor crofters who come up there to work.

52,503. But you do not give it to the people; it is not a present to the people?—They do not get a present of the works, but they get the money expended for the works.

52,504. But they are employed on utterly unproductive works; their labour is wasted?—I don't suppose the crofter minds that.

52,505. But from a national point of view, and from an economical point of view, it is an utter blunder to spend that money?—Very well, let us have it so.

52,506. It is so, without any question. How many crofters are there on the estate, under the Act?—There have been no applications at all under the Crofters Act.

52,507. But can you give us the number who are under the Act, although they should make no application?—There are from fifteen to twenty, I should say.

52,508. I thought you said there were sixty-seven crofters?—Small tenants; they are not all crofters. I did not call them crofters; I said they were occupants under the £30 limit.

52,509. So that of crofters within the meaning of the Act there are about fifteen?—Yes, I should think that is about the number.

52,510. It is not a very important matter, the population of that particular district, but I think you say that the population is rather increasing, is that so?—It may be called stationary.

52,511. It is exactly what it was when the estates were bought?—There may perhaps be a dozen fewer or a dozen more, but there is no greater difference, I think.

52,512. But you cannot give the exact figure?—No.

52,513. Then you say there are two forests and a grouse moor on the estate. Is it a pure grouse moor?—It is the grouse shooting upon a sheep farm.

52,514. And that sheep farm is occupied by a farmer, I suppose?—Yes; it is the £500 farm of which I have spoken.

52,515. What is the value of the grouse moor?—We get a rent of £700, but a large part of that goes for the shooting lodge and amenities, with some fishing rights. You may call it £700.

52,516. So that the grouse rent is equal to the pastoral rent?—It is rather more, at present.

52,517. Then, is it the case that in many forests, if you count the grouse rental and the pastoral rental, these two would in many cases equal what is now in the Valuation Roll as a deer forest?—In very few cases indeed.

52,518. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—With regard to the expenditure on the Glengarry estate, has a good deal of that money been spent on the planting and management of fir wood on an extensive scale?—Yes, a good deal of planting has been done on Glengarry.

52,519. You would hardly call that a waste of money?—Certainly not.

52,520. You were asked a short time ago about the depletion of the rural districts in the Highlands, and the increase of the population in towns. Should you say that it is a matter of common knowledge, however much we may regret it, that the Lowlands of Scotland and most parts of England are suffering from the same circumstance?—Yes, and to a greater extent. That is one of the matters which I intend to allude to in my statement; a great deal of this examination is, I think, an anticipation of what I intended to say.

52,521. So that, in that respect, the Highlands of Scotland are not peculiar, or different from the Lowlands of Scotland, or from a great extent of England?—Not at all.

52,522. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated that evidences of former occupation were not visible within a certain area on the Glengarry estate?—Yes.

52,523. Is it the case that a good deal of the land that was occupied before, and arable, is now under plantation?—Not that I am aware of, and I have done a large quantity of planting myself, since I went there.

52,524. Then, I think you challenged any person to say that there were any evidences within that area of former habitation?—Yes, I do. Of course you may see one place, or perhaps two—

52,525. Do you deny that I have seen one place?—I don't recollect it.

52,526. Would you deny that I have seen several places?—No; I would probably admit it, if you refresh my memory.

52,527. And that trees were planted upon every part of it that I have seen?—I don't know it; I cannot recollect it, at any rate.

52,528. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I find in the Minutes of Evidence taken by the Select Committee on Colonisation in July, 1890, you were asked by Mr Campbell Bannerman, the following question:—'May 'I ask have you many crofters upon the properties 'you manage?' and your reply is—'We have only from 'thirty to forty families, I think?'—I suppose that meant crofters and cottars.

52,529. Do you think you were giving a full answer to the question put? You were asked 'How many 'crofters,' and you said 'thirty or forty,'—did you mean crofters?—It may have meant only the crofters; of course, I was speaking off-hand, not having the particulars before me; but you will find in the same book from which you have quoted, that this matter is explained farther on, and corresponds with the statement I have made here.

52,530. Did you at that time believe that there were between thirty and forty crofters on the estate?—I did, or I would not have said so.

52,531. So that you meant crofters when you used the word families in the answer?—I did.

52,532. Now, what properties did you refer to? The question was 'upon the properties that you 'manage'; what properties were these?—They must have been Glengarry and Glenquoich.

52,533. I have taken the last Valuation Roll, and summarised the number of tenants on the Glengarry estate as follows:—Two tenants pay £30; one £19; two £12 odds; one £11 odds; four £10; one £9; one £7; two £6; one £5; and two £4, making altogether eighteen crofters. Now, if in July 1890, there were between thirty and forty crofters on Glengarry, how does it happen that there are only eighteen there to-day?—I have already stated that I was speaking on that occasion off-hand, without having either the Valuation Roll, or a rent-roll, or anything else before me. I have to-day given the correct figures.

52,534. Am I then right in assuming that your statements of fact given on that occasion may be accepted as very loose and very vague statements?—I don't think I need give any answer to that question.

52,535. Did you not in your statement to-day say that there were sixty-seven crofters?—No.

52,536. What was the word you used in connection with the sixty-seven?—I said there were sixty-seven occupancies under the £30 limit.

52,537. Holdings?—Occupancies, or holdings, whatever you like to call them. [*The Chairman*—The exact words are 'crofters and other tenants whose 'rents do not individually exceed £30.'] Inverness. — George Malcolm.

52,538. So that there are only eighteen crofters within the Act?—Yes. There is a large number of cottars and cottagers, besides the crofters.

52,539. Then, have all these other tenants, to the number of forty-nine, a holding?—Every one of them has a house and garden, and some of them have got potato ground.

52,540. Have they all a garden, every one of them?—Yes, I think every house in the glen has got a plot of garden ground, and a large number of them have potato ground as well.

52,541. How many of the forty-nine have potato ground?—I cannot tell you at this moment.

52,542. Approximately?—Perhaps the half of them.

52,543. How many of the forty-nine have got a cow?—I cannot tell you; I did not bring the particulars of them.

52,544. Are there half a dozen cows among the forty-nine?—I cannot say.

52,545. Are there two cows between the forty-nine?—I think there must be more than that, but as I say, I cannot give you the exact particulars.

52,546. *The Chairman.*—Then, Mr Malcolm, as we have no other questions to ask upon the matters connected with these estates, kindly proceed with your general statement?—I shall have to bespeak the patience of the Commissioners, for the statement is very lengthy.

To The Honourable The Royal Commissioners (Highlands and Islands, 1892).

Gentlemen.—The objects of your inquiry are *First*:—To ascertain whether, within the area to which your labours are limited, there is land, and if so, how much land, now occupied for the purposes of a deer forest, grouse moor, or other sporting purpose, or for grazing, not in the occupation of crofters or other small tenants, which may be withdrawn from its present use, and applied to the formation of new or the extension of existing crofts, within the meaning of the Crofter Acts; and *Second*:—To ascertain whether such land is capable of being cultivated to profit, or otherwise advantageously occupied by crofters; including, no doubt, in the latter proposition the further questions, which are inseparable from it, whether such land may be more profitably occupied by crofters, than by its present possessors, and if so, upon what terms.

I desire respectfully to bring under your notice some considerations, evolved from a long personal experience of these questions, which have convinced me that the objects above defined are not permanently practicable, and that even if they were so, they would, in relation to other and larger interests in the Highlands, be in the highest degree prejudicial to the general welfare of the Highland people.

In pursuance of this intention it will be impossible to avoid a short retrospect of the history of the class in whose interests your inquiry has been instituted, but it will be unnecessary to enter into the subject beyond a few generations backward. It is by nobody supposed that the 'good old times' which are occasionally referred to as having been lost to the Highlands, but are no where related by any responsible historian, are of great antiquity. They cannot have existed during that dark period, when all that is known of the region, forming the seat of this inquiry, amounts to little else than a record of continuous strife, war and bloodshed; of cruelty, theft, oppression, and vice practised by the chiefs and lesser barons, and of grinding misery, want and suffering as the lot of the people. No fervour of even Celtic imagination could possibly conceive these old times as having been in any sense good. In so far as the period of these alleged departed halcyon times in the

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

Highlands can be conjectured, they are supposed not to recede beyond the middle or first quarter of the last century. It will, in any case, serve the present purpose to limit the survey practically to the period since that date. It was then that two very notable and far-reaching political events occurred in the Highlands, in the suppression of the Rebellion of 1745, and the abolition of Heritable Jurisdictions in 1746; it was then that the class now known as crofters were established as independent tenants, holding their lands direct from the landlords, and it was shortly after then that the introduction of improved sheep farming on a systematic and extensive scale took place, undoubtedly, the most remarkable and beneficial economic movement which the Highlands have ever seen. From these facts the convenience and advantage of adopting this starting point will be more apparent.

But while it is unnecessary for the present purpose to carry inquiry into the misty and turbulent ages of Scottish history, it is well that it should be noted, with reference to a certain aspect of agrarian agitation in the Highlands, existing in the present day, that documentary evidence not only of continuous and undisturbed individual ownership of land, but of individual occupation of land, equally in the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland, from a very early date, is beyond all question. From the thirteenth century at least charters and other instruments of conveyance of land are in abundant record, and inasmuch as in many of these deeds unmistakable references are made to prior ownerships, it seems scarcely possible to set a limit to the date when individual ownership and free sale as well as administration of land in Scotland was not a familiar operation.

With regard to the early tenancy of lands in Scotland, it is clear from the earliest recorded lease in 1312, two years before the battle of Bannockburn, and from numerous documents of similar import, and not much later date, that the letting of land, for onerous considerations, and upon definite conditions, between individual owners and individual occupiers, was then of common occurrence. There is the best reason for believing that transactions in the letting of land to agricultural use were of common occurrence some centuries earlier, for the specific and wisely liberal conditions, inserted in the Scone lease of 1312, and similar early instruments with reference to the cultivation of the land, payment of rent, and the fulfilment of other obligations, do not greatly differ from, and may be said to be perpetuated in leases of land in the present day. What we still know in practice as an 'improving lease,' with a rent graduated to the progress and value of the improvements, the Scone lease of 1312 clearly was, and it was otherwise framed with surprising skill and adaptation to the agricultural wants of the period.

But while these facts are firmly embedded and preserved in the early historical annals of Scotland, the evidence is no less abundant and clear that down to the beginning of the seventeenth century as regards the greater part of Scotland, and for more than a century later as regards the Highlands, the political condition was almost constantly such as to stifle the progress of agriculture and every other peaceful art. National wars and internecine feuds; military service, involving absence from and neglect of tillage of the land, devastation and pillage, wherever the fortune of war led the battling forces; occurring and recurring almost without intermission down to the Union of the Scottish and English Crowns in 1603, all but smothered the vitality of agriculture, and crushed the growth of every peaceful and useful feature of the social life of these times.

But on the fusion of the crowns, and consequent transference of the Scottish monarch, with many of his powerful nobles, from these immediate scenes of turbulence and lawless exactions, to the English capital, a great improvement was effected. With so large an augmentation of power in the central and supreme Government the lawless but divided forces in the northern kingdom were more readily quelled or crushed. It was natural and inevitable that the force and effect of these corrective measures should first have been felt in the southern districts of Scotland, for while no less turbulent and troublesome had been the warlike and sturdy reivers and moss-troopers of the borders, than the free-booting, stealthy and cruel caterans of the Highlands, the former were at first more accessible to the power of the united crowns. The Lowlanders were therefore fully a century earlier than the inhabitants of the Highland districts brought under subjection to the benevolent forces which were applied to break the arbitrary power of the barons; and though erewhile a fighting, reckless, and thriftless people, from the beginning of the seventeenth century they gradually entered upon a new epoch of peace and security, and betook themselves to those industrial occupations for which they have ever since held a high reputation.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

In the Highlands the course of events was somewhat different, for there the difficulties of applying peaceful measures of legislation were much greater. Difference of race and language, the existence of great mountain barriers, then all but insurmountable, and various other circumstances interposed to render the peaceful conquest of the Highlands a much more arduous labour than it had proved in the Lowlands. Thus it was that for more than a century after the Lowlands had yielded to the influences of civilization, and had entered upon useful and peaceful industries, the Highlands lagged behind,—a distinction which to this day is marked with very important results. Feuds and fights, reiving and raiding, plunder and pillage, and frequent crimes of even deeper dye, continued to stain the moral and political life, and ruin the social condition of the Highland people, till upon the complete collapse of the rising of the Clans in 1745, adequate measures for the subjugation of the disloyal chiefs and their followers were at last successfully applied. The same results, with one exception, presently to be referred to, then followed in the Highlands as had occurred in the border districts a century or more earlier. The enforcement of law and order was at once followed by a feeling of security and protection, and a decided advance in material prosperity. The savageries and cruelties of war and feud gave gradual place to the humanities and comforts of industry and peace.

But while this was so, the consequences of the delay of nearly a century and a half after the Union of the Crowns, in reducing the Highlands to a condition of peace and regard for law and constituted authority have in one respect been momentous. Enduring to the present day, it forms unquestionably the root of those matters which have led to the appointment of this and previous Royal Commissions of Inquiry into the condition of the people of the Highlands and Islands. What is here referred to is the sharp and striking contrast between the numbers and the material prosperity of the rural peasant population as they are found now in these respective districts. There are sufficient grounds for believing that down to the beginning of the seventeenth century little difference existed between the distribution, habits, and worldly condition of the humbler tenants and peasantry of the district south of the Grampians, and those of the north. In the south the population of this class was perhaps more numerous than in the north, but the people were alike in respect of the wasting and hurtful life which they led. If advantage at all lay with the southerners, it arose from the natural superiority of their climate and soil, and not certainly from any industrial or moral superiority down to the date mentioned.

How different is the case now! In the south the suppression of lawless and destructive feuds, and the consequent decay of the military spirit and habit, were rapidly succeeded by a gratifying growth of the peaceful arts and industries, and especially of the larger and improved systems of agriculture. In the south an economic condition was established, which, being

opposed by no artificial barriers, led at once on the one hand to the decay of small and unprofitable tenancies and on the other to the rise of larger holdings, which were better suited to the development of sheep farming, that form of agriculture for which both the southern and northern parts of Scotland are best adapted. As a result of this silent economic change, an extensive voluntary withdrawal occurred of the smaller tenantry from rural life to the larger and more lucrative activities of the industrial centres at home, or to the wider fields of foreign emigration. But while this was so as regards an extensive district, both south and north of the border line of England and Scotland, and while this law of demand and supply has been in uninterrupted operation in every other part of Scotland, it has, by no means, been so in those Highland districts which form the subject of your inquiry. Here, though more than a century later, the same strong and beneficent hand of Government was extended to repress the belligerent political relations, and compose the internal strifes of the Clans, winning them successfully to that loyalty to the British Crown from which they have since never swerved. Here were the same inducements, accentuated by the difficulties of an unfertile soil and ungenerous climate, to quit the discouraging pursuit of *petite* culture for the wider opportunities of the city. But here the population have in their numbers elected to cling to the restricted conditions of existence which these regions can alone afford to their class. Herein lies the secret of a very striking contrast in the circumstances and sentiments of the smaller tenantry of these two provinces of our small country. Here may be found the source of the poverty, the origin of the discontent, the root of the agitation, and the crux of the agrarian problem in the Western Highlands, which in recent years have attracted so much attention, and which from constant accumulations of population in certain localities have become a menace and a scandal.

The extensive change in the management of Highland estates which occurred upon the discovery that millions of acres of mountain land which had hitherto been put to no practical use, could be utilized by the new system of sheep farming, has not escaped some rather unsparing criticism, in which the flow of sentiment has been allowed an easy victory over the logic of facts. But it is unnecessary at this time of day to expend words in refutation of a contention so absurd, and inconsonant with the most obvious results, as that the introduction of sheep farming into the Highlands was not a great public good. Perhaps nothing in the whole economic history of the Scottish nation has produced more prosperity than this great interest; and if, in the establishment and development of an industry of such remarkable public benefit, other and lesser interests have unavoidably receded, or possibly from causes external to the system, have suffered, these trivial effects cannot for a moment be weighed against the enormous good which has accrued to the general population from the change referred to. A little friction is inevitable upon the fresh discovery and application of economic improvements in conducting the world's business.

But we shall be better able to gauge this economic change in the Highlands, and appreciate its substantial benefits, by glancing for a little at the state of agriculture, and the domestic condition of the Highland people, when this important industry of improved and systematic sheep farming appeared in the Highlands and rapidly obtained a general development. For this purpose the most reliable sources of information are contemporary writers, who were eye-witnesses of the matters whereof they wrote. Of these perhaps the most important and detailed is the well-known *Old Statistical Account of Scotland*, compiled in the last decade of the last century, under the superintendence of Sir John Sinclair, whose enlightened views on agriculture and many other domestic and social concerns of his day, and whose genius as an advanced improver in his time, appear remarkable even to the instructed observer of the present day. The reports to the Board of Agriculture, also drawn up under the supervision of Sir John Sinclair, and the works of other contemporaneous observers, such as Johnston, Burt, Anderson, Walker, Knox, Pennant, &c. as well as those of Cosmo Innes, Skene, Duke of Argyll, and others in our own day, likewise teem with interesting and suggestive references to the social and industrial condition of the Highlands during the period under consideration.

From all these authorities comes unanimous testimony to the wretchedness of the poor agricultural inhabitants of the Highlands in the eighteenth century; to their ignorance of the better methods of agriculture, and the wastefulness and unproductiveness of their forms of culture. Passable roads were scarcely known till a late period in the seventeenth century, and traffic was incredibly small as compared with the business of the present day; while as to rapidity of locomotion the comparison might be, as a writer has put it, between facilities for travelling in the days of the Pharaohs and the speed of a modern express train. As regards implements of cultivation the advance from the cumbrous and ineffective appliances of that era to those of our own is still more striking. Meagre and uncertain as the fruits of cultivation were in those days, the wonder is that some of these agencies were in any degree operative. Before the introduction of potato or turnip culture; before even haymaking was much understood or practised; when the only crops raised were oats, or bere, or barley, repeated continuously for incredibly lengthened periods; when manufactured stimulants of the fertility of the land were completely unknown; when, further, no better advantage was taken of the latent riches of the sea than of the soil; when systematic fishing and the scientific implements and methods of fish capture, to say nothing of fish culture, now in use, were utterly undreamt of; and when communications and markets for the disposal of fish from Highland waters had practically no existence, it is little wonder if we light upon frequent references in the writings of these eye-witnesses and contemporaneous authorities to periods of great depression and poverty among the humbler population of those days. Evidences of this are indeed so constantly met with in the early records of the Highlands as to constrain to the belief that the normal condition of the humbler classes in the Western Highlands and Islands in those days was one of acute poverty, frequently attended by epidemic forms of disease, which invariably dog the footsteps of want. It would be too much to say that even now those districts have been permanently lifted above the occurrence of seasons of destitution and misery. The condition at the present moment of the crofter and cottar population in crowded localities is indeed convincing evidence that such is not the case. For instance in 1892 an excessive and protracted rainfall, followed by frost and snow, all over the Highlands, destroyed the grain crops so as to render them not only unfit for human food but equally unfit for re-sowing,—a state of matters which, being coincident with prices of live stock so low as to be perhaps unexampled in the present century, reduced the crofter class in the western districts to such a condition of penury and suffering as must have excited the sympathy of all observers and perhaps opened their understanding to its reasons and lessons.

But while, as in the case just referred to, the peasant population of these parts is still frequently reduced,—nay is normally subjected,—to an insufficiency of the necessaries of life, there has been no repetition for the last fifty years, or thereby, of those dreadful visitations of positive famine which are recorded as having overtaken them in earlier times. Painful and pathetic descriptions of such experiences are frequently found in the earlier literature of the Highlands, with the details of which it is unnecessary to burden these pages. The concluding seven years of the seventeenth century were years of great dearth over the greater part of Scotland, and the Highlands then suffered very

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

severely. It was stated by Fletcher of Saltoun that in 1698, in addition to those very meanly provided for 'by the Church boxes,' there were in Scotland 200,000 people begging from door to door. The year 1740 was another of scarcity of food, when a great frost, with 'deep and untimely snow,' occurred in spring. The bad and late harvest of 1782 led to another season of severe and alarming famine, when exceptionally strong measures had to be resorted to, not always with success, to save the people from dying from want. At this period many crofts and farms were abandoned, and a strong tide of emigration to America began to flow. In 1807, 1817, 1836–37, and in 1847–48 similar experiences occurred; but what need is there to follow this subject further, with all its sickening and heartrending details of hunger of man and beast,—of the bleeding of lean cattle for human sustenance; of the suspension and abandonment by suffering multitudes of the ordinary pursuits of business, and of actual starvation both of men and cattle.

It was at a time when repeated visitations of this kind had made it plain that the existing system of occupation of the land in the Highlands was incapable of providing for the steady support of the ordinary population; when food, provided from eleemosynary sources, was frequently brought from more fertile districts to maintain the lives of the people, that the larger and greatly improved system of sheep farming was introduced. Extensive changes in the occupation of the land in the Highlands which occurred at and after this epoch are frequently attributed entirely to this cause, but it is only partly true that these arose from the creation of sheep walks. Sweeping statements have been made respecting the operations generally known as 'Highland Clearances,' and were they wholly true these operations would deservedly meet with condemnation. But gross exaggeration of language has been employed to describe what really did take place when these removals were effected. No impartial reader can fail to be impressed with this. The indefiniteness of the numbers and circumstances of the removals, and the looseness and vagueness of the evidence adduced in support of the allegations made frequently rest on nothing more than irresponsible statements of aged and prejudiced persons, whose words were never subjected to judicial investigation. The truth is, these removals were in the main, an unavoidable outcome of inexorable economic law operating upon the depressed and hopeless condition of the smaller agriculturists in the Highlands at that period, rather than the effects of purely arbitrary landlord power. Chronic want and unhappiness, naturally stirring the longings of those who were tied to this state for a happier life, led them to emigrate in such numbers as actually to raise the alarm and opposition of many landlords, as well as the deprecation of the Government of the day. A further important factor in this case was the establishment of the kelp industry by which large numbers of persons in the condition of cottars and crofters were drawn from the glens to the shores of the Western Islands and seaboard. Last of all, and, probably, least of all, came undoubtedly the influence of the larger mode of sheep farming upon the smaller tenantry.

Turning now to those crofters who continued their avocation side by side with the new style of sheep farmer, what was their condition during that long period of remarkable success, which attended the new era of sheep farming in the Highlands? Generally speaking, they followed, or were free to follow, the same lines of business, though, of course, on a much smaller scale, as the larger farmers, but while the larger farmer throve and filled his coffers, the crofter stuck immovably in his immemorial slough of poverty and depression. While the sheep farmer introduced and depended largely for success upon improved breeds of sheep, and gave his utmost attention to other methods of increment of both carcase and fleece, the crofter, in nearly every case, clung, and still clings, to the scraggiest and least improvable varieties of sheep, in utter neglect of well-understood rules and results of stock breeding, and retrograding instead of advancing in this respect. Neither has sufficient attention been paid by the crofters to what may be called the sanitary management of stock; too often these are seen infected by scab and other preventible ailments. Nor in the general case, has the land been any better managed by crofters than the stock upon it. Modern discoveries for stirring the activities, and applications for augmenting the fertility of soils, they have, with few exceptions, despised or ignored. The land has neither been so well tilled nor drained as even moderately successful agriculture requires. Nor have ordinary prudence and foresight in the tending of growing crops, or in husbanding crops been more apparent. Let it be admitted that adverse and discouraging influences of climate operate powerfully against the success of Highland farming, the fact remains that, working side by side, under the same conditions of weather, and free to adopt identical methods of tillage or pasturage, the sheep farmer has prospered, and not seldom blossomed into a man of wealth, while the crofter remains in the grasp of poverty, and struggles for the mere day-to-day necessaries of life, let alone its comforts or luxuries. He not infrequently sinks, indeed, in his later years, into the ranks of pauperism, or into the scarcely less deplorable dependence upon son or son-in-law who follows him in possession of the croft, and in due time succeeds him in the same miseries connected with it.

Inverness — George Malcolm.

If all this is true of that halcyon period—'the good 'old times' of crofter agriculture; if it is true still, as the appointment of this Commission is warrant for assuming, and overwhelming facts disclose, is there not here a strong *prima facie* case against the taking of measures for intensifying or perpetuating a social condition among a class which has in the past proved so distressful? It has been suggested that there are at present more hopeful conditions for a further test of the crofting system. But what are these conditions? The providential decrees which govern climate have not been altered in the Highlands. Nor is it apparent that this optimist view is largely shared by the class on whose account it has been propounded. From the genesis of the movement now known as the 'Crofter Question' it has been conspicuously conducted and controlled by external agents, who have copiously scattered the seed which erewhile has ripened into a pestilent crop of discontent, mixed on occasions with the rank weeds of lawlessness, to the sorrowful astonishment and regret of thousands of the crofters' warmest friends. The worst belief of these friends fell far short of beholding that utter disregard of law and order, and cowardly resort on several occasions to intimidation, and even attempted bodily injury to man and beast, of which some unworthy individuals among the crofters have been guilty.

So matters stood until in 1883, a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the condition of the Highlands and Islands, composed of a number of very competent Highland gentlemen, with Lord Napier as president, was appointed. After long and patient investigation of their subject, a masterly Report was presented by these Commissioners, which, though loaded with and marred by a vast quantity of unveracious and worthless matter, contains a very large amount of reliable and useful information concerning the past and present condition of the Highland people and their agrarian customs. The presentation of this Report eventuated two years later in the passing of the 'Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886,' under the pilotage in its earlier stages at least of Sir George Trevelyan, who was then, as he is now, Secretary for Scotland. Though this Act, which is now the palladium of crofter rights, may be considered the sequel of the Royal Commission of 1883–84, it is not by any means a replica or literal fulfilment of the findings and recommendations of that Commission. It may not have been surprising that Sir George Trevelyan in his speech of 25th February 1886, in introducing the Crofters Bill, should have betrayed considerable inaccuracy and ignorance in his treatment of Highland affairs as they

then stood, but it was with some astonishment, which has never been explained, that it was found that while in his Bill some of the most important and vital recommendations of Lord Napier's Commission were deliberately ignored, on the other hand various provisions were introduced which that Commission had either directly or by implication declined to recommend. Sir George in bringing the Bill before the House of Commons certified that it was an embodiment of proposals which 'would settle and ought to settle a burning question.' That it has not done so is now known to everybody. The existence of this honourable Commission is a conclusive proof of it; and there is a strong probability that this failure is mainly due to the omission to give effect in the Crofters Act of 1886 to some of the strongly enforced recommendations of the very strong Commission who reported in 1884. The authors of these recommendations were much more likely to be right than the originators of that irresponsible advice which has so conspicuously failed in that utility and finality which Sir George Trevelyan so much desiderated in 1886, and is again unfortunately in search of.

Under the Crofters Act, 1886, what may be called 'forcible tenancy' was for the first time imposed upon Scottish landlords, or rather upon that section of them —the sinners above all others—who were within the scheduled area of the Act. It secured to the smaller tenantry of that area (under certain statutory and onerous conditions) fixity of tenure and fair rents, free sale was withheld, but a partial substitute for it was conceded in the provisions for compensation for improvements effected by the tenant on his removal from the tenancy, and in the clause regulating succession to crofts. The working Commission or Land Court which the Crofters Act called into existence was endowed with practically autocratic powers for the fixing of fair rent, and for dealing with arrears of rent. The power to remit or suspend payment of arrears of rent was unfortunately, and perhaps unavoidably, open to abuse, inasmuch as it opened a door to unscrupulous persons to evade their just engagements, though quite able to fulfil them. Not a few persons it is feared bowed the knee to this golden idol.

A very extensive business has been conducted by the Crofters Commission or Highland Land Court. From 1886 down to the end of 1893, the applications before it for the fixing of fair rent have amounted to 18,269, and of these 17,790 have already been disposed of, and the Commission seems to be now within measurable distance of finishing its original labours. It is proper to note that while the applications for fair rent have been so numerous, only 564 applications for enlargement of holdings have been made, a proportion which is not suggestive of a general or extensive desire for more land on the part of crofters. This will be more fully referred to at a later stage of this statement.

Having thus rapidly sketched the origin and effects in the past of the crofting system, and commented upon the existing condition of the crofter class under the influence of the special legislation which has recently been applied to it, I proceed now to consider the question from the point of view which has led to the appointment of this Commission. The *raison d'etre* of the Commission is a certain agitation or movement of public opinion in which two elements have been conspicuous. *First*, the existence in certain districts in the Highlands, almost wholly insular or seaboard, of a very inconvenient overcrowding and overlapping of the population, producing serious social and economic evils; and *Second*, the opinion that this condition and these evils may and ought to be relieved and corrected by a resort to migration of a proportion of these congested communities to other districts within the counties to which this inquiry is restricted. The agitation I have referred to generally embraces a *Third* proposition, viz. :—that this migration ought to be effected, and for a time, maintained by public agency; but there appears to have been no instruction to your Commission to deal with this side of the problem. I do not pause to inquire how far the agitation concerning these questions has really permeated and moved the whole body of crofters in these counties, or even that limited section of them who can alone be accounted congested, and whose condition calls, it is alleged, for alleviation in the manner suggested. I believe it has not done so, but that it is to a large extent the production and the nursling of a small but prominent and most persistent body of men, who have thrown themselves into this question with very diverse motives; some with benevolent and patriotic intentions, some from no deeper or more useful promptings than the merely sentimental or picturesque in Highland social life; but the larger number from the cravings of notoriety, or the more unworthy calls of self-interest, personal or political.

While agreeing with the statement that in certain insular and seaboard localities in the Highlands there is at present inconvenient and probably insanitary overcrowding of crofters and cottars which must be relieved, I do not hold with the other propositions that relief can best be effected by transferring portions of these communities to other districts within the crofter area, there to pursue and perpetuate their present mode of life; and that this transference should be accomplished and supported in some degree by public money or credit.

If I have in the preceding part of this statement accurately depicted the past condition of the Highland crofter and his predecessors in the same class of life, and fairly explained his present situation and prospects under the environment of the special 'beneficial' legislation which he has recently enjoyed, it must be inferred that the crofter system is at fault. If it has done so little in the past to provide for its followers even a humble share of the comforts and decencies, let alone the brightness and rewards, of life, it must be weighted with inherent elements of failure, incapable of permanent elimination, and certain, under existing or extended dimensions of the system, to eventuate in the same experiences in the future as have flowed from it in the past. But as *primâ facie* argument will not here suffice, more explicit consideration of the subject will be given under the following heads, viz. :—

First. — Are the propositions referred to this Commission feasible? And
Second.—If feasible are they desirable?

I believe them not to be feasible as a permanent settlement of the crofter question, and their infeasibility presents itself to me under several aspects, viz. :—

Insufficiency of land; unsuitabitity of climate; and overpowering expense.

Upon the simple arithmetical question of the extent of land existing within the territory to which this Commission applies, suitable for the crofting industry, and governed as regards situation, quality, present utility, and other considerations, by the terms of reference to the Commission, I do not propose here to enter in much detail. While it is a main point for elucidation by the Commission, it is of subordinate importance to the further question whether such land, whatever its extent may be, can now, or may hereafter, be put into the occupation of crofters under conditions whereby they may realise a profit, or in other words, derive a living, according to a reasonable standard, from the same. But having, for a purpose not very dissimilar to the present, been led to make some investigations into this matter a few years ago, I may here be allowed to state very briefly the results of that inquiry. My inquiry, made in 1885, related, *inter alia*, to the extent of arable land at that time or formerly within the then existing deer forests. Queries were submitted to the owners and lessees of the whole of the 109 deer forests, which then existed. From a small minority, no replies or information reached me, but taking those from whom I received answers to my queries (which I think included all the larger and more important deer forest) as an index

Inverness.

George Malcolm.

of the rest, I found that the proportion of arable land to hill pasture land in the deer forests stood in the ratio of 1½ to 1000. The total area of the deer forests, as had just been ascertained by Lord Napier's Commission, was then 1,955,209 acres, which gave 2933 acres, or as my returns made it 3184 acres, as the extent of arable land within the whole of the deer forests. Throughout this inquiry, I have noted the evidence upon this point, so far as it has yet been disclosed, and have observed that it has been confirmatory of the conclusions arrived at by myself, eight or nine years ago.

It is proper here to state that even this limited quantity of arable ground in deer forests would not be all available for redistribution among crofters. Much of it, nearly the whole of it, probably,—though within the confines of the deer forests, is in no respect made use of for the support of deer. It is fenced from the pasture land to the exclusion of deer, and is either let for rent to small tenants, or held by servants, as part of their wages. You could not, therefore, bestow this land upon crofters from other localities without inflicting obvious hardship and injustice upon the present occupants of it. It would be a clear case of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul.' In not one of the deer forests under my personal management, is there a single acre of arable land assigned to the keep of deer. Every bit of arable, in some cases conjoined with a goodly slice of hill grazing land, is either separately let to tenants of the smaller class, or held and cultivated by the servants required in these districts; and not only are these plots of cultivated ground effectually fenced against incursions of deer, but the whole of the low-lying pasture lands, adjacent to these deer forests, which are occupied by crofters, are similarly protected.

The foregoing remarks with regard to the extent of arable land in the deer forests, may, I think, be considered as applicable generally to sheep farms also, with the qualifying observation that the ratio of arable to pasture land may be higher in the latter case. It has not hitherto, as far as I am aware, been accurately ascertained.

Throughout the discussions and the taking of evidence at inquiries, preceding the present inquiry, relating to the crofter extension movement, it has been uniformly and consistently insisted upon by crofters and agitators alike, that, in the formation of an ideal croft, whether by way of extension or new creation, there must be a combination of arable and pasture land. Opinions have never, I believe, varied about this, although they are rather divergent as to the necessary or desirable proportions of each description of land. Many widely differing views of the best size of crofters' holdings, and by consequence, of its rent or annual value, were propounded to the Royal Commission of 1883–84, and are recorded in their Report. For example; the idea of extent of one crofter of the most suitable size of holding was represented by a rent of £8; another said he should require a croft of £16 annual value; while many were of opinion that crofts or small farms ranging from £30 to £40 in rent would be necessary to fulfil the desire which was expressed by a Hebridean crofter who said 'The very thing we want is to live as farmers 'on a farm where we could make a living out of our 'crofts by our own labour.' (*Napier Report, p.* 100.)

Similarly variable opinions were expressed in 1883–84 and are still held, as to the numbers and descriptions of live stock necessary for the satisfying croft. In Skye it was found by the Royal Commissioners of 1883 that the minimum requirement would be 4 or 5 cows and 50 to 100 sheep; in Uist 6 cows, 2 horses, and 40 to 50 sheep; and in Lewis 6 to 10 cattle and 40 to 50 sheep. (*Napier Report, p.* 100.)

The parallel evidence received by the Royal Commissioners of 1883 as to the extent of arable land required for the best size of croft ran thus:—In Skye 'enough cultivated land to support a family;' in Uist 'enough arable land as would supply a family with 'food'; and in Lewis 'from 6 to 10 acres.' (*Napier Report, p.* 100.)

Inverness.

George Malcolm.

The extent of hill land (which it is necessary to bear in mind would have to be at a moderate elevation) which these estimates imply, allowing 3 acres for each sheep, and an equivalent extent for cattle, would be from 270 to 300 acres for each croft. (*Napier Report, p.* 101.)

Practical testimony received by the Commissioners of 1883 from other sources than the crofters, and opinions elsewhere officially recorded, confirm or do not materially differ from the figures above stated. These will be further referred to when the financial side of your inquiry or the profitable occupation of new or extended crofts is here considered. (*Colonisation Committee Report, p.* 295, *Question* 4769, *Question* 4799.)

The conclusion arrived at by the Royal Commission of 1883–84 was that 9 to 10 acres of arable land and 277 acres of pastoral land were indispensable for the making of a croft capable of supporting a crofter family in any approach to comfort and decency. (*Napier Commission Report, p.* 101.) If that view was correct,—and I think it erred in assigning an insufficiency of land,—it follows in the light of the inquiry made by me in 1885, and so far confirmed by the present official inquiry, that the total arable area of all the deer forests would not suffice for the provisions of 400 crofts. How much arable land the sheep farms within the crofter counties contain has never as far as I know been brought to light. The ratio, I am ready to admit, will probably be larger than in the case of deer forests, and the area under sheep farms in the counties now under consideration is greater than the area under deer forests. The following view of the extent of land under deer forests and sheep farms in these counties, though a mere estimate as regards the cultivated land on sheep farms, may not be very wide of the mark:—

	Total Acreage.	Pasture.	Arable.
Under deer forests, .	2,552,383	2,548,555	3,828
Under sheep farms, .	3,119,959	3,112,303	7,656
	5,672,342	5,660,858	11,484

Thus we have, if there be any approach to accuracy in this estimate, a total arable acreage of 11,484 acres. Assuming all this land to be existent, there remains the question;—can it all be made available for crofter cultivation? By availability I do not here mean, or merely mean, suitability for profitable or advantageous occupation, but rather its applicability for division or distribution in a physical sense. Only a very small proportion of it would be available for new crofts unless indeed most of it were diverted from its present use, by sheep farmers, existing crofters and servants, which would be manifestly absurd and unjust. Further, every one knows that the arable land on sheep farms and deer forests is not all situated at one place. It exists, often in small isolated patches, in different localities. If such arable lands are therefore to be utilized for crofts, the crofters will have to be widely distributed, one or two here and there. Rarely could they be set down in townships or groups. Thus would originate serious difficulties. It would, in the first place, lead to difficulty in regard to common pastures. Pasture could not easily be used in common unless there was contiguity of residence, and where there was not pasturage in common there would have to be separate enclosures, greatly enhancing the expense of fencing. Separation or isolation of crofts in single holdings, or holdings in groups of two or three would also land us in difficulties in reference to

roads, schools, and other accessories of village communities. The plantation of communities of crofters in localities never before populated, or which have been long devoid of population, would obviously call for the attentions of the road-maker, the schoolmaster, the doctor, and probably the minister. In districts where a considerable population was thus congregated, those calls on the common public purse, though grevious and unjust to the general body of rate-payers, might not be seriously withstood, but they would be indefensible, and indeed impossible, in cases where only one, two, or three families were concerned. Such cases would perforce be left to 'fend' for themselves in matters of access, education, health, and religious ordinances.

Of all the influences which have led to the troubles and privations of the smaller tenantry in the Western Highlands, possibly the most malignant is the unconquerably inclement climate. No other considerable part of the British Isles,—perhaps no British Colony,—few parts of the world, are subjected to a rainfall so copious, or so frequently visited by violent onsets of wind, as the Western Highlands. The average rainfall is between 80 and 90 inches, and in many districts it exceeds 100 inches; and when there is added to this the destruction often caused by gales of such violence and duration that no corn crops, whether standing or cut, can withstand them, it is no wonder that the cultivation of cereal crops is, for any useful purpose, almost an impossibility in these parts. In many places in the North-West Highlands there are few days of the year on which rain does not occur, and a rainfall of 1, 2, or even 3 inches in a single day is at some of the more humid stations not uncommon. The experiences of the year 1892 have afforded a notable example of the hopeless difficulty of arable farming in this respect. From June till the end of October rain fell with such continuity and copiousness that all efforts timeously to conduct the usual agricultural operations were baffled, and the harvest of 1892 was one of the latest and most disastrous on record. In many places in the North-West Highlands so late was it before the corn was ingathered, and so damaged was its condition, that it was literally unfit for the use of man, and of hardly any value even for stock. An illustration of this in my own district (where no less than 111 inches of rain fell in 1892) may be alluded to because it happened to have been noticed by a writer who appears to have visited a number of deer forests in that year. This gentlemen was so captivated by the smiling appearance in July of a patch of oats, and so moved to grief at its being included in the adjacent deer forest (which it was not) instead of being let to an industrious agricultural tenant (which it was) that he incontinently poured out in pamphlet from the phials of his minatory eloquence against the lairds and lessees of deer forests in general who could sanction such iniquity. But what was the subsequent history of that particular field of oats? In the interval between the apostrophe of this glowing but inaccurate scribe, and the reaping of the corn in question, upwards of 30 inches of rain and snow had fallen and had so soaked and battered the grain as to render it practically useless. Similar deplorable instances of ruined crops throughout the North-West Highlands in 1892 might be mentioned almost without limit. Nor was this disastrous harvest confined to these parts. It may be said to have been general throughout the North of Scotland. No traveller by the Highland Railway for example, could pass through Strathspey without having his sympathies aroused for its hapless tenants. Perhaps there is no healthier or more enchanting region than Strathspey, during the warm and dry summer months, but how terribly rigorous it may be during the rest of the year was greviously illustrated in 1892. The corn crops on the higher parts, having been early damaged by frost, and subsequently overtaken by snow, were literally levelled to the ground, and destroyed for all useful purposes,—many fields not having been reaped at all.*

* The above remarks respecting the harvest of 1892 were written in 1893.

These observations on the severity of the climate and the hopeless difficulty it interposes against profitable cultivation of the soil in these parts, will be illustrated by reference to the map showing the rainfall of the British Isles issued by the Scottish Meteorological Society (which I submit) and are confirmed and emphasised by the following extracts from the same source of the mean annual rainfall at some of the principal recording stations in the West and North Highlands:—

County.	Station.	Mean Annual Rainfall. Inches.
Argyle,	Duart,	91·08
„	Tobermory,	75·32
„	Quinish,	56·09
„	Camusinas,	83·22
„	Corran,	78·85
„	Airds,	60·08
„	Dalmally,	78·80
„	Loch Awe,	79·91
„	Dunolly,	61·99
„	Oban,	65·35
„	Melfort,	83·91
„	Glenfyne,	102·43
„	Glencroe,	128·50
„	Ardrishaig,	66·20
„	Dunoon,	74·98
Inverness,	Glenstrathfarrar,	59·04
„	Fort-William,	80·91
„	Invergarry,	60·70
„	Glenquoich,	104·62
„	Glenfinnan,	106·35
„	Inverie,	79·11
„	Kinlochmoidart,	64·44
„	Raasay,	74·28
„	Uig,	66·16
„	Waternish,	92·52
„	Dunvegan,	75·37
„	Portree,	87·28
„	Sligachan,	92·02
„	Kyleakin,	75·76
Ross and Cromarty,	Lochbroom,	51·32
„ „	Gairloch,	49·79
„ „	Applecross,	57·35
„ „	Strome Ferry,	65·30
„ „	Inverinate,	72·89
„ „	Strathconon,	51·48
„ „	Stornoway,	44·24
„ „	Bernera,	66·53
„ „	Harris,	45·15
„ „	Lochmaddy,	55·47
Sutherland,	Helmsdale,	35·13
„	Lairg,	39·04
„	Tongue,	38·41
„	Cape Wrath,	39·32
„	Scourie,	43·90
„	Achamore,	76·64

In an interesting article by Dr Buchan of Edinburgh, Secretary of the Scottish Meteorological Society, on 'The climate of the British Isles,' from which these figures are quoted, that eminent Meteorologist remarks, 'The West Highlands present the most extensive 'region of heaviest rainfall in the British Islands. 'The mountain masses, along whose slopes the rain-'fall is precipitated, offer a practically unbroken face 'of high lands directly in the course of the rain, 'bringing winds of the Atlantic. Further, these 'mountain masses present innumerable lochs and 'valleys, directly in the course of these winds, up 'which therefore the winds are borne, and being 'cooled as they ascend, pour down those deluges of 'rain which deeply trench the sides of the mountains 'in the lines of their water courses.'

When even at the level of the sea cultivation of land in the North-Western Highlands is attended with such difficulty and unfruitfulness, it may be understood even by those who are not personally familiar with the climate of that region; that cultivation at altitudes over a few hundred feet above

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

sea-level, must be beset with insuperable difficulty. Yet persons are to be found ignorant or rash enough to advocate experiments in cultivation in the West Highlands up to 500, 700, or even 1000 feet of altitude. In places having the driest and best climate of which the British Islands can boast, cereal cultivation at these altitudes is always attended with risk of failure; in the climate of the West Highlands it would be the greatest folly. While crofters do, as a rule, struggle on in their efforts at cultivation, with what poor results every visitor to these parts is familiar, it is seen on the other hand that the larger farmers in the same districts being better instructed, and perhaps enjoying a larger discretion, and choice of agricultural systems, are generally throwing their arable lands out of cultivation and into permanent grass. Having had practical experience of the thriftlessness and loss attending rotating cultivation of land in these regions, they are wisely yielding themselves to the dictates of the permanent factor,—natural law,—by which this matter is in the end controlled.

In considering whether a systematic and wholesale furnishing out of new crofts from deer forests and sheep farms within the scheduled counties is feasible, a further and very important aspect of the case is, what would it cost? No reflecting person will dispute that this side of the matter is as certainly dominated by economic law as are the points that have been previously here discussed, viz.:—the available quantity, and the limits of cultivation, of land suitable for this purpose. All are equally and unalterably regulated by physical or economic law, and it needs no special wisdom to foretell that an enterprise of this kind, which is unable to pay its way, must end in no great length of time, in disastrous collapse.

In discussing this phase of the crofter question some important and necessary considerations have sometimes been left out of calculation. With some this is due to imperfect knowledge; with others it arises it is to be feared from a less innocent cause. The cost of migrating crofters is sometimes regarded from the point of view of the crofters only; but clearly there are other interests which ought to have consideration, viz. :—those of the landlords, and those of the ratepayers generally. At the very outset the compensation provided under Clauses 8, 9, and 10 of the Crofters Act, 1886, on the renunciation of holdings would face the landlords, falling upon them, or on the adjoining tenants with whose holdings the vacated old crofts might be consolidated, in sudden and wholesale fashion, it would probably be impossible to meet these claims, and a strong temptation would arise to seek relief in the immigration of new and independent tenants to reoccupy the vacated crofts, which would surely be a misfortune.

But assuming this initial difficulty to have been overcome, let us next see what would be the expense of establishing a migrated crofter, under conditions which would afford him and his family a reasonable prospect of living in comfort. No one, it may be assumed, would count it any improvement on the existing state of things to remove families to crofts of inadequate size and insufficient equipment, in localities where they would be complete strangers. Their second state, in such a case, would be much worse than their first, inasmuch as many of them would have to forego the more or less substantial help they had derived from fishing, and from seaware, in their former locations. 'By far the greater number of the 'crofters and cottars of the Highlands and Islands 'of Scotland are wholly or largely dependent for their 'subsistence on their earnings as fishermen,' said the Royal Commissioners who reported in 1884. (*Report*, *p.* 53.) There would be, to begin with, the cost of transport, but as this would be an indefinite and varying, and probably not individually heavy item, it may be here left out of account.

It is certain that in numerous cases,—indeed in every case after the limited extent of arable land had been apportioned,—there must be a heavy charge for reclamation. If that were undertaken by any one other than the crofter himself, and were done thoroughly, it would be putting it very moderately at £20 per acre, or for a croft of 10 acres of reclaimed land, say £200. Some notable reclamations of land in the North and West Highlands have very largely exceeded this estimate, and have not been successful after all, but such cases lie manifestly out of account in considering our problem.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

But, say some of the leading advocates of migration of crofters, the land would be reclaimed by the crofters themselves, and they would also build their own houses. What sort of house is here meant may be inferred from a statement of one of these gentlemen to the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Colonisation in 1890, viz. :—'I think 'if you would give say £30, it would be extravagant 'to go to anything further than that for a house for crofts such as these.' (Evidence of Mr Alexander Mackenzie—*Colonisation Report*, *Question* 5114). Can it be possibly supposed that in these days a dwelling-house for a whole family, affording means of observing the decencies of life, and providing reasonable accommodation, can be erected for such a sum, even with the crofter's own labour thrown in? The time has, it is believed, gone by when any attempt to reproduce and perpetuate the old, insanitary, comfortless, and it may be said, indecent type of crofter's cottage, would be tolerated. The new style of crofter's house must not be repugnant to the public sense of decency, or offend the requirements of the Acts of Parliament applicable to public health, whatever may be the cost of it.

As with the buildings which the crofter would erect if left to his own unassisted efforts, so it would be with the reclamation of his land. By his own unaided means it would too surely be done superficially and unproductively, and herein to some extent lies the reason why crofter lands yield, as a rule, so much less than farmers' lands. Many crofters are indeed incapacitated from age and otherwise from undertaking the heavy manual labour which these works would necessitate. By some means or other, therefore, a very large sum must be found for trenching, clearing, and draining new land for all those crofters who cannot be provided with it from the existing stock of cultivated land; but, as in the present state of our knowledge, the quantity of new arable land which would be required, and the consequent expense of creating it, is unknown, I shall leave this estimate unsettled for the present, and proceed to show what in my view would be the individual cost of planting and equipping crofts of adequate size from *old* land capable of immediate occupation.

The expression 'croft of adequate size' may be variously interpreted. I think that no croft up to the maximum limit of rent,—£30,—is in the North or West Highlands capable, without supplementary help from extraneous sources, of sustaining a family in comfort and sufficiency of living, to say nothing of affording, by dint of thrift and saving, a chance to any members of the family of rising higher in the social scale. No holding, in my opinion, of less extent than may be reasonably obtained for a rent of £50 or £60 can possibly do that; but as we are in this inquiry dealing with crofts as legally defined (*Crofters Act*, 1886, *Section* 34), I shall adopt the maximum rented croft as the subject of the following estimate of capital required, and constructive account of profit and loss, for such a croft.

The capital account would stand thus:—

New dwelling-house of 4 rooms (2 on ground floor and 2 above), stone and lime and slated, . . .	£180	0	0
Barn, byre, and other offices, do., do., .	80	0	0
Fencing, say 800 yards at 1s. . . .	40	0	0
Draining, clearing, and other preparatory work, ...	30	0	0
Carry forward, . . .	£330	0	0

Brought forward, . . .				£300	0	0
Stock :—						
1 horse and 6 cows, .	.	£92	0	0		
100 sheep, . .	.	150	0	0		
Implements, . .	.	20	0	0		
				262	0	0
				£592	0	0

For the first year there would not only be extra expense in setting the croft agoing, but there certainly would be some loss in acclimatising the sheep stock to the ground, and all things considered, probably less than an average return. In future years, subject, of course, to market variations, the following would be the Revenue Account :—

Receipts.

Sales :—			
1 cow, ...	£7	0	0
3 stirks, ...	9	0	0
20 slack ewes at 12s., . .	12	0	0
30 wedder lambs at 8s., . .	12	0	0
5 shot ewe lambs at 12s., . .	3	0	0
20 stones wool at 8s., . .	8	0	0
	£51	0	0
Excess of expenditure over receipts, ...	9	0	0
	£60	0	0

Expenditure.

Rent, ...	£30	0	0
Interest on Capital at 4 per cent.,	23	12	0
Rates, ...	3	0	0
Dipping, ...	1	5	0
Fire Insurance and sundries, .	2	3	0
	£60	0	0

The prices here set down for sales of stock are considerably in excess of prices current in 1892, but it is thought well to allow some margin for a return to better prices. In this balance-sheet nothing is credited for produce of the cultivated land, for the simple and sufficient reason that all this, and probably more, will be consumed in the support of the family, and of the live stock during the winter and spring. 'At no time,' says the Royal Commissioners Report of 1884, 'that we know of, was the 'cereal production of the Highlands, as a whole, 'equivalent to the consumption of the inhabitants.' (*Napier Commission Report, p.* 6). I have not been without doubt whether the wool raised on the croft should not be similarly treated ; some of it certainly would be used at home ; but in any case the value of the cereal produce may be safely set against the value of the labour of the family on the croft, neither being entered in this account.

The calculation of interest on capital in the foregoing account is made on the assumption of the investment or loan being permanent and well secured. If, however, it were to be gradually liquidated by annual payments, covering principal and interest over the usual period of years, the burden thus laid upon the crofter would before many years too probably land him in bankruptcy.

The example just given may be taken as of special application to the western side of the crofter area, and before leaving this division of our subject it may be well to state a case, also, which would more particularly apply to the eastern and more favoured side of that area. Here it would be necessary to resort to a partition of existing farms ; and the divided holdings might pass above the crofting rent limit of £30. For this purpose I shall take a case, present to my mind, as to which some communings about its sub-division have already been held. It will illustrate the supreme difficulty of providing equipment for a number of separate holdings out of one. The farm in question contains 160 acres arable and 362 acres pasture. The present rent is £130. The existing buildings upon it cost £1850. Suppose this farm to be now divided into four holdings, each containing 40 acres arable and 90 acres pasture, it is evident that the present buildings would serve only one of the four tenants, and that entirely new buildings and other equipments would be required for the other three. What would these cost? A *dwelling-house*, containing on ground floor a room, closet, and kitchen, with lean-to for milk-house behind, and two attic bedrooms, built of stone and lime, and slated and plastered, could not, exclusive of carriages, be provided for less than £220

And a *steading* suitable to the holding, containing barn, byre, turnip-house, and cart-shed, built of stone and lime, and slated, could not be erected for less than 300

Further for necessary *fences, sheep-fold, &c.*, . 60

Capital required for buildings, &c., for each holding, ... £580

Each tenant's share of the original rent would be 33

To which add interest on above capital at 4 per cent., say 23

Amount of new rent of each holding . . £56

Where are tenants to be found to enter upon small holdings upon these terms ; and if not by this method and upon such terms, how otherwise are such holdings to be created? It would be idle to expect proprietors to do so, even under compulsion, if that be conceivable, for speedy bankruptcy would be the fate of nearly every one of them. Be it observed that as yet we have got no further than providing the land, and the buildings for its use ; but farming land and buildings must have stock, which, in the case we are dealing with, would necessitate a further sum of at least £300, expended upon a horse £25 ; eight cows, £96 ; five young beasts, £40 ; fifty sheep, £100 ; and implements, £39. Here would be created a further capital charge of £12, making in all an annual payment of £68 for rent and interest, if everybody is to have his own out of this transaction. Nor has allusion been made to the fact, that in all cases of this kind the larger part of the original buildings upon the farms broken up, could not be utilised for the new holdings. They would serve one of the smaller holdings only, and what was not thus required would be abandoned.

Estimates of the expense of establishing and equipping small holdings upon much lower terms have, I am aware, been submitted to you, but as one who has been long and frequently engaged in the erection of such buildings, I am obliged to say, advisedly, that having regard to the comfort of the tenant, and the efficient management of the holding, the figures I have given cannot be judiciously reduced.

With regard to the security available for advances to crofters for the provision of buildings and stocks, it is evident that it would be of a very precarious character. Any security at all, taken over sheep or other live or moveable farm stock, must, when fairly looked at, be seen to be quite illusory. No banking or other reputable lending agency would touch, or ever does touch it ; and no one who knows what the vicissitudes risks and losses of Highland sheep farming are,—the mortality from ordinary and abnormal causes ; the variableness of markets ; the incompetence, or it may be the dishonesty of management ; and such like, can entertain any doubt that in eschewing such transactions lenders are right. Even over the buildings provided from such loans, good and substantial as these might be, the security would be more or less insufficient. It would depend entirely on the energy, prosperity, and honesty of the borrower ; in other words, on the established success of the scheme of plantation of crofters now being considered, an issue which is very extensively doubted,

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

and which to say the least, is far from being assured. Upon failure or miscarriage of this crofter enterprise the security for these loans, even over the buildings, would disappear, for if these buildings, with the other provisions of crofting equipment, were not wanted for such a purpose, they could not be used for any other.

Such is a financial view of this question as it would affect the crofter, and him only; but, as already said, there are other important interests which cannot be left out of account. The interest of the landlord, who of all persons would be most affected, is to a certain extent involved in the estimates above stated; but he is in other respects deeply concerned. He is concerned as an owner, who would not only have his ownership seriously compromised by a forcible plantation of tenants upon his property, whom he did not want, and whom his existing tenants did not want; but by the same operation he would be so fettered in the management of those parts of his property,—sheep farms or deer forests,—which were not appropriated to crofters, that overwhelming loss to him from that cause would very probably ensue. This, as well as the interest of the general body of ratepayers in these proposals, I propose to consider at a later stage. Here I will only further point out that the cost of migrating and settling crofters would not end with the provision of houses and other farming equipments, wherever, at least, a township or community of crofters was established. For all such places a road communicating with the nearest existing highway would have to be formed and upheld; a school would have to be erected and maintained; provision would have to be made for the functions of the parish doctor and sanitary inspector, all matters which would involve a large capital and annual outlay, falling upon the county and local rates.

In dealing with the subject of local migration of crofters it will be obviously advantageous to examine any actual examples of this which may have recently occurred. For practical purposes it is difficult to obtain this advantage, for the known cases, either under voluntary agreements between proprietors and crofters, or under the statutory powers conferred upon the Crofters Commission, are few. It is significant that applications by crofters for more land under the Crofters Act, 1886, have not been more numerous if there be truth in the statements sometimes heard, that more land is so much desired by them. From the establishment of the Crofters Commission in 1886 down to the end of 1893 only 564 applications from crofters for extensions of holdings have been lodged, while no fewer than 18,269 applications have been received for the fixing of 'fair rent,' of which 17,790 have already been disposed of. It is also suggestive that of these 564 applications for more land only 8 related to land in deer forests, the remainder presumably applying to land devoted to sheep and other purposes. Thus the total number of applications for enlargement of holdings was only 3 per cent. of the total number of applications for revision of rent; and the total number of applications for more land to be taken from deer forests was only 1·4 per cent. of the total number of applications for more land from other sources.

To account for these facts, which challenge attention, it has been stated that the fewness of official applications for enlargements of holdings is due to the restrictive statutory conditions under which these operations are effected. There is, however, some reason to doubt this, the conditions of enlargement of holdings are specified in Sections 11 to 15 of the Crofters Holdings Act, 1886, and were fully discussed in committee while the measure was before Parliament. The Act was introduced and carried by Mr Gladstone's government, upon whom these provisions for extension of crofters' holdings were strenuously and successfully pressed by the representatives of the crofters in the House of Commons.

In liberality to crofters they are far in excess of the original proposals of the Bill, and were looked upon then as having curtailed to an 'irreducible minimum' the powers and position of the owners of crofting land within the area to which the Act extended. The Secretary for Scotland and the Law Officers of Scotland who conducted the Act of 1886 through the legislature, were the same gentlemen as fill these offices now, with one recent exception, and there is reason to believe that it was not without hesitation that they consented to widen to their present dimensions the original provisions of the Bill with respect to enlargement of holdings. Be that as it may, the fact is undeniable that only an insignificant number of crofters have applied under the Statute for additional or enlarged holdings. There has been no combined, considerable, or conclusive manifestation among the crofter class of a desire to forsake their present locations for homes or holdings in other, and it might be, distant parts of the Highlands, where the conditions of removal would entail as great a wrench of old associations and attachments, and as much initiatory anxiety, as emigration to another continent would. It is probable that a consciousness of hopeless inability to stock and carry on new or enlarged holdings may have mainly induced this indifference of crofters to local migration, at all events there is not sufficient evidence that they have been deterred by the statutory conditions regulating the process.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

These remarks, of course, refer to the past, and to the existing state of the law; but it must be admitted that any scheme of migration of crofters providing for new as well as enlarged holdings, must include a relaxation of the restriction that lands for such purpose must be upon the same estate, or in an adjoining parish to that in which the applicants reside at the date of their application. It may be added that another of the conditions applied to enlargement of holdings by the Act of 1886, viz., that sheep farms then under lease were not to be available, has become practically inoperative by the lapse of time.

The cases of enlargement of holdings under the Crofters Holdings Act, 1886, are so few and so recent that it would hardly be prudent to generalise from them, though the many instances of inability or unwillingness to pay 'fair rents' which have come under the cognisance of this Commission do not give an encouraging view of success.

There are, however, some cases of the kind of longer standing, the outcome of private and voluntary treaty, which it will be useful to look into.

On the Macleod estates in Skye, several experiments of the breaking up of sheep farms for sub-division into crofts have been tried by the present proprietor. An early instance of this kind was Glendale; and somewhat prominent evidence of the poverty of the inhabitants of this place has been before the public for some years. Another was the partitioning of the farm of Ullinish in Bracadale. It was let in common to five tenants. They were men of some resources, they built houses, and with the assistance of the proprietor purchased stock. Yet they have not prospered. The original rent of £200 which these tenants accepted as fair, was soon, at their request, reduced to £150, then to £100, and now they desire to be released altogether. Of the advance of £1000 made by the proprietor to them at entry, evidence has been laid before this Commission that very little has been repaid. A third instance was at Roag, where Macleod had eight crofts of 10 acres each laid out and fenced. These crofters have a large extent of hill pasture. The cumulo rent of £70 is considered low, yet this adventure has also been a failure, and the tenants are already considerably in arrears. In 1883, Lady Gordon Cathcart declined an offer of £131, 5s. from an eligible tenant for the farm of Bentangaval, in the island of Barra, in order that she might divide it for crofters. It extends to 1750 acres, and it was apportioned among forty-five crofters. Of these only thirty-five took up their lots. The result has been a complete failure. The total rent was £133. Only £70, 13s. 8d. of this was paid even in the first year, but much worse remains. During the six years ended at Whitsunday, 1891, only £68, 1s. 9d. of rent was received, while the amount

exclusive of interest which should have been received was £798—the arrears in this case amounted at the end of the seventh year to £792, 4s. 7d. Another experiment of this kind in Barra by Lady Gordon Cathcart was Allasdale. It was divided among seven crofters at a total rent of £110. The fittest persons in the island were selected for these large crofts; the land was excellent, and everything was done by the estate to promote their success. They have been in possession for fully ten years, but this venture has also turned out a failure. Of the total rent accruing during these ten years not one half has been paid; very large abatements have been made, yet still a very large amount is in arrear, and this notwithstanding the fact that at the end of the fifth year the rent was reduced to £80 or about 27 per cent. Other experiments of the same nature in the islands of Benbecula and Barra by Lady Gordon Cathcart have proved equally disappointing. The general condition of the crofter tenantry on the West Highland estates of Lady Gordon Cathcart may be gauged by the fact that at the end of 1892 close upon £1000 of arrears of fair rents were due—an accumulation of only three or four years, in contempt of the authority of the Crofters Commission.

Another case of the conversion of sheep farm grazing into crofter holdings may be quoted from the Lews. At Martinmas 1885, a tract of land extending to 4486 acres was disjoined from the farm of Park and offered to three or four tenants. At that time no small tenants able to take and stock these holdings could be got, but ultimately it was let to six tenants at a total rent of £51. A rent of £70 from one tenant was refused in order that the crofter experiment might be tried. Here again the same tale of deep arrears and voluntary retirement of some of the tenants is heard.

Turning to the mainland a few instances of the results of extending or creating new crofter holdings may be given. A case in the west of Sutherland is specially interesting as having occurred since 1886, and been conducted under the orders of the Crofters Commission. In 1888, on the application of a number of crofters, parts of the farms of Oldney, Achmore, Ardvar, and Clashmore, and of Glencanisp deer forest, in all to the extent of about 12 acres arable and 6508 acres hill pasture, was broken up under an order of the Crofters Commission, and partitioned among 210 crofters at a cumulo 'fair rent' of £174, 19s. 9d. The landlord was ordered to supply fencing materials for about six miles, costing £440, 15s. 9d, and the crofters were ordered to erect these fences before taking possession of the land. Now, how were these operations carried out, and with what results? At Achmore, on receipt of the order of the Crofters Commission, a hirsel of this farm was cleared of sheep, but nine of the twenty-two crofters to whom this land had been appropriated at once repudiated the transaction alleging that they had been deluded into the application for it by a neighbour, and petitioned the landlord to retake these nine shares of the ground, from which on their urgent appeal, he had just removed the sheep stock and the shepherds. Matters remained in abeyance till 1891 when the Commissioners returned to see how their orders had been carried out. The Commissioners withdrew this land from the nine repudiating crofters, and gave it to the others, but no rent was obtained for the same for two years.

At Nedd, where additional ground to the extent of 434 acres had been given, the Commissioners found that the fence ordered to be erected by Whitsunday, 1889, had not been completed, and that consequently possession of the ground could not be taken. They withdrew the share of land assigned to two of the crofters, and extended the time for completing the fence to the others till Whitsunday, 1892. It is believed that it has not yet been passed by the Commission and meantime no rent has been paid for this enlargement.

52,547. *Mr Sutherland.*—Which enlargement is that?—It is a place called Nedd.

52,548. What is your authority for making the statement?—I have the authority of the estate, and have the documents with me.

52,549. Are you aware that that matter was before us at Lochinver?—No, I do not know; I am only giving it as illustrating my own position.

52,550. But if your illustration is not according to fact, it will materially interfere with your argument?—I give the facts as they were given me by the estate authorities, I do not go farther than that.

52,551. Who is your authority for making that statement with regard to Ardvar?—Mr Maciver, Scourie.

In the townships of Inverkirkaig and Strathan twenty-eight crofters had their holdings enlarged by 702 acres pasture land withdrawn from Glencanisp deer forest. As a first result the shooting-tenant renounced his lease, causing a loss of £300 a year to the landlord. In this case also, when the Crofter Commissioners returned, they found that the crofters had failed to erect the fence as ordered. Five of the twenty-eight crofters to whom this land had been assigned two years before, now threw up their shares, as they could not stock them, and these shares are vacant still. Possession of this ground ordered at Whitsunday, 1889, was not taken till Martinmas, 1891, and no rent was received during that interval.

The financial result to the landlord of this operation has for the past four years been a loss of upwards of £1600. Of 'fair rents' amounting to £700, which ought to have been paid, only £315 was paid, and £385 is in arrear. Other difficulties have occurred in almost every township concerned, and it is beyond doubt that many of the crofters who participated in this transaction thought better of it in anticipation than they do now.

Further attempts to establish new colonies of crofters by breaking up grazings and farms at Attadale, Letterewe, &c. might be quoted upon which the same comment of disheartening failure would have to be repeated, but sufficient illustration of the system has been made. Not only are these tenants doing badly in their crofts, and glad to escape from their obligations when they can, but it would seem to be equally true of many of the older crofter tenants, who, far from desiring additions to their holdings, are seeking to throw up what they have, if only they could see their way to a better condition in life.

These notes of past endeavours to settle small tenants successfully in the Highlands by way of migration, would not, however, be complete without some reference to the gigantic land reclamation works which were carried out a few years ago, in Sutherland, by the late Duke of that name. Although the land in this case was not intended, or at least chiefly intended, for crofter occupation, its history has a very pertinent bearing on what has been advanced in these pages. Upwards of a quarter of a million sterling was expended by the late Duke of Sutherland in this enterprise. The latest and finest appliances of agricultural science were brought to bear upon it; special implements for the breaking up, draining, and pulverising of land were invented for it; the best fertilising agents were applied to it, and every known means of making the venture a complete success were lavished upon it, and what was the result? The Duke's representative on being asked, when Lord Napier's Commission sat in Sutherland, what had been the increase of returns in connection with this great expenditure, replied that on the reclamations it was *nil*. What is the result now? The answer may be given by quoting a short paragraph from the Reports of the Agricultural Department. In remarking upon a striking diminution of 7000 acres in the area under cultivation in Sutherland, the editor says:—'This is 'due to the circumstance that a large tract of land, 'altogether occupying an area of this extent, which 'had recently been reclaimed in order to bring it 'under cultivation had been found quite unfit for 'crops of the ordinary kind, or for the superior 'description of grasses, and that it could only be kept 'under rotation of crops by a costly system of

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

'manuring it. It has therefore been allowed to run 'out of cultivation, and will again, as formerly be 'classed as mountain land.' Surely there is here an impressive and unmistakeable warning against attempts at cultivation in the face of elemental forces, which have written *impossible* upon them. If such has been the actual and inevitable outcome of an experiment conceived with all the foresight, and conducted with all the skill and experience which could be brought to bear on it; conducted moreover in a part of the Highlands where the rainfall is by comparison not excessive, much more so will it be with similar attempts in situations more obviously unsuitable.

So many failures of recent crofter partnerships such as have been described, suggest an observation or two about crofter club farms, and the considerations in favour of or in opposition to a possible extension of this system of farming in the Highlands. First of all it ought to be stated that the number of existing *bona fide* club farms occupied and conducted by crofters is small. There are hundreds of instances of grazing and crofter rights or privileges, other than stocks and arable lands, being used in common, but the cases on the mainland and in the Hebrides of community of stock (under one mark) as well as pasture are very few. Nor does it appear from the history of small tenancies or crofts since these began to be held directly from the landlord that farms or holdings held in common were ever numerous in this stated area.

There must be a reason for this,—where does it lie? Is it not in the well-known rule of everyday example, that what a man himself exclusively owns and manages is, with very few exceptions, more successfully treated than where the subject is managed, but not owned, by another, or by a community? In general, but especially in agriculture, there is an incentive to diligence, prudence, promptness, and painstaking in the operations of the individual which belongs not to the commune. Thus it is that club crofter farms have rarely been successful. A partner, or it may be more than one, falls into financial trouble, or he has a difference with his partners on some point of management perhaps, and complications at once ensue. The management is hampered, and stock diminishes and deteriorates, till the whole concern is involved in stringency and probable failure. Indolent and ineffective management, — jealousies and differences about marketings,—the absence of individual independent energy, and, on the other hand, the presence of a listless haphazard 'common' interest in the concern, have too often landed the club farm in disaster. If there have been any cases of apparently or temporarily successful club farms among crofters, it will, I think, be generally found that they have arisen from bounties or concessions by the landlord upon the foundation of the club, rather than from inherent elements of success and self-made effort. At the best, the level of attainable individual prosperity is, under the necessary rules and limitations of these combinations, a very humble one, and, it is to be feared, may not be improved. It is a hard and fast system, without elasticity or capability of advancing its members to a higher plane of social conditions.

For these reasons the club farm has little popularity among crofters themselves, and is favoured by few indeed among those who are practically concerned with the ownership or management of Highland estates.

Thus far these observations on increase of crofters' holdings have been mainly directed to its practicability from the crofter's side of the question. If a comprehensive and systematic policy of crofter extension combined with local migration, on the lines submitted to the Royal Commission, can be shown to be impracticable, there is nothing more to be said. I venture to think that the considerations, physical, climatical, and financial, which have been here advanced, strongly support the negative conclusion, but as these opinions, the soundness of which I believe will be amply demonstrated should they ever be tested in practice, may not at present be generally accepted, I will for the moment assume the feasibility of a large measure of crofter extension by means of migration, and inquire for a little into its desirability. There are very weighty interests which demand equal consideration to those of the crofters. There is the particular and definite interest of the landlord, and there are general interests in which the whole body politic is concerned. It will not be disputed that the proposals under consideration ought not to be proceeded with, or at least that they will not rest upon an equitable basis, unless they can be carried out to the common advantage. Legislation for a class has deservedly fallen into disfavour, and it ought not to be revived in this particular case unless under stress and compulsion of overwhelming reasons.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

Referring first to the effect that a general scheme of plantation of crofts upon lands presently dedicated to other purposes would have upon the estates and means of the landlords, the influence which this would exercise upon the remaining parts of the holdings whence these crofts had been obtained, claims attention at the outset. Whether this is considered in its effects upon the deer forest or the sheep farm, such knowledge and experience as I have acquired during a long and constant residence in the North-West Highlands constrain me to say that if you took from such subjects the arable or cultivable land, together with all or most of the low-lying pasture land, and thus limited your sheep or deer to the pasturage of the higher lands, letting them have no access to food or water under an altitude of 1000, 700, or even 500 feet, you would create a condition of things which would extinguish both sheep farms and deer forests as valuable subjects. The *rationale* of this is very simple. Neither deer nor sheep can live, or ever have lived, on the higher mountain ranges of the Highlands all the year round. By far the greater area in the Highlands is over 1000 feet above the sea, and it need not be said that this is not only far above the range of profitable cultivation in that region, but is likewise beyond the limit of grazing during the winter months. Further, the extent of land dedicated to deer forests and sheep farms below 1000 feet level, bears a small proportion, —certainly not more than one-fifth,—to the extent above that altitude; and it is not too much to say that all this enormous area above 1000 feet, or whatever height may be assumed to be the limit of possible grazing in winter, amounting within the crofter area to 5 or 6 millions of acres, or as much of it at least as had been bereft of arable and low pasture land, would practically fall into disuse. It would be of little or no value as a lettable subject, and most of it would revert to waste, as indeed it was prior to the introduction of the modern system of sheep farming. Why and how this would happen may be looked at a little more closely.

First as respects *sheep farms*. From the seventeenth century, further than which it is not material to carry this inquiry, till the last quarter of the eighteenth century when the improved mode of sheep farming began to find a home in the Highlands, land was held under three different forms of occupation. It was either let (1) to tacksmen who personally occupied it, and kept around them a number of 'Scallags' or cottars; or (2) to tacksmen who were merely middlemen and sublet the land to tenants of inferior grade; or (3) to groups of joint-tenants holding directly from the proprietor (Skene's *Celtic Scotland*, Vol. III., p. 370). But it must be remembered that before the advent of systematic sheep farming under large holdings, occupation or at least profitable use of land in the Highlands, was confined to the lower ranges. There was no attempt at regular grazing on the higher ranges. In these days, says Skene 'the 'great mountain ranges and the groups of larger hills 'either formed deer forests or lay waste.' Another eminent authority has estimated that 'the intro-'duction of sheep farming into the Highlands was

'equivalent to the reclamation from pure loss and 'waste of somewhere about nine-tenths of all the 'mountain area,' and adds that 'when it was dis- 'covered for the first time about 1793, that the 'modern breeds of sheep could live and thrive on the 'Highland mountains all the year round, a great 'portion of the country was as much redeemed and 'reclaimed for the use of man as if it had been lifted 'from the bottom of the sea.' Occasional reference is made in present days to utilization of the higher grazings in former times, before the sheep farming era, when it was customary for some of the inhabitants of Highland townships, especially the females, to remove with their cattle to 'sheilings,' which were at some distance from, and usually at a higher altitude than the township or home grazings. But these sheilings or summer grazings, the situation and boundaries of many of which are still traceable, were not only of limited extent,—and generally at altitudes far below the uppermost grazings, but were always composed of the choicest portions of pasture, as was natural where the choice was so large in those merely cattle grazing days, and the occupation only for a few weeks of the year. The prime object of these brief migrations was the husbanding of the pastures at the homesteads or townships for support of the cattle during the long and rigorous winter and spring seasons,—a practice which confirms the observation, elsewhere made, that no form of profitable use of these mountainous and stormy regions is possible without a varying proportion of low-lying ground of good quality as a refuge and resource for stock when the upper pastures are inaccessible. In those old days almost the only live stock kept in the Highlands were the native cattle, still well-known, and a few sheep of indigenous breed which for more than a century have been quite discarded. But only the lower walks of the pastures were frequented even by these hardy cattle; there were millions of acres, affording an untold extent of valuable pasturage, of which no agricultural or economic use was ever made. Further there were, and still are, many thousands of acres of ground so rocky and precipitous as to be absolutely inaccessible. Such ground has never been nor ever will be trodden by man or beast, a fact which ought to be taken into account when reference is made to the extent and character of the land devoted to deer forests.

For a long period after its introduction into the Highlands sheep farming enjoyed unbroken prosperity. Men endowed with capital and special knowledge of this branch of agriculture were attracted from the lowland and border districts to the Highlands, where opportunities were available of acquiring extensive sheep walks at very moderate rents. In those early days 'foreign competition' in this line of business had practically no existence. Importations of foreign or colonial wool were then of little moment, and the idea of importing meat, dead or alive, fresh, chilled, or frozen, from abroad had not even been started. But by-and-bye changes occurred. The importation of wool, which fifty years ago was quite inconsiderable, has now expanded to the prodigious quantity of 671,663,194 lbs. The total importation of butcher meat, which in the end of last century was practically *nil*, has now (1893) reached the enormous figure of 9,306,804 cwts. or 465,340 tons. No fewer than eighty-eight fast steam vessels fitted with the latest refrigerating machinery, and having an annual carrying capacity of 6,700,000 carcases are now engaged in this business. Nor is this very extensive transfer of foreign and colonial produce for consumption in the British Isles effected at the cost of a diminution of the live stocks of the foreign and colonial countries concerned. The contrary appears to be the case. For example, while the sheep returns of New Zealand stood at 16,753,752 in 1891, they were 19,357,000 in 1893, an increase, in spite of all exportations, of 2,603,248. Another development of the trade in foreign and colonial farm food stuffs are the remarkably successful consignments of butter during the past year. During the current year (1893) the exports of this article from Victoria alone will it is anticipated, not be under 3000 tons. In short, so easy and certain has the transport of perishable produce from even the ends of the earth become through the discoveries of science and the enterprise of capitalists, that no limit may now be set to further developments in this direction.

As these importations of wool and meat grew in volume and value, markets fluctuated, and were now and then greatly disordered by excessive imports due to the operations of speculators, or the vagaries of fashion in woollen fabrics. A gradual decline of this great and vital Highland industry has ensued, so that everywhere sheep farming tenants,—especially those of southern origin,—are manifesting a very decided desire to escape from this business. The most desirable sheep farms of a quarter of a century ago,—such as, when open to be let, drew quite an embarrassment of competitive offers,—are now neglected, or can only be let, with all their natural advantages, on terms very much reduced,—in some cases the reduction being to less than half the former rents. Especially is this the case with respect to wedder farms. The expenses of rearing and supporting during winter and spring when the upper pastures are not available this class of sheep, have so absorbed all profit, or so often led to loss, that now it is hardly possible to let a purely wedder farm at all. Herein lies one of the chief reasons for the formation of additional deer forests within the last decade, a fact which will be more fully noticed at a later part of this statement. What it is wished here specially to point out,—if indeed it is not self-evident,—is, that if amid the stress of a depression of sheep farming, so deep and universal as to threaten abandonment of this industry altogether over a great part of the Highlands, that part of the land is withdrawn, viz.:—the arable and low-lying pasture upon which are supported the ewe stocks, which alone render a continuance of sheep farming under present conditions possible, a paralysis of this business must ensue. Such a calamity it might be said would at the worst be only partial, for not *all* the ewe ground and arable ground would be taken away; to which the obvious answer would be that if this were to be the only remedy or provision for congestion of the crofter population, the available supply of such land would be far short of the necessity. It is, however, hard to accept the possibility of any movement which would involve the ruin of the supreme industry of the Highlands, in order to clear the way for a social experiment of vastly little importance when compared with the great interests it would supplant, and which there are grave reasons to fear would itself eventuate in a failure disastrous to all concerned.

If such would be the effect upon sheep farms of a withdrawal from them of the ground which is alone capable of wintering stock, the same would apply with redoubled force to the lands occupied as deer forests. With rare exceptions deer forest land runs to a much greater altitude than sheep grazing land, and is generally of a more rugged and mountainous character. The deer forests contain little arable ground, and much less low-lying pasture land than sheep farms. Of 130 deer forests appearing in the Parliamentary Return of 1891, no fewer than 126 reach an altitude of over 1000 feet; 106 exceed 2000 feet; 61 exceed 3000 feet; and 7 exceed 4000 feet; the highest being 4248 feet. On the other hand, only 31 descend to the level of the sea. *Sea-level* when west coast grazings are referred to not uncommonly conveys an erroneous impression of the value of such grazings to those who are not acquainted with those parts. It might be supposed that along the verge of the sea, at least, there would always be a belt of sweet green pasture, invaluable for the winter support of grazing stock; but in not a few cases this would be a fallacious inference. In some cases the rugged, rocky conformation of these lands extends sheer down to the water's edge, so precipitous, indeed, as to be quite inaccessible to animals, and totally uninhabitable by man.

It may be desirable to examine this feature of deer

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

forests a little more closely, seeing that much misconception of their character, and ignorance of their capabilities still prevail. For this purpose inspection is invited of the map of deer forests which I submit. It will there be found that within the region marked off by the lines coloured red, an enormous preponderance of deer forest ground is situated. It will likewise be noticed that a very large proportion of this ground lies within the locality denoted by the parallelogram on the left or west side of the map, which is the district distinguished far above all others in the United Kingdom for altitude, ruggedness, sterility, and humidity. Unblessed by nature in an agricultural sense, swept and ravaged by frequent storms, and deluged by a nearly incessant rainfall, in very truth little of such land is capable of being put to human use or habitation of man during the more inhospitable months. It is, in fact, fit for no other purpose than that to which it is now devoted.

There is another test which may be applied to deer forest land and which strikingly confirms its comparative worthlessness. There is here submitted a short table showing, *First*, the total number of deer forests in each of the counties now under consideration. *Second*, the total acreage of each and all these counties. *Third*, the acreage of land afforested in each and all these counties. *Fourth*, the percentage of afforested land. *Fifth*, the average rent per acre of each of these counties. And *Sixth*, the average rent per acre of the deer forests within these counties.

County.	Number of Deer Forests.	Total Acreage.	Acreage afforested.	Per Centage afforested.	Rent per Acre of whole County.	Rent per Acre of Deer Forests.
					s. d.	*s. d.*
Argyll, . .	11	2,056,402	215,298	10·47	4 1¾	0 8
Inverness, . .	44	2,616,545	901,761	34·46	2 4	0 10½
Ross & Cromarty,	46	1,970,004	809,819	51·11	2 9¾	0 11¾
Sutherland, .	8	1,297,849	212,658	16·38	1 6¾	0 7¾
Caithness, . .	1	438,878	38,560	8·77	5 6½	1 6¾
	110	8,379,678	21,178,056	22·24	3 3¼	0 11¼

A glance at this table is calculated to dispel many fallacies as to the extent of land dedicated to the maintenance of deer, and as to its character and value.

From this table, and from the table of more detailed 'particulars of deer forests in Scotland' forming an appendix to this statement, it will be seen that in Argyllshire there are eleven deer forests ranging from 1500 to 3776 feet of maximum altitude; that nine of these touch sea-level, five of the nine being, however, islands; and that even in this county a very large preponderance of the land afforested is over 500 feet above the sea. In *Inverness-shire*, with its forty-four deer forests, the maximum height of the land various from 1386 to 4248 feet (excluding Arisaig and Skaebost, which are fenced deer parks, and exceptional in the Highlands). But here perhaps the most sterile and valueless land in an agricultural view is found; twenty-six of these deer forests or 60 per cent. attain an altitude of 3000 feet and over and no fewer than 39 or 90 per cent. exceed 2000 feet. Ten of these forty-four Inverness-shire deer forests touch the sea. Of these five are insular and five have a seaboard of the most rocky and absolutely unimprovable character. In the county of Inverness there are eighteen deer forests which are over 500 feet at their *lowest* level. The area of these is 428,657 acres, being 47½ per cent. of the whole afforested bounds. *Ross and Cromarty* contains forty-six deer forests, varying from 223 to 3637 of maximum in height. In this county nine deer forests, five of which are insular, touch the sea. The very small forest of Arnish, in the Lews, which attains to no greater height than 223 feet, must be looked upon as a very uncommon case, in proof of which it may be stated, that there are in this county fifteen deer forests with a *minimum* altitude of 500 feet and an extent of 196,988 acres, being nearly one quarter of the whole afforested area. *Sutherlandshire* has eight deer forests ranging from 1706 to 2952 of maximum height above the sea; of these two fall to sea-level, but an overwhelming proportion of the afforested area lies above the 500 feet line. *Caithness* has only one deer forest, with a maximum of 2312 and a minimum of 100 feet above sea-level. The extent of arable land in all these 110 deer forests is less than 3000 acres, and the extent of land below 500 feet is comparatively small, in all probability not more than 12 per cent., whence a suggestive view of the agricultural value of deer forests as a whole may be obtained.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

Glancing now at the rents of these afforested lands, the view is not less hopeless. While the average rent per acre for the whole of Argyll is 4s. 1¾d.,—the land afforested is only worth 8d. per acre. For Inverness the average rent per acre is 2s, 4d., and the deer forest rent per acre 10½d. For Ross and Cromarty the average rent per acre is 2s. 9¾d., and the deer forest rent per acre 11¼d. In Sutherland the average rent per acre is 1s. 6½d., and the deer forest rent 7½d. per acre. And in Caithness while the average rent per acre is 5s. 6¼., that of the deer forest is 1s. 6¾d. While the average rent per acre of the counties of Argyll, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness, considered together is 3s. 3¼d., that of the deer forest area in the same counties is only 11¼. Comparisons are here limited to those counties containing deer forests which are within the scope of the Royal Commission, but if similar comparisons were made in the other deer forest counties, viz.:—Aberdeen, Banff, Bute, Forfar, and Perth, still greater differences between the value of afforested land and land otherwise occupied would be brought out, proving conclusively that only the poorest land is devoted to deer in any of these counties.

From these facts,—which I believe to be indisputable,—the conclusion is irresistible, that withdrawal of the arable land from deer forests,—very limited as it is,—and withdrawal at same time of the lower pasture ground, say under 500 feet level, would be fatal to these institutions. The red deer is a hardy animal, and is perhaps better able to endure the privations of hunger or inclemency of weather than the hardiest breeds of sheep, but though, during the milder portion of the year, he seeks the highest mountain retreats, he is compelled, in common with every four-footed animal in the British Isles, to betake himself during winter to the lower expanses, where alone shelter and herbage can then be obtained.

But some one may say 'could not those higher 'grazings in sheep farms and deer forests be brought 'into account for the support of temporary or flying 'stocks of cattle or sheep during summer and 'autumn'? This is not in a physical sense impossible, but the important element of such a question is, would it pay? Light temporary or flying stocks invariably mean light rents. In this case they would mean insignificant rents compared with the rents obtained for deer forests under the present system, much of these steep and lofty grazings never could be reached by cattle, while the impossibility of wintering either cattle or sheep without access to the low grounds, and the uncertainty and risk attending the only alternative to this, viz.:—selling off the stocks before winter, would be so serious that even upon the most favourable rent arrangements very few persons would be induced to embark in such a business. Further, an enormous extent of fencing to keep separate the permanent stocks of the crofters from the roving or flying stocks, would be required, the cost of which can be appreciated only by those who are acquainted with the extremely irregular conformation of the ground in question. When it is suggested that a hard and fast line,—be it 500 or be it 1000 feet above the sea-level,—below which there should be no afforested ground, should be adopted, it is evident that the extremely tortuous lines of the coast, and the suddenly varying levels of ground which characterise the Highlands, are not understood. Argyllshire, alone, with its islands, presents a coast line of 2289 miles. Adherence to a given level would fre-

quently necessitate three or four miles of fence for each mile 'as the crow flies;' and upon such a basis the fencing of upper from lower lands would be extremely absurd and, indeed, financially impracticable. A 'give 'and take' line here excluding and there including portions of ground on either side of the ideal line, would be absolutely unavoidable.

If, then, the proposals under consideration of the Royal Commission, viz:—withdrawal of the arable land, and the more accessible and valuable low-lying pasture land, from sheep farms and deer forests for the purpose named in the reference to the Commission, would be incompatible with the continued prosperity, or probably, the very existence of these concerns, it is proper to inquire what the effects of their suppression or decay would be.

First, a word or two may be said as to the probable extent of this economic revolution. Ten years ago it was estimated by the Napier Commission that the crofter and cottar population of the area then, as now under consideration, numbered about 200,000 souls, or probably about 40,000 families (Report, p. 108); and the census of 1891 has revealed the fact, which had been previously suspected, that the congested districts, such as Lewis and some parts of Skye, have increased considerably in population between 1881 and 1891, and are consequently more congested now than ever. This, taken in connection with the minimum quantity of land which by common agreement would be required for the establishment of each new croft, makes it evident that upon any plan of re-partition of the land among the whole of the congested crofter and cottar inhabitants, not only would all the arable land and all the adjacent low-lying pasture land of sheep farms and deer forests in these counties be absorbed for such a purpose, but it would not nearly meet the necessities of the case.

The great sheep farming industry has, it will not be disputed, exercised an enormous influence in the marvellous development of the Highlands during the present century. No interest in the Western and Northern parts, at all events, approaches it in importance, and none has done more for the Highland people. From inflexible economic causes sheep farming has been for sometime, and is at present greatly depressed, but that this is not an irrecoverable condition may be inferred from the fact, that the number of sheep within the United Kingdom is growing,—there having been an increase of 1,454,370 within the last two years, to which all parts of the country have contributed. In the six counties forming the field of this inquiry, the number of sheep has remained almost stationary within the same period. So important and indispensable to the welfare of the Highlands does this great interest remain, even in its presently less flourishing condition, that the evils which would result from its permanent downfall need no demonstration, and I pass on to consider the effects which would ensue upon a serious curtailment or extinction of deer forests.

The origin, extent, attributes, and influence of deer forests have been much canvassed within the past few years, and few questions have elicited in their discussion evidence of so much misconception. Deer forests have been involved inextricably in the crofter controversy; and though it is now universally admitted that they have not been the cause of evictions, or led to the depopulation in any wise, yet they have been denounced on other pretences equally by persons who clearly knew little or nothing about them, and by hired agitators on crofter platforms, who have hesitated not to permit their zeal to over-ride their accuracy. Deer forests have been described, sometimes in ignorance and sometimes in malice, as the fruit of the riches and luxurious idleness of the latter half of the present century; and the outcome of gilded temptations offered by a southern plutocracy to a financially feeble Highland proprietary. But such has by no means been the case; at all events, it is a statement which requires considerable qualification. Deer forests are not a growth of yesterday. Evidences and records of these institutions may be found in abundance as far back as the sixteenth century. It has been computed that of 130 deer forests now in existence as stated in the Parliamentary Return of 1891, at least twenty have existed from time immemorial; that fifty-nine were formed between the beginning of the present century and 1872, when, in course of a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Game Laws of Scotland, the full number of deer forests was found to be seventy-nine; that thirty more were formed between 1872 and 1883, when the Royal Commission of the latter year ascertained the total number of deer forests to be 109; leaving twenty-one as the number formed from 1883 to the latest official Return in 1891.

With regard to the area occupied by deer forests similar error has prevailed. Very exaggerated statements as to this were current till the appearance of the Report of the Royal Commission of 1883, when it was seen that the exact extent of the 109 deer forests then scheduled was 1,955,209 acres.

The Return of deer forests in 1891 brought the number up to 130, and increased the acreage to 2,552,383; but in this return, hastily prepared as it was, there is grave reason to suspect many inaccuracies. For example,—while in the return of 1883 the extent of each forest is clearly headed 'Area in Statute 'Acres,' with replies that are believed to be correct, the corresponding column in the return of 1891 is headed 'Estimated Extent' with figures following, which are in many cases mere haphazard estimates indeed. Here in no fewer than sixty-five cases, being exactly one-half of the whole, the acreage is stated in round figures terminating in three ciphers. In several cases alternative areas, differing to the extent of 5000 acres, are stated. In seventy-two cases common to both returns the acreage set down in 1891 differs from the acreage stated in 1883. In forty-nine of these cases the areas are larger in the return of 1891 to the extent *in cumulo* of . . . . 319,900 acres
In the remaining twenty-three cases the areas are less to the extent of 43,786

Leaving an unaccounted-for difference of 276,114

Nor is this all: the Return of 1891 contains a number of deer forests which are stated to have been formed prior to 1883, yet they do not appear in the Return of that year. The Return of 1891 also contains a number of places, which, as may be shown by evidence, are not, and never were, deer forests in the true sense. There are unexplained discrepancies, too, between the Returns of 1883 and 1891, with respect to altitudes of the forests,—both the highest and the lowest. The Return of 1891 shows thirty-one deer forests as descending to the sea-level, but in none of these cases is the length of coast line stated. In many of these cases the line of contact with the sea is very short, and in others the contiguity is upon a rock-bound and uninhabitable coast. The list of deer forests prepared in 1883 by Lord Napier's Commission was a careful, deliberate, and workmanlike production evolved from reliable materials, and believed to be singularly free from gross mistakes; but from the circumstances above mentioned, and other internal evidence, the conclusion cannot be avoided that the Return of 1891 is not a reliable document.

So also has it been with respect to the qualities of these deer forests; their benefits or their disadvantages. Prior to 1883 uninstructed criticism may be said to have held the field, but since the publication of the able Report of the Royal Commission of that year a better state of public knowledge and of public opinion has prevailed. Not now, for example, it is ever stated that 'clearances' of population were made to make way for the formation of deer forests. All uneasiness in regard to this was removed from the public mind on the appearance of the Report of 1883. Statements to the opposite effect are to be found in the Appendices to that Report, but these, not having been supported by evidence, or tested by examination in presence of the Commissioners, are of no authoritative

value; and the Commissioners, giving weight only to the evidence received in the usual manner, reported 'that during the course of their inquiry they had only 'come upon one clearly established case in evidence 'of the removal of crofters for the purpose of adding 'to an already existing deer forest.' (*Report, p.* 84).

But though responsibility for removals of the population cannot be truthfully laid to the charge of deer forests, the dedication of so much land to purposes of sport has not entirely escaped condemnation, both on economic and on sentimental grounds. Here again, however, a due appreciation of the circumstances and the motives which have induced the owners of these properties to adopt the course of afforesting them will, in nearly every case, compel the candid inquirer to admit that not only was there no other course open to these gentlemen, but that the course adopted has been for the best in the public interest as well as their own. The severe and protracted depression in sheep farming has in many cases compelled the owners of high wedder land either to afforest it or let it lie tenantless, rentless, and useless. Take a typical case; a large sheep farm, probably carrying 5000 sheep, falls out of lease. The outgoing tenant has intimated that he does not desire a renewal of the lease, and the farm is consequently advertised to be let. No offers for it are forthcoming,—a common experience in these times. In such a case the proprietor, if he ventures to take the farm into his own occupancy, is obliged at the outset to find a capital of £10,000 or £12,000 wherewith to buy the sheep stock on the holding. He is very probably obliged to borrow this amount, at a high rate of interest, and upon security other than the sheep stock itself, which, as elsewhere stated, no financier will accept as sole security for an advance. He may be in a position precluding him from even this expedient; and at the best he knows there is no probability, under the financial burden thus imposed, and in view of the unprofitableness of sheep farming, of his carrying on the farm successfully. He is therefore pressed into a very tight corner, out of which the only means of escape is through afforestment of the farm. What else could he have done, or ought he to have done than embrace this mode of relief? He thereby saves and benefits himself no doubt, and self preservation is the primary law of nature, but he benefits his neighbours as well. He secures a substantial rent, and thereby not only prevents the increase of local taxation, which would obviously occur were the farm unlet, or let at a largely reduced rent, but he actually contributes to the amelioration of the taxes then existing, besides having brought into the district a new source of employments for the local population. Such is the description of a case by no means uncommon in the history of the development of deer forests of the later era. Of the twenty-one forests formed since 1883 many have originated in circumstances such as have been here described.

It is hardly necessary to repeat the observation here that upon the food supply of the nation, or even upon local food markets, deer forests exercise practically no influence. The loss of meat by the displacement of stock in all the deer forests in existence is but the fraction of a fraction of the total consumption of meat by the nation. So also is it with regard to wool. A few figures here will demonstrate this lest doubt lingers in any mind. The extent of land afforested is 2,552,383 acres, and it has been officially laid down that five acres of average land devoted to deer forests are necessary for the maintenance of one sheep (Napier Commission Report, p. 86), therefore the deer forests are capable of maintaining 510,477 sheep. But under the universal system of management of hill stocks in the Highlands the number of sheep sent annually to market is only, at the most, one-third of the total stocks, which gives a possible annual output from the deer forests of 170,156 sheep, or reckoning the weight of each sheep at 60 lbs., a total quantity of 10,209,360 lbs. of mutton. Let this be now compared with the national meat bill, being 110·444 lbs. per head of the whole population

	Total Number.	Estimated Number consumed.	Weight per Head.	Weight consumed.
			lbs.	lbs.
Cattle in United Kingdom,	11,207,554	3,735,851	600	2,241,510,600
Sheep in ,,	31,774,824	10,591,608	60	635,496,480
Pigs in ,,	3,278,030	3,278,030	80	262,342,400
Dead Meat Imported.	Cwts.			
Beef, ...	2,008,566	all.		224,959,392
Mutton, ...	1,971,500	all.		220,808,000
Bacon and Ham and Pork,	4,557,310	all.		510,418,720
Tinned or Preserved, . .	769,428	all.		86,175,936
				4,183,711,528

(37,880,764) at last census. Let this be contrasted with the supply of mutton which the grazings comprising the whole of the deer forests would be capable of yielding if restocked with sheep, and the proportion is found to be only ·002 lbs. per head of population.

Still more insignificant is the quantity and value of wool which might be derived from the deer forests when compared with the aggregate consumption of that commodity in the United Kingdom. In 1893 the importations of raw wools to this country amounted to the enormous quantity of . . 671,663,194 lbs.
Add to this home-grown wool from sheep of all ages except lambs, 98,800,280 ,,
770,463,474 ,,

Against this place the product of wool derivable from deer forests. They have a sheep keeping capacity of 510,477, deduct 150,000 under one-year old, from which no wool is obtainable at that age, and there remain 360,477, from which the annual return of wool would be 1,802,385 lbs., an almost imperceptible fraction of the total wool bill of the country.

It is hardly necessary to notice here several minor objections to deer forests which were occasionally heard till they were dispelled by the light shed upon this subject by the Report of the Royal Commission of 1883; but a few remarks may be made on the other side of the case, viz.:—the benefits which are now with little dissent allowed to spring from deer forests.

It admits of no dispute that to the owners of these lofty and rugged pastures the advantage of afforestment, especially in these times of great agricultural dullness, are great; but a little impartial consideration must also show that these advantages are widely diffused, and may not be withdrawn without material injury to large classes of people besides landlords and their immediate dependents. It would not be too much to say that in some localities abolition of deer forests would dislocate the whole economic arrangements, and be for these localities a transmutation from prosperity to poverty. The whole of the Highlands indeed are intimately dependant on gains from visitors. The acquisition of money from shootings and fishings especially is immense, and correspondingly great is its circulation among the trading and labouring classes, to whom it is needless to say this is of vital moment.

Through the great rents obtained for the lease of sporting subjects, especially deer forests, the parish rentals are very largely increased, and the pressure of taxation upon the poorer rate-payers is correspondingly alleviated. Over the whole of the sporting areas this is computed to be not less than 25 per cent., while in many Highland parishes the contribution of rates and taxes from sporting possessions is far higher, amounting in some instances to half of the whole rating. In not a few of these parishes rates are abnormally though unavoidably high, reaching to five, seven, and even ten shillings per £ of rental; and in such districts it is evident that a withdrawal of the sporting rental would be speedily followed by financial collapse. Further, these big rents enable the landlords to devote more of their means to improvement of their estates, and to the employment and comfort of their smaller tenantry and employees than they otherwise could possibly do.

But not through rents alone do the Highland

people benefit from the sporting system in their midst. Every lessee of a deer forest, or of a grouse moor, or salmon fishing, must, in the mere maintenance of his establishment, be at considerable charges. In some cases these are upon a great scale. The annual expenditure of all kinds upon deer forests alone is there is reason to believe not less than £325,000. In some of these cases there is afforded steady employment and support to nearly the whole resident population; and a stoppage of this, from whatever cause, would entail the greatest injury and misery upon these persons, which it would be folly to expect could be recouped or relieved by the substitution of a colony of crofters for the former regime. Even where crofters managed to support themselves, after a fashion, it would not be said of them that they ever could be in circumstances to provide employments, or confer benefits, of any kind on the rest of the people in their vicinity. How great would be the contrast between the first state and the last in such a case. In 1883, facts were submitted to me with respect to 52 deer forests (being rather less than half of the whole number then existing), which showed that within a period of about forty years no less than £2,224,823 had been disbursed in connection with these properties, by owners and lessees, in rents, rates, improvements, and other ways, but excluding in every case purchase price. In the same ratio the expenditure applicable to the whole of the deer forests in 1883 would amount to £4,500,000. Ten years have since elapsed during which this expenditure has continuously gone on, so that these figures, great as they are, must be largely increased upon a computation brought up to the present date. The magnitude of this expenditure may excite surprise, but when it is considered that it includes not a few individual cases of outlay by lessees much interested in and attached to their districts, and possessed of ample means, to amounts ranging from £50,000 to £250,000, the matter may be more readily understood. It then may be better seen too, how much the districts and counties so favoured by this would suffer by its discontinuance.

An aspect of the proposal to appropriate the lower grazing grounds of these counties for crofting purposes which has not hitherto been much considered, now forcibly presents itself, viz.:—its bearing on the wood forestry of the Highlands. This is just the land most suitable for the rearing of trees. The arable land is not only very limited, but too valuable and indispensable for other purposes. It is moreover, speaking generally, less adapted to timber growing than sound hill ground at a moderate elevation. Upon the high and more exposed ground of these north-western counties successful timber cultivation is an impossibility. In this region the forces of nature have unalterably determined the timber line far below its limit in the drier and more protected districts upon the same lines of latitude, in the middle and eastern parts. He who would form a plantation of even the hardiest native trees in these wet and windy glens, or bleak hill slopes, must not expect success above a 600 or 700 feet level. If he ventures higher he will, while contemplating with pleasure satisfactory progress along the lower lines of his plantation, be doomed to note with disappointment and repentance the sickly aspect and dwarfish habit of the plants upon the higher parts. This, which must have been often observed by all who are interested in the growing timber of the North West Highlands, is a further and independent proof of its unkindly climate and unproductive soil. Still, there exists along the straths and shores a considerable extent of ground below a certain level which is not given up to the plough,—neither indeed can be without impossible expense,—very well adapted for the growth of timber. It is the only land in these parts fitted for this, with any prospect of commercial success. It is, however, precisely the land which it is now proposed to assign to crofter farming; and if it were segregated to this purpose, the rearing of plantations of trees in these north-western districts would be a lost, or at least impossible art. No longer would it be possible to produce those masses of trees which add so much to the embellishment of the landscape; which sensibly contribute to the shelter and moderation of climate in their neighbourhood; and which, above all, replace the constant abstractions of matured timber, and maintain a home supply of this indispensable commodity. The dedication of such land to crofter farming, under a form of tenure in all probability intended to stereotype it to that special purpose, would be a deathblow to the enterprise of the planter, and threaten with extinction the profession of the nurseryman in these parts. It is humbly suggested that the bearing of your inquiry upon the question of forestry is a matter of moment which should receive full consideration.

While the woodland area of Great Britain now extends to about 2,700,000 acres, there is reason to fear that the formation of new plantations does not keep pace with the consumption of the old. In the art and practice of forestry, Scotland occupies a creditable position. Her proportion of the total woodland area is 905,759 acres, or one-third, while of the planted area of Scotland one-third is in the Highland counties,—Inverness-shire alone having plantations extending to 168,738 acres, an area considerably greater than the surface under all other forms of crops in that county, and more than a fifth of the whole Scottish woodlands. 'It is noteworthy' says a Government Statistician 'that two-fifths of the surface planted in 'the last ten years is returned from Scotland alone, 'while practically half of the 41,000 acres of new 'plantations in that country are accounted for from 'the counties of Aberdeen, Inverness, and Ross.' What is the conclusion to be made from this? Unquestionably it is, that only in these Highland counties, or more extensively and more profitably in them than elsewhere, can the necessary reparations and expansions of planting be effected.

Planting on an extensive scale in the North-West Highlands has in latter days been strongly recommended on grounds distinct from the duty or utility of maintaining a national supply of home-grown timber. It would create a large and immediate channel, and afford a more or less permanent means of employment for the people in districts where work is never plentiful and seldom quite accessible. It would utilise presently unproductive ground; improve the face of the country; and ultimately greatly enhance the value of property. But, as has been said, there are great natural limitations to this view of the matter, and it may be assumed that men of business will take practical account of it, and will not venture to sow where they cannot reap. One point, at any rate, is sufficiently clear. The land now under review, as a possible refuge for crofters, is precisely the land, and the only land, which in these districts is fit for successful forestry. It cannot be dedicated to both purposes.

Such are, I think, the facts of the problem which has been given to you to investigate, and such, in my opinion, would be the inevitable effects of withdrawing from their present form of use, and segregating to the use of crofters, the arable and low-lying pasture lands within the area under consideration. I have shown at the outset that the available quantity of such land is insufficient for the purpose in view. Reasons deduced from the forbidding character of the climate, and from formidable economic and financial impediments have been stated to show that successful establishment of crofters upon these lands is impossible; and some actual and recent examples of failure of such endeavours have been given. It has been urged that even were such a policy possible, it could only be effected at the sacrifice of interests of greater importance than the concerns of the crofters; and that it would indeed operate to the serious prejudice of the *common welfare* of the Highlands. The fact that there has been no real or general demand by the crofter class for migration has been pointed out; and that, on the other hand, the proposed movement would be hurtful and obnoxious to the existing inhabitants of the proposed new

Inverness. George Malcolm.

crofting areas, and would be strenuously objected to by them.

It is by no means my wish to picture on too sombre a canvas the effects which, I believe, would follow adoption in practice of the proposals submitted to this Royal Commission. I trust I am keenly enough sensible of the hard and hopeless lot of many of the crofter class in their present position, and of the desirableness of helping them to improve their condition; but if I am asked whether upon a calm and serious review of the circumstances surrounding this problem, an extensive scheme of local migration of crofters and cottars could be undertaken with reasonable prospects of success, I must, without hesitation, say, it is not permanently possible. Even were its enduring possibility demonstrable, or left an open question, what, under such impediments as have been here explained, could be said of its desirability? How could the disadvantages be outweighed or counterbalanced by the advantages of the scheme?

On the one hand there would be something approaching paralysis of the great concern of sheep farming. There would be extinction of the extensive and increasingly valuable benefits derived from shootings and fishings, which are at present the only prosperous possession within the Highlands. In the wake of these results a general stoppage of every description of land improvement would necessarily ensue; and it needs no proof that by a diminished or suppressed application of capital to the land, the channels of labour must be greatly restricted. With curtailment of the fields of labour, and of the volume of trade, to a serious extent, there would arise an increase of pauperism and an enhancement of rates and taxes. In brief, an economic revolution such magnitude and far reaching influence would be set up as would plunge the material concerns of the Highlands backwards and downwards to the low and meagre level of a century and a half ago, prior to the discovery and introduction of those great interests which awoke the Highlands to that advancement and prosperity in every line of life and business which it has so long enjoyed.

On the other hand, what would the Highlands gain from a feasible system of local migration of crofters and cottars? At the best a place of living for a few thousand families under surroundings and limitations which must for ever preclude them from sharing in many of the comforts far less the pleasures of their more fortunate compatriots. The provision of a home with a few acres, which, unless it were a mere repetition of the wretchedness, squalor, and insanitation of existing crofterdom,—which no local authority would now permit,—must be so crushed by financial obligations as to lead before long to insolvency. It is a scheme which would give impetus and importunity to the baleful cry of state help *versus* self-help, and would lend encouragement and strength to visions, already common, of reaping without sowing,—of consuming without producing, of enjoyment without exertion. Its victims, for so they would in the end be, would be tied to a baneful cast-iron system of land occupation, whence freedom of contract had not only been eliminated, but where a vexatious and oppressive code of conditions had been imposed; wherein protection pure and simple was sought to be stereotyped, and free trade found little recognition. It seems impossible that intelligent Highland men and women should desire the establishment, or would long endure the continuance of a system of living so hard, bare, and incapable of expansion into higher and better things. Their common sense, their education, their ambition, and even their religion must ultimately revolt against it, and flow forward into channels affording possibilities of a sweeter, happier, and even longer earthly existence.

Impregnated with the seeds of agricultural failure, and charged with elements of financial collapse, ready to burst forth on the first reverse, the life of such an undertaking would not be a prolonged one. Sooner or later the dissolution of such a system would be inevitable, but it might be late enough to have meantime involved in disastrous overthrow all those interests which this hurtful and hopeless crofter system had supplanted, and which probably, nay certainly, could never be restored in their former volume and value.

Inverness. George Malcolm.

Divergence from these views will probably be offered to your consideration, as well as, I should hope, full approval and ample confirmation of them. But at the very least, upon such a serious difference of opinion regarding a question which all will admit touches the most vital interests of the Highlands, there is the strongest call for caution, and inquiry of the most searching kind, before venturing on what might prove to put it in the least disputable way, the most disastrous and irretraceable act of policy ever applied to this region. It seems natural, therefore, to submit to your consideration, in the event of your not being thoroughly satisfied, upon the conclusion of your inquiry, of the impracticability of local migration of crofters and cottars, upon a profitable basis, the suggestion of an experimental trial of the scheme. It is believed that no very formidable obstacle to this would be met with if Her Majesty's Government were prepared to embark in it. For this purpose the most obvious and hopeful course would be the acquisition by purchase of one or more of the Hebridean Isles, or a tract of the Western Seaboard adjacent to a congested district, for partition among crofters or cottars in relief of the congestion. The experiment would, of course, be elaborated and wrought out under conditions, the wisest and fairest that could be devised. Expropriation of the landlord on reasonable terms. Crofts suitable in extent, and adequately equipped with buildings, fences, &c. Due provision of necessary roads, schools, and other accessories. Effective rules of management, agricultural, and financial. Sufficient time secured for thoroughly testing the adventure; and so on. No one would probably offer serious objection to an experiment upon these lines; and though none of the larger islands is of sufficient extent to furnish sizeable crofts for all its surplus or landless population, there would at least be scope in this way for a certain measure of present relief. If, simultaneous with this, additional voluntary and probably more effective means of reduction of the overcrowded and poverty stricken populations of the north-west were devised and kept operative, some permanent success might be hoped from the experiment. Even if it resulted in failure, being of restricted application it would, at worst, be failure under financial limitations, and it would have served a not altogether bad or useless purpose. A light and lesson would have been obtained, guiding the hands in power and saving the rest of these counties from becoming involved in a gigantic, chimerical, costly, and disastrous adventure.

While the primary object of these pages is to record a clear and sincere conviction,—founded upon a continuous and consistent train of facts, and the deduction of a lengthened personal experience,—adverse to the propositions submitted to your consideration, I may be permitted, as bearing intimately upon the matters involved, to indicate, at no great length, certain means by which, in my opinion, the overcrowding and other ills pressing upon some sections of the crofter population may be redressed, and a healthy and hopeful change may be initiated.

In considering remedial measures it is natural to turn first to the districts concerned, and see what native helps are possible to the solution of this problem of the social and material advancement of the Highland crofters. The catalogue of actual or possible industrial pursuits in the North and West Highlands is a short and meagre one. Destitute of minerals, and almost equally devoid of textile industries, there are really no staple employments but such as are connected with the landed and fishing interests. The landed interest, with which is associated the concerns of sport, has already been discussed, but some mention must here be made of the fishing in these western waters.

By some it is urged that the settlement of the

Highland difficulties is largely dependent upon improved and steady cultivation of the valuable fisheries which undoubtedly exist around and off the west coast of Scotland. It is true that in several respects fishing in the open sea, especially where this includes culture as well as capture of the produce of the ocean, has important advantages over agriculture. The fisherman owns no lord of the soil; is hampered by no private rights, saving the trifling exceptions applicable to the three mile limit. He pays no rent, and is not amenable to rates or taxes, yet how precarious, fitful, and generally inconsiderable are the results of fishing along the Western Seaboard. Be the reasons what they may, it hardly needs re-statement here that, in comparison with the extent and success of the fishing industry on the east coast of Scotland, fishing on the west coast is of trifling importance. The herring fishing will serve as an illustration of this. While in 1891 the quantity of herrings captured on the east coast was 858,646 barrels, on the west coast in the same year (a favourable one for herring on the west coast), it was only 267,426 barrels. In 1892 the herrings caught on the east coast were 795,277 barrels, and on the west coast 249,042 barrels. While the average take of herrings on the east coast from 1881 to 1890 was 1,111,744 barrels, the average take on the west coast during the same period was only 225,276 barrels. In 1892 the east coast accounted for 79 per cent. of the quantity, and 81 per cent. of the value, of fish of all kinds landed on the shores of Scotland. In 1892 the amount invested in the fishing industry on the east coast was £1,659,000 while on the west coast it was only £209,000.

The apathy, ill-luck, want of skill, or whatever it may be called, of the west coast fisherman is accentuated by the history of the provision made under the 32nd Section of the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886, by which financial assistance is extended to fishermen for procuring and maintaining efficient boats and tackle. In so far as this has been availed of, which has only been to the extent of 246 separate transactions, covering a total amount lent of £30,111, 16s. 7d., at a low rate of interest and repayment of capital,—the scheme has proved a disastrous blunder and failure for all concerned. At the end of 1891 (no loans have since been granted) fully 50 per cent. of the instalments, including interests, of repayment of these advances was in arrear. Not only were there these arrears, but, as at 31st December 1891, the Fishery Board for Scotland state, that they included 'thirty-nine cases of arrears of loans 'which were in such a position that the Board con-'sidered the balances due as irrecoverable. Every 'endeavour has been made both by taking legal 'proceedings and otherwise to reduce the arrears, 'but with very poor results. In many cases the 'Board have had to pay heavy legal and other expenses 'not only in carrying out prosecutions, but in taking 'possession of the borrowers' boats (some of which 'were abandoned and left uncared for) in order to 'avoid almost a total loss.'

In the unfortunate results of this well-meant governmental experiment one may reasonably read a warning of the probable fate of a similar policy if applied to crofts. Analogy in this case, however, should not be carried too far, for it is right to say, that the industry of fishing along the west coast is greatly hampered by the conditions under which it is at present pursued. The lack, in some parts the utter want, of facilities for conveying the takes of fish to a rapid and ready market is a complete bar to steady success. Nor does this apply to off-shore fishing only. With regard to off-shore fishing, when a good take of fish has been secured, it may be after the toil and risk of launching into a stormy sea, the loss and disappointment from failure of market is of course very bitter But it likewise not seldom applies when rich and great shoals of herrings come crowding into the sea, lochs, and creeks, almost to the doors of the fishermen's cottages. Under such circumstances the fish are either not caught at all, or when taken, are sold, unpreventably, at very unremunerative prices. Herein probably lies, it is right to say, some explanation of the seeming indolence, and apparently culpable neglect of opportunities of catching fish, which the west coast men are often accused of. They, in reality, lack the necessary spur to their industry which the certainty of a steady, fair, and always accessible market for the produce of their labour supplies.

In this connection the most pressing need is further railway communications directly to the north west coast, and, if possible, throughout the larger islands. More harbours, and a free extension of postal and telegraphic accommodation, are also no doubt, necessary; but the numerous sheltered arms of the sea to some extent serve as good substitutes for artificial harbours, and lessen the necessity for a great expenditure under this head; and it must be admitted that much has been done in recent years, and much more will probably be done at an early date, to provide adequately for the postal and telegraphic necessities of these parts. But neither telegraphs nor harbours will avail if rapid and effective means of land transport do not exist. Neither of the two railways which touch the north western coast of Scotland at present is of great use for the conveyance of fish in respect to considerable stretches of the fishing grounds. It is necessarily an exceedingly tedious and inconvenient route from the west coast by Dingwall and Inverness to the southern markets, and, therefore, the Highland railway does not meet the requirements of the more southerly fishing quarters. On the other hand, the railway which proceeds from Oban lies much too far south for the wants of the more northerly fishings. What is evidently needed for full development of the fishings of the North Western Highlands, is, at least two additional and independent lines of railway, carried to this coast,—one between the existing railways, and the other farther north. Not till these are made will the latent value of these fisheries be fully utilised for the special benefit of the crofter fisher class, and the good of the public at large. There is good reason to suppose that assistance by Government Guarantee of a small rate of interest on the capital invested, or by a moderate contribution towards the construction charges of these railways, is all that is required to effect this most urgent public improvement. (Since the foregoing was written, Parliamentary sanction has been obtained for a railway to Mallaig on the west coast of Inverness-shire, which, when made, cannot fail to be of much benefit to fishermen and others in these parts). The great benefits which these railways would provide would not be confined to the fishings. While the benefits of harbours are practically restricted to sea-faring interests, those of railways are of universal application, and invariably foster and advance every industry. Wherever they have been established, they have proved a most powerful agent in the extirpation of poverty, idleness, and languishing trade; and it may be confidently predicted that not till these Highlands are adequately penetrated and tapped by this beneficent agency, will the oft-recurring difficulties of this division of the country be permanently allayed.

If within the region under review the supply of profitable employments for the whole able-bodied population is insufficient, and cannot be made sufficient under existing circumstances, it is a self-evident conclusion that the pressure of this superabundant and largely non-self-supporting population, with all its attendant ills, cannot be permanently relieved by a mere redistribution of this population within the same area. It follows with equal clearness that the only effectual and enduring remedy for such a condition of things lies in a partial dispersal of these over-populated communities. As to this dilution of congestion, and as to its urgency, all are agreed, but all are not at one as to the best method of doing it.

Seeing that the whole population of the North-West Highlands cannot be decently maintained through employments indigenous to these parts, there are but two other ways of doing so, viz.:—migration to other

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

centres of industry, and emigration. The wealth, high station, and success in all the conditions of life, which many Highlanders have achieved when emancipated from the forbidding conditions of existence, which in their native parishes were alone possible, should, one would suppose, be a strong inducement to their brethern to endeavour to follow their example in larger numbers. The operation of immoveable economic law, and the natural growth of higher desires in life, quickened by the effects of the excellent system of education now in operation all over the country, will no doubt in due time awaken Highlanders, especially the younger men and women, to the pursuit of this better way. This beneficent movement of population is observed in silent operation in all other parts of the country, and the wonder is that it has been hitherto less seen and acted upon in these north-western districts than elsewhere. Difference of language, and racial peculiarities may be largely accountable for this. Certain it is that to them are attributable much of the idleness, poverty, and general backwardness which have so long rested upon this northern population, and not till these distinctions are rooted out, and the Highland people are assimilated in language, habits, education, occupations, and communications with the busy industrial populations in other parts of the Empire, will this Highland question, with its irritating sores, ever be completely healed.

It should not be forgotten that the crofter system, the system of small tenancies, is not new in the economic and social history of our country; nor has it been always confined to the Highlands. At one time general over the whole of the face of Scotland apparently, it has gradually, at various dates, given place to consolidation of holdings everywhere but in the Highlands. There it has lingered down to the present time. Down to the union of the English and Scottish Crowns, the agricultural as well as the social and political circumstances of the Lowlands, with the exception of a belt along the Eastern Seaboard, were identical with those of the Highlands. The accessibility of this strip along the eastern coast to the visits and influence of both the English and French peoples, as well as its own superior soil and resources, appear to have greatly favoured it, and to have withdrawn it from much of the strife and bloodshed, rapine and famine, which down to 1603, or thereby, were constant scenes in all other parts of Scotland, south as well as north. But, as has been noticed by various writers, while there was this unquestionable similarity between north and south,—between the Celts of the Highlands and the Anglo-Normans of the Lowlands and Borders; while both races were identical in their more peaceful habits and pursuits as well as in their marauding and destructive propensities down to about the date mentioned, their later history, and their present condition, present a sharp and surprising contrast. How is this explained? It lies in this, that, whereas in the south the statutes and executive of the Crown, supported by the augmented power of the Union, were successfully applied in suppressing the plundering forays and frays, and all the numerous forms of lawlessness of those times, the same effect was not produced in the north. In the northern parts of the country, now called the Highlands, the reforming and repressive Acts of Government, though felt and submitted to, to the extent that they closed the age of hostilities between the Crown and powerful chiefs claiming practical independence, failed, for at least a century and a half later, to put a period to the raiding and ravaging of clan upon clan or sept upon sept. While in the south this triumph of authority led immediately to a numerous drafting of the clansmen of these parts from their evil surroundings and pernicious occupations to the seats of peaceful and productive industry, in the Highlands there was no contemporaneous movement of this kind. While in the south, coeval with these changes, there occurred a great extension of agriculture, especially of sheep farming, in the Highlands agriculture made little way, and sheep farming by system found no footing till at least a century later. In a word, while migration with all its benefits, was promptly on the beginning of the reign of order and law taken advantage of by the south, it has, down to the present day, been sparely resorted to in the north and west, though it must be evident that, so far as it has been adopted, it has generally been attended with the happiest results. All this may be clearly traced in the social and material welfare of the people of these respective districts,—now so dissimilar, though differing so little in the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the one case development of population has not risen above the level of requirements,—free and unfettered bargaining rules in the daily affairs of men, excitements to lawlessness or solicitations to evil courses in any shape, are never heard,—the voice of grumbling is still, and peace and plenty fill the land. In the other case a grossly superabundant and too often idle population is found, which has never been able to rise above a squalid life of privation, and struggle for mere existence, and where of late outbreaks of angry discontent, and even resorts to violence, have not been unknown; where artificial remedies have been tried, which have brought no permanent relief, for, being economically unsound, they were foredoomed to failure.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

The loitering march of prosperity of the Celtic Highlands, in so far as it is due to dissimilarity of race or duality of language, is a condition which is gradually, and at an increasing pace, wearing itself out. But the infertility of the northern soil and the inhospitality of its climate, have also been important factors in the lagging condition of Highland crofters. These are, unfortunately, irremoveable barriers to an ideal form of agriculture in these parts,—but if they are irremoveable they may be moved from; and not till a large portion of the population in these north-west districts, now pressing upon the resources of the land far more than the land can bear, betake themselves to other localities and pursuits, may they hope for prosperity equal to that of their fellow countrymen.

No impartial or complete consideration, however, of the problem wrapped in the condition of the crofter population, and of the most practicable and effective means of extrication from its difficulties, is possible without taking into account that which has been most prominently recommended through past investigation and experience, as well as by the highest and most fully instructed testimony contemporaneous with the present inquiry, namely voluntary emigration. Upon that point, as a first and indispensable necessity of immediate alleviation, as well as of permanent improvement, of the state of the people in question, there is a consensus of evidence and opinion, as submitted to every successive official body which has tracked the case, which appears to be quite conclusive. It was likewise strongly insisted upon by the writers of the old Statistical Accounts of the Northern Parishes in the last decade of the last century, men who had the very foremost opportunities of appreciating the conditions and wants of the country at that period. Earlier as well as later writers have likewise, with scarcely an exception, adopted the same view, that emigration must form a leading and essential part of any good scheme for the permanent betterment of this population.

It would be inconvenient to encumber these pages with many examples of the numberless testimonies in favour of emigration which have been referred to, but two or three short quotations from the Reports following Governmental inquiries may be made. In '1841, the Select Committee appointed to inquire into 'the condition of the population of the Highlands 'and Islands of Scotland, and into the practicability 'of affording the people relief by means of emigra-'tion,' after stating that 'the famine and destitution 'in the years 1836 and 1837 were so extensive that 'many thousands would have died of starvation had 'it not been for the assistance which they received 'from the Government and the public' called 'the

'serious attention of the House to the necessity of 'considering some efficient remedies to alleviate the 'existing evils amongst which that which appears 'from the evidence to be of primary importance 'is a well-arranged system of emigration.' Sir John Macneill in his well-known and very able Report of 1851 on the distressed condition of the Western Highlands and Islands arising from the failure of potato culture in 1846–47, and the collapse of kelp manufacture a few years earlier, very emphatically insisted upon emigration as a first necessity of lasting alleviation of this distress, and put upon record that 'in the whole course of his 'inquiry not one individual who was questioned on 'the subject, save one, expressed a belief that the 'population of those districts could be extricated from 'their present difficulties without the aid of emigra-'tion.' Following upon this Report and the alarming state of the population which it disclosed, coupled with the emphasis and urgency with which the resort to emigration was recommended an 'Act to facilitate 'emigration from certain distressed districts of Scot-land,' was passed in 1851, which, however, obtained little favour owing to its cumbrous and onerous provisions.

Coming to a more recent date, the facts and reasons by which state-aided voluntary emigration has been uniformly and strongly recommended by the several Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Committees which were appointed to deal with the acute reap-pearance of the old forms of Highland distress, and manifestations of discontent during the past ten years or thereby are fresh in the recollection of all persons interested. The better known and most im-portant of these, viz. :—the Royal Commission of 1883–84, presided over by Lord Napier, and otherwise com-posed entirely of Highland gentlemen intimately con-versant with Highland affairs, and admirably qualified to appreciate and advise upon the questions submitted to them, insisted upon emigration, 'as an indispensable 'remedy for the condition of some parts of the High-'lands and Islands' (Report, p. 108). The report of Her Majesty's Secretary for Scotland on the condition of the cottar population in the Lews, a sectional inquiry, arising from a recurrence of poverty there in an accen-tuated degree, intrusted to the resident Sheriff of that island and Mr Macneill, Secretary of the Board of Super-vision, gives expression to the same views. Similar testimony is continued and enforced in the 'Report 'of the Commission (1890) (also appointed by the 'Secretary for Scotland) to inquire into certain 'matters affecting the interests of the population of 'the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland,' where the Commissioners say 'that every means 'should be taken to explain the advantages of emi-'gration, and that facilities should be afforded by 'Government to enable those who are willing to move 'to commence life elsewhere; and we desire to place 'on record our conviction that until some measure 'has been taken in this direction no material improve-'ment in the condition of the population can be 'effected.' Lastly, the very important report of the Select Committee on Colonisation in 1891 may be re-ferred to as presenting further emphatic corroboration of the views of their official predecessors on emigration. This large and very able Committee of twenty-one members of the House of Commons, of all shades of politics, and representing many varying interests in life and business, were ordered 'to inquire into 'various schemes which have been proposed to her 'Majesty's Government to facilitate emigration from 'the congested districts of the United Kingdom to the 'British Colonies or elsewhere; to examine into the 'results of any schemes which have received practical 'trial in recent years, and to report generally whether, 'in their opinion, it is desirable that further facilities 'should be given to promote emigration; and if so, 'upon the means and the conditions under which such 'emigration can best be carried out, and the quarters 'to which it can most advantageously be directed.' This committee, after hearing voluminous evidence, and giving prolonged consideration to the subject referred to them; and after indicating that in their view 'Migration' would not offer a suitable or adequate remedy, and after dealing with various suggestions for the temporary or partial relief of destitution in Lewis 'and other spots severely though less terribly con-'gested,' thus spoke of emigration. 'It cannot be 'doubted that there are districts in which no remedial 'measures can be adequate or permanently beneficial 'which do not include some for the reduction of the 'redundant population within manageable limits. In 'so saying, your committee can lay claim to no new 'discovery. From 1836 down to the present time 'competent authorities have from time to time 'declared that the population of these districts cannot 'be extricated from their difficulties without the aid 'of emigration, and each successive report has demon-'strated that the evil and the necessity have contin-'uously increased.'

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

These conclusions, so clear, uniform and emphatic, derived from the fullest and most perfect sources that could be resorted to, and framed with all the care and sifted accuracy of Governmental investigations, cannot certainly be impugned upon any ground of imperfection of inquiry. Nor are the impartiality and freedom from prejudice of this committee less undoubted than their capableness and assiduity.

These official pronouncements, unanimous and decided as they are, do not stand alone in their prefer-ence of emigration as the most hopeful remedy for the congestion and distress in the Highlands. An equally solid, and practically unanimous, body of opinion coming from clergymen, land agents, the larger tenants, and other persons residing among these people, and consequently having the best means of studying this subject, closely agrees with these oft-repeated official findings. Many even of the crofter class them-selves have also, there is good reason for believing, recognised the necessity of a free resort to voluntary emigration for the relief of their home life, and the brightening of the time to come. They only await light and leading to this desirable change.

Surely then, recommendations, official as well as private, reiterated with so much unhesitating emphasis and unanimity, might justly be taken as conclusive. It is nevertheless true, that in these Highland districts, where relief from the congestion and impoverishment of the population have been most clamantly required, scant readiness has been shown in later years to resort to emigration. The reasons assigned for this are various, but two only, which probably embrace all others, need here be noticed, viz. :—(1) imperfection of the schemes of emigration hitherto submitted to the Highland people, and (2) interested misrepresentation of the purposes and results of emigration.

No plan of voluntary state-aided emigration, fittingly adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the Scottish crofters, has yet been advanced. Schemes furthered by Government no less than those emanating from private enterprise or philanthrophy, have been equally marked by failure. Of controversy respecting the personality of the ideal Highland emigrant; whether he should be simply emigrated, or both emigrated and colonised, and of similar barren discussion, there has, indeed, been more than enough; but no scheme of public or private origin conceived with adequate regard to the home condition as well as the over country necessities of the Highland peasantry, has yet been devised. The powers conferred on County Councils under the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889, of aiding in emigration or colonisation, appear to have been still born. So far as known these powers have not been exercised in a single case. An exception to the general failure should perhaps be made of the recent Convention between the British Government and the Government of British Columbia, under which a sum of £150,000 has been appropriated for emigra-tion to and colonisation in the latter country, though even this enterprise appears to stand in need of some elaboration and amendment in order to bring it into perfect adaptability to the ends in view. When that

Inverness. George Malcolm.

has been done, however, there seems good reason to expect that at least one hopeful field will have been opened for the redundancy of the crofter class, where their energies may have a liberal reward.

The advantages of emigration to the overflowing and struggling crofter population of the Highlands are not even in the present day, universally admitted. In some cases the ground of opposition is no more than an unreasonable sentiment of attachment to the land of birth; the people cannot brace themselves to the point of breaking with the old, though it be deeply marked with failure, and girding their energies to the new, so fruitful of better possibilities to them. But more frequently those advantages are hotly disputed by persons whose motives are grounded on self-seeking in politics or trade. By specious detraction of the honest purpose and prospects of emigration, or by dangling before the people misleading views of their situation at home, leading representatives of the crofters have frequently been seduced from the truest interests of their class; and as Highlanders, of whom the crofter body is composed, are as gregarious in thought as they are in material and domestic concerns, counsels inimical to emigration have thus too often prevailed. But notwithstanding all this prejudice against emigration, and the interested efforts to gainsay its success where it has already been fairly tried, emigrants from the Highlands to Canada and elsewhere are rapidly making satisfactory way in their new homes and possessions. When this fact has been sufficiently absorbed and rooted in the knowledge of the Highland people, the same gregarious sentiment which has operated against a free resort to emigration, will, it may be confidently expected, tell rapidly in favour of it. Even now the mythical and untrue, which have been so long, with cruel and culpable persistency, instilled into their minds respecting this matter, are being dispelled by the growth of education and the widening of intelligence among the young. Agitators, professional politicians, and vote hunters, so long the agents in disseminating much unwise and unfaithful doctrine and advice among this people, are gradually being discredited. Driven from pillar to post, they are now at their last line of defence,—an impossible scheme of local migration. The close of a long period of misrepresentation and deception, and the dawn of a more reasonable appreciation of the facts and true position of this social problem, seem at hand.

Inverness. George Malcolm.

So it has always been and will be, that in the long run the homely attributes of industry, self-reliance, sobriety, and prudence assert their sway and determine the individual lot. These are the most effectual counteractives of such ills as our crofter and cottar population are heir to, and offer the most promising guarantee of a better day to come. They are the only sure and safe avenues to comfort, and independence void of spurious elements. Let then this hereditary bondage to a life doomed and demonstrated by the unalterable powers of nature to failure, be abandoned, and let the people seek the more excellent way, as truly they must in varying degrees, in a fuller and more skilful traffic with the riches of the seas which wash their shores; in a wider adoption of more favoured portions of the British Islands for their lines of life, and in a larger resort to those fields of promise in further lands, where kin and clan have already in innumerable cases established themselves amid many blessings.

It is the sincerest wish of the writer of these notes, who throughout a long intercourse with the crofter class has received from them many signs of friendship and respect, and towards whom he entertains every mutual kindly regard, that, by whatever means it may be accomplished, their lives and fortunes may be greatly bettered and brightened in the not distant future.—Respectfully submitted by,

(Signed) George Malcolm.

PARTICULARS OF DEER FORESTS IN SCOTLAND.

(Based upon the Parliamentary Return of Deer Forests in 1891.)

ABERDEENSHIRE.

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Annual Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
		Acres.	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Abergeldie,	Hugh Mackay Gordon,	2,760	No report	2437	1153	1615	0 11 8½	No report	Abergeldie is not a Deer Forest in the usual sense.
Ballochbuie, Balmoral, and Whitemount,	Her Majesty, The Queen,	19,310	Do.	3786	1050	1000	0 1 0½	Do.	
Glenmuick,	Trustees of late Sir J. T. M'Kenzie, Bart.,	12,000	Do.	2722	1050	875	0 1 5½	Do.	
Glentanna,	Sir Wm. Cunliffe Brooks, Bart.,	26,030	Do.	3077	454	1002	0 0 9¼	Do.	Annual Outlay much exceeds the Rent received.
Invercauld,	Alexander H. Farquharson,	20,220	Do.	3586	1100	1500	0 1 5¾	Do.	
Mar,	His Grace, The Duke of Fife, K.T.,	80,100	Do.	4296	1060	4000	0 1 0	Do.	
Blackwater (part of),	His Grace, The Duke of Richmond and Gordon, K.G.,	1,840	Do.	2068	970	100	0 1 1	Do.	
	Total,	162,260							

ARGYLLSHIRE.

Blackmount,	Marquis of Breadalbane, K.G.,	80,000	Only Foresters' Crofts	3602	Sea level	1930	0 0 5¾	No report	
Ardtornish,	T. V. Smith,	12,000	No report	1500	Sea level	400	0 0 8	Do.	
	Carry forward,	92,000							

ARGYLLSHIRE—*continued.*

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
	Brought forward, .	Acres. 92,000	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Jura, ...	James Campbell, ...	27,500	15	2750	Sea level	900	0 0 7¾	5200 0 0	Average yearly expenditure for many years, chiefly circulated in the Highlands.
Rum, ...	George Bullough, ...	27,000	No report	3000	Do.	550	0 0 4¾	No report	Not now a Deer Forest.
Dalness, ...	Mrs Stuart, ...	8,000	None	3766	290	419	0 1 0½	Do.	Afforested in the time of James VI. Rainfall 85 inches.
Scarba, ...	F. C. T. Gascoigne, ...	3,675	No report	1490	Sea level	326	0 1 9½	Do.	
Glen Etive, ...	E. Seymour Greaves, ...	10,153	16 tilled 44 old	3776	Do.	448	0 0 10½	1982 7 11	This amount is chiefly circulated in the Highlands. About £13,000 has been expended in improvements.
Kingairloch, ...	John Bell Sheriff, ...	12,000	20	2423	Do.	430	0 0 8½	800 0 0	
Ardlussá, ...	Walter Macfarlane, ...	17,970	...	1500	Do.	952	0 1 0¾	1060 0 0	This is not really a Deer Forest. A supposed stock of 500 deer run together with a stock of 6000 sheep.
Laggan, ...	Maclaine of Lochbuie, ...	6,000	...	1900	Do.	140	0 0 5½	500 0 0	Whole forest enclosed.
Conaglen, ...	Earl of Morton, ...	11,000	None	3000	46	650	0 1 2¼	3939 18 5	To a very great extent this expenditure is circulated in the district.
	Total, . .	215,298							

BANFFSHIRE.

		Acres.	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Glenfiddich, ...	Duke of Richmond and Gordon, K.G., .	25,000	No report	2583	810	850	0 0 8¼	No report	High ground. Small quantity of arable ground.
Glenavon, ...	Do., ...	40,000	Do.	4083	1190	1300	0 0 7¾	Do.	Any arable land here must be above limit of cultivation.
	Total, . .	65,000							

BUTESHIRE.

		Acres.	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Arran, ...	Duke of Hamilton, ...	3,300	200	1500	Sea level	400	0 2 5	4,000	Whole of expenditure is distributed in Arran.

CAITHNESS-SHIRE.

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
Langwell and Braemore, . .	His Grace, The Duke of Portland, . .	Acres. 38,500	Acres. Nil.	Feet. 2312	Feet. 100	£ 3000	£ s. d. 0 1 6¾	£ 10,000	This expenditure is nearly all local. Rates are very greatly alleviated by Deer Forest Rent.

FORFARSHIRE.

Invermark, ...	Tutors of the Earl of Dalhousie, . .	Acres. 30,000 to 35,000 (say 32,250)	Acres. 228	Feet. 1200	Feet. 820	£ 1000	£ s. d. 0 0 7½	£ 3,960	Rent per acre calculated on 32,500 acres.
Glen Doll, ...	Duncan M'Pherson, ...	14,000	4	3143	1240	557	0 0 9½	1,725	No cultivation can be possible here.
Backnagairn, ...	Trustees of the late Sir James T. Mackenzie, Bart.,	6,000 in Forfarshire	No report	3314	1050	80	0 0 3¼	No report	Do. Do.
Tulchan, ...	Earl of Airlie, ...	9,160	23	3500	1500	100	0 0 2½	1,800	A large proportion of this expenditure goes at first hand to tradesmen and small tenants.
	Total, . .	61,140							

INVERNESS-SHIRE.

Abernethy or Dell, . . .	Countess Dowager of Seafield, . .	Acres. 26,000	Acres. Small patches in occupation of servants.	Feet. 4084	Feet. 690	£ 1685	£ s. d. 0 1 3½	£ 9000	Expenditure all laid out in the Highlands, and goes largely at first hand to crofters and tradesmen, and in alleviation of rates and taxes.
Achnacarry, Achdalieu and Locharkaig,	Donald Cameron of Lochiel, . . .	36,100	Do.	3224	93	1715	0 0 11½	6500	Expenditure all laid out in the Highlands, and goes largely at first hand to crofters and tradesmen, and in alleviation of rates and taxes. If there were no Deer Forests in Kilmallie Parish rates would be increased 40 per cent.
	Carry forward, .	62,100							

INVERNESS-SHIRE—*continued.*

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
	Brought forward,	Acres. 62,100	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Aigas in Erchless,	Edmund Chisholm Batten of Thornfalcon, near Taunton,	790	No report	1900	500	100	0 2 6½	No report	Can hardly be considered as altogether Deer Forest.
Amhuinnsuidh (North Harris),	Trustees of the late Sir Edward H. Scott, Bart.	18,265	Do.	2227	Sea level	800	0 0 10½	4300	Expenditure all applied on the estate, and in alleviation of rates.
Ardverikie,	Sir John Ramsden, Bart.,	30,000	None	3569	810	2472	0 1 7¾	No report	
Ardvourlie,	Trustees of late Sir E. H. Scott, Bart.	16,488	No report	2622	Sea level	600	0 0 8¾	...	*See* Amhuinnsuidh.
Arisaig,	Mrs G. S. Nicholson of Arisaig,	3,000	100	509	Do.	240	0 1 7¼	1750	Expenditure all applied to estate.
Balmacaan,	Countess Dowager of Seafield,	28,000	3	2200	50	1300	0 0 11½	9000	The expenditure is all applied locally.
Barrisdale,	John Baird of Knoydart,	18,000	30	3083	2200	700	0 0 9¼	*See* Carnoch and Inverie below	Average rainfall 70 inches.
Ben Alder and part of Strathmashie,	Sir John W. Ramsden, Bart.,	30,000	None	3757	1153	2370	0 1 7	No report	
Benevrich,	Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Bart.,	8,530	None	2971	1020	500	0 1 2	...	*See* Corrour.
Carnoch and Inverie,	John Baird of Knoydart,	20,000	70	2970	2200	900	0 0 10¾	9000, including Barrisdale	This amount has been entirely expended in the Highlands. Rates have been here covered to extent of 75 per cent. Expenditure has largely exceeded estate income for many years.
Caennacroc (South Dundreggan) and part of Invermoriston and Caennacroc, North,	Captain J. R. J. Grant of Invermoriston,	32,760	10	3634	390	4015	0 2 5½	7000	Arable land is fenced and cultivated by keepers. The expenditure is chiefly applied in the Highlands. Rates thereby relieved at least one-fourth.
Coignafearn,	Alfred D. Mackintosh of Mackintosh,	30,000	None	2652	1100	800	0 0 6½	No report	All high land.
Corrour, &c.,	Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Bart.,	34,475	None	3611	1080	1450	0 0 10	3450	Nearly all expended in the County.
Dalnavert and South Kinrara,	Alfred D. Mackintosh of Mackintosh,	4,500	No report	4000	700	700	0 3 1½	No report	
Fasnakyle,	Mrs A. C. Chisholm,	15,000	Do.	2884	290	170	0 0 2¾	...	*See* Glencannich, &c., below.
Fersit and Torgulbin,	Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Bart.,	13,246	6	3433	1100	500	0 0 9	No report	
Gaick,	Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bart.,	23,650	No report	3000	1150	1690	0 1 5¼	...	*See* Glenfeshie below.
	Carry forward,	388,804							

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
	Brought forward,	Acres. 383,804	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Glencannich, North Affric, and Erchless.	Mrs A. C. Chisholm,	78,000	158	3877	710	1100	0 0 3½	13,077 10 0	Household expenses not here included. Expenditure chiefly applied locally, and rent greatly tends to reduce rates.
Glendoe,	Right Hon. Lord Lovat,	17,190	No report	2839	50	445	0 0 6¼	No report	
Glenfeshie, (part of),	Sir George Macpherson Grant, Bart.,	50,000	5½	1119	1050	2266	0 0 6	10,516	Gaick and Glenfeshie have been Deer Forests beyond living memory. The land is all above 1000 sea level. The expenditure is entirely local. Sporting subjects in this parish contribute 66 per cent. of rates.
Do.,	Alfred D. Mackintosh of Mackintosh,	6,000	No report	3338	1050	825	0 2 9	No report	All high ground. Cultivation impossible.
Glengarry,	Trustees of late Edward Ellice,	17,730	10, all enclosed	3066	92	820	0 0 11	3500	Nearly all within County.
Glenkingie,	Donald Cameron of Lochiel,	16,130	None	3290	360	800	0 1 0	. .	*See* Glenquoich.
Glenmore,	The Duke of Richmond and Gordon,	16,000	10 Keepers' Crofts	4083	1035	1310	0 1 7½	2000	Exclusive of supplies. Mostly spent locally.
Glenquoich, Easter and Wester,	Trustees of late Edward Ellice of Glengarry,	46,301	28	3395	Sea level	1788	0 0 9¼	10,523	Total expenditure for 21 years of occupation, £221,992, nearly all having been distributed locally.
Braulen and Glenstrathfarrer,	The Right Hon. Lord Lovat,	30,000	None except Foresters' Crofts; about 5 acres each	3773	200	1560	0 1 0½	No report	Large improvement outlays were made here by the late tenant.
Guisachan,	Right Hon. Lord Tweedmouth,	16,000	None	2991	400	700	0 0 10½	10,000	This rate of expenditure has been going on for many years, and has been chiefly distributed locally.
Inverlochy,	Right Hon. Lord Abinger,	22,500	6	3990	350	750	0 0 8	3515	Exclusive of household expenses; chiefly applied locally.
Invermoriston,	Captain J. R. J. Grant of Glenmoriston,	17,220	...	2224	84	270	0 0 3¼	2000	*See* Caennacroc, &c.
Inverwick,	Captain J. R. J. Grant of Glenmoriston,	3,100	...	1850	290	Included	in Invermoriston		
Kinveachy,	Countess Dowager of Seafield,	11,000	None	3337	1000	990	0 1 9½	2500	
Loch Hourn,	Robert Birkbeck,	12,000	1½	3316	Sea level	600	0 1 0	1875	Five-sixths of this amount is circulated in the Highlands.
Macdonald (part of),	Right Hon. Lord Macdonald,	10,350	No report	2537	Do.	250	0 0 5¾	No report	
	Carry forward,	758,325							

INVERNESS-SHIRE—*continued.*

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
	Brought forward,	Acres. 758,325	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Mamore,	Mrs Cameron Campbell of Monzie,	30,000	30	3700	Sea level	950	0 0 7½	2500	Exclusive of all tenants' expenses; very large sums were applied by the late tenant on improvements.
Meoble,	Do.,	15,000	5	3130	30	200	0 0 3¼	230	Exclusive of all tenants' expenses.
Morar,	Right Hon. Lord Lovat,	20,000	No report	2818	Sea level	200	0 0 2½	No report	
Port Clair and Cullochy,	Do.,	14,300	Do.	3773	100	1200	0 1 8	Do.	
Rothiemurchus,	John P. Grant of Rothiemurchus,	18,466	20	4248	840	1315	0 1 5	Do.	
Skaebost,	Lachlan Macdonald of Skaebost,	3,000	30	600	Sea level	200	0 1 4	381	All expended in the district. Does not include improvement outlays or household bills.
Struy,	Right Hon. Lord Lovat,	21,290	No report	3254	200	1210	0 1 1¾	No report	
Urchany and Farley,	Do.,	4,340	Do.	1386	460	500	0 2 3½	Do.	
Luskentyre,	Right Hon. Earl of Dunmore,	17,060	Do.	1654	Sea level	150	0 0 2	Do.	
	Total,	901,781							

PERTHSHIRE.

Atholl,	The Duke of Atholl, K.T.,	Acres. 36,000	Acres. 58	Feet. 3671	Feet. 620	£ 2600	£ s. d. 0 1 5¼	£ 4180	
Fealar,	Do.,	14,000	None	3424	1200	1680	0 2 4¾	3070	No land has been in cultivation for over a hundred years. Atholl lands have been afforested for centuries.
Glenbruar,	Do.,	12,000	None	3200	1400	850	0 1 5	2000	
Glenartney,	Earl of Ancaster,	6,857	No report	3224	500	680	0 1 11¾	2030	Exclusive of household expenses.
Rannoch,	Sir Robert Menzies, Bart.,	11,000	None	3000	1153	800	0 1 5½	2800	
Drummond Hill,	Marquis of Breadalbane,	2,500	Do.	1500	380	400	0 3 2½	No report	
	Total,	82,357							

ROSS AND CROMARTY.

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
		Acres.	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Achanault,	Arthur Bignold,	45,000	...	1831	315	350	0 0 1¾	4800	Expenditure all made in the Highlands, and largely at first hand to crofters and tradesmen, and in alleviation of rates and taxes.
Auchnasheen and Lochrosque,	Do.	11,000	...	3060	508	1200	0 2 2	...	Do. Do.
Auchnashellach,	Lord Wimborne,	33,250	50	3034	48	3300	0 1 11¾	6778	Expenditure all made in the Highlands and largely at first hand to crofters and tradesmen, and 56½ per cent. of rates and taxes in this Parish is derived from sporting subjects.
Aline,	Lady Matheson,	11,160	8½	1500	Sea level	300	0 0 6½	...	*See* Park.
Alladale,	Sir C. H. A. F. Ross, Bart.,	15,412	None	2689	540	900	0 1 2	4000	About three-fourths spent in Highlands.
Amat,	Trustees of late George Ross,	721	4	1488	296	375	0 10 4	715	This rent includes salmon fishings in river Carron, and other subjects, besides forest ground.
Applecross,	Lord Middleton,	35,000	None	2936	Sea level	1040	0 0 6¾	3500	Expenditure all applied in the Highlands.
Arnish,	Lady Matheson,	3,290	5½	223	Do.	50	0 0 3¾	...	*See* Park.
Attadale,	Sir Kenneth J. Matheson, Bart.,	12,606	None	2612	405	560	0 0 10¾	2117	
Bendamph and New Kelso,	The Earl of Lovelace,	17,325	...	3060	Sea level	700	0 0 9¾	3439	For many years there was a larger expenditure while new works were proceeding. The whole of this money is laid out in the Highlands.
Ben Wyvis,	Walter Shoolbred,	15,000	24	3429	713	1200	0 1 7¼	...	*See* Kildermorie.
Braemore,	Sir John Fowler, Bart.,	23,408	2¾	3547	590	1060	0 0 10¾	3650	All laid out in the Highlands.
Clunie,	James E. B. Baillie,	12,051	None	3342	606	1000	0 1 7¾	1800	
Corriehallie and Glengowrie,	Trustees of the late G. F. Gillanders,	7,000	29	2500	610	400	0 1 1¾	1577	
Corriemulzie,	Trustees of the late George Ross,	9,731	2	2220	700	400	0 0 9¾	400	*See* Amat.
	Carry forward,	251,954							

ROSS AND CROMARTY—*continued.*

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
	Brought forward, .	Acres. 251,954	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Coulin, ...	W. Ogilvy Dalgleish, ...	14,600	15	3034	350	1200	0 1 7¾	3200	Household bills not included in this expenditure. A very large part of it goes to crofters and tradesmen from surrounding districts.
Coulmore or Drumruinie, .	The Earl of Cromartie, ...	20,000	None	2800	173	900	0 0 10¾	2500	
Deanich, ...	Sir C. H. A. F. Ross, Bart., . . .	12,384	No report	1000	720	838	0 1 4½	No report	
Diebidale, ...	Sir Kenneth J. Matheson, Bart., . .	9,752	5	2249	660	880	0 1 9½	1187	
Dundonnell, ...	Hugh Mackenzie, ...	30,000	No report	3485	15	925	0 0 7½	No report	
Fannich, ...	Do., ...	20,000	Do.	3637	822	700	0 0 8½	Do.	
Fisherfield, ...	Mrs Marie Ann Liot Bankes, . . .	30,000	Do.	2874	220	1200	0 0 9½	Do.	
Flowerdale, ...	Sir Kenneth S. Mackenzie, Bart., . .	10,000	Do.	2500	32	300	0 0 7¼	Do.	
Glencalvie, ...	William Allis Smith, ...	4,632	48	2330	360	325	0 1 4¾	2797	
Glenshieldaig, ...	Charles James Murray, ...	9,000	No report	1700	Sea level	400	0 0 10½	No report	
Glomach, ...	Sir Kenneth J. Matheson, Bart., . .	7,150	None	2750	220	550	0 1 6½	796	
Gruinard, ...	Trustees of the late A. R. Catton and Mrs Catton,	16,000	No report	2508	279	550	0 0 8¼	No report	
Inchbae, ...	W. D. Mackenzie of Farr, . . .	21,000	Two small crofts for keepers	2573	380	1100	0 1 0½	3000	Entirely circulated in the Highlands.
Inverlael and Glenbeg, . .	Sir Arthur G. Mackenzie, Bart., . .	15,000	No report	3039	500	550	0 0 8¾	No report	
Kildermorie, ...	Walter Shoolbred, ...	22,000	20	2749	622	1150	0 1 0½	3700	This expenditure includes Ben Wyvis. It is all spent in the neighbourhood except about £200 a year. In addition, the present proprietor has spent many thousands on permanent improvements.
Killilan, Patt, and Riochan, .	Sir Kenneth J. Matheson, Bart., . .	14,617	None	2950	390	1600	0 2 1¾	1800	
Kinlochewe, ...	Sir Kenneth S. Mackenzie, Bart., . .	23,750	None	3000	32	800	0 0 8	3000	Sporting subjects in this Parish pay about one-third of the rates.
	Carry forward, .	531,839							

ROSS AND CROMARTY—*continued.*

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
	Brought forward, .	Acres. 531,839	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Kinlochluichart, . . .	Lady Ashburton, ...	43,000	31	2464	295	1950	0 0 10¾	4600 10 6	
Kintail (Morvich and Inchcroe),	Trustees of late Sir J. T. Mackenzie, Bart.,	11,000	No report	3500	Sea level	1080	0 1 11½	No report	
Leckmelm, ...	Alexander G. Pirie, ...	4,750	Nil	2100	500	125	0 0 6¼	1875	This expenditure, which does not include taxes or household bills, is all applied in the place or district.
Letterewe, ...	Mrs Maria Ann Liot Bankes, . .	10,000	2	3217	32	550	0 1 1¼	3600	Fully three-fourths expended in Highlands.
Monar, ...	John Stirling, ...	19,500	15	3459	490	950	0 0 10¼	1500	All expended in the Highlands.
Morsgail, ...	Lady Matheson, ...	24,100	6	1250	Sea level	1000	0 0 9¾	...	*See* Park.
Park, ...	Lady Matheson, ...	50,000	42	1500	Do.	2000	0 0 9½	5883	Nearly all laid out in the Highlands.
Rhidorrich, ...	The Earl of Cromartie, ...	37,000	5	1800	265	850	0 0 5½	2000	Chiefly expended in Highlands.
Strathvaich, ...	Captain Mackenzie of Ord, . . .	18,000	4	3547	750	1220	0 1 4½	3500	Chiefly expended in Highlands, and goes greatly to relieve rates.
Scalisero, ...	Lady Matheson, ...	11,000	6	800	Sea level	150	0 0 3¼	450	
Shieldaig, ...	Sir Kenneth S. Mackenzie, Bart., . .	9,000	No report	2500	32	250	0 0 6½	No report	
Strathconan, ...	R. H. Combe, ...	27,500	50	3550	395	1920	0 1 4¾	3100	Expenditure all circulated in the Highlands. Very large amounts have been expended by past and present proprietors on permanent improvements.
Tolmuick, ...	The Earl of Cromartie, ...	1,500	3	2059	860	250	0 3 4	350	
Torridon, ...	Duncan Darroch, ...	11,630	None	3456	95	500	0 0 10¼	1503	Does not include household expenses. Almost entirely applied in the Highlands.
	Total, . .	809,819	...	...	...	...	...	...	

SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

Name.	Proprietor.	Estimated Extent.	Arable Land.	Altitude above Sea Level.		Rental.	Rental per Acre.	Average Yearly Expenditure for all Purposes.	Remarks.
				Greatest.	Lowest.				
		Acres.	Acres.	Feet.	Feet.	£	£ s. d.	£	
Ben Armin,	Duke of Sutherland,	18,523	No report	2338	460	750	0 0 9¾	No report	
Ben Hee,	Do. Do.,	15,600	Do.	2500	324	125	0 0 2	Do.	
Corry-na-fearne,	Do. Do.,	10,835	About 30 acres unfenced green ground	2278	460	600	0 1 1¼	1100	This expenditure is exclusive of household bills, and of capital outlays by Proprietor, amounting to £3852.
Corry Kinloch,	Do. Do.,	10,800	Two or three old townships not occupied for about 70 years	2461	343	300	0 0 6¾	1370	This expenditure is exclusive of household bills, and of capital outlays by Proprietor, amounting to £6333.
Dunrobin and Uppat,	Do. Do.,	10,500	No report	1706	91	1000	0 1 10¾	No report	
Glencanisp,	Do. Do.,	32,460	20	2786	Sea level	700	0 0 5¼	1300	Exclusive of £3000 improvement outlays by Proprietor, and a large amount for improvements by tenants. Household expenses not included.
Glendhu,	Do. Do.,	35,050	30	2597	Do.	800	0 0 5¾	1630	Exclusive of £3450 of improvement outlays by Proprietor and of household bills.
Reay,	Do. Do.,	78,890	20	2952	35	2370	0 0 6¾	4303	Entirely laid out in the Highlands. Since 1850 about £40,000 have been expended in the district on permanent improvements.
	Total,	212,658	...	...	...	...	...	...	

(Signed) GEORGE MALCOLM.

August 31, 1894.

Inverness. George Malcolm.

52,552. *Mr Sutherland.*—Whose statement is that?—It is my own statement entirely.

52,553. For whom?—For myself.

52,554. It is not a statement made by you in any representative capacity whatever, but represents only your own views?—It is generally said that I represent the landlords.

52,555. And therefore I wish to ascertain whether that is their representation, or your own individual representation?—It is my own.

52,556. Are we to take you as presenting this to us as being the landlords' views and sentiments and opinions upon the questions dealt with?—There has been no special appointment of myself to make this statement as representing the Highland landlords or as representing the Highland Property Association.

52,557. You are here representing yourself in that statement?—Yes, I am here as professing to know something about the subject.

52,558. As an individual?—Yes; I have been expected by these landlords and by the members of that Association to appear and make a statement, but it is proper to say that I have not been formally appointed to do so.

52,559. So then that is your own individual statement?—Yes.

52,560. It must be either yours or theirs?—Well, I put it forward as my statement; it is not headed as coming from the landlords at all.

52,561. It is your own statement, Mr Malcolm, for yourself?—Yes.

52,562. *Mr Munro.*—You are the Secretary of the Landlords Property Defence Association, I understand?—Yes.

52,563. And do you make this statement in the capacity of Secretary of that Association?—I have not signed it as the Secretary of that Association, but it may be considered so.

[Adjourned.]

SIXTY-FIRST SITTING.

Inverness.

INVERNESS, September 1, 1894.

Present:—

David Brand, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
Michael Hugh Shaw Stewart, Esq., M.P.
Angus Sutherland, Esq., M.P.
Rev. Malcolm Maccallum.
John Macleod, Esq.
Henry Munro, Esq.
William Mackenzie, Esq., *Secretary.*

George Malcolm.

George Malcolm, Invergarry—*Examination resumed.*

Before my examination is proceeded with, my lord, I would like to make a short explanation as to my precise position here with reference to a conversation which took place when we were all on our feet and about to leave last night. Mr Sutherland asked me whose paper that was; I said it was mine. He then, I think, asked me if the paper represented the opinions of the landlords of the Highlands; I stated that I had no authority to say that it represented the views of all the landlords of the Highlands, whereupon a question was put to me by Mr Munro which I could not have properly heard, for it appears he asked me if it represented the views of the Highland Property Association, and it seems that I gave a doubtful answer, or gave a negative answer to the question, whereas I wish it to be understood that I am here to represent the Highland Property Association.

Inverness. George Malcolm.

52,563A. *The Chairman.*—Then, your paper is one which we may take as setting forth the views of the Association which you represent?—Yes.

52,563B. And the views there stated by you are their own views?—Yes, I take the responsibility of that.

52,563C. *Mr Sutherland.*—May I ask you about the membership of the Association,—has it a large membership?—There are about 90 members.

52,563D. May these 90 members be taken to represent the majority of the landowners in the Highlands of Scotland?—Oh, no; I don't think so.

52,564. Do they include the greater number of the large landowners in the Highlands?—Yes, a considerable number of the members are amongst the largest landholders in the Highlands.

52,565. The report of the meeting at Inverness which was referred to yesterday is prefaced by a list of gentlemen who were present, or who apologised for absence?—Yes.

52,566. Are all the names mentioned there to be found in the roll of membership of the Association?—I do not remember the particular names in the report.

52,567. Was it a meeting of the Association?—It was a meeting called by the Association.

52,568. But it does not follow that every gentleman mentioned there is a member of the Association?—Certainly not.

52,569. What are the objects of the Association?—The objects of the Association, briefly stated, are to defend the interests of the persons who compose the Association.

52,570. And by what means?—By defending their properties or interests when they are attacked.

52,571. That is, when they are attacked openly, I presume?—Yes; we can only know it when it is done openly.

52,572. You do not mean, of course, that in the case of its being physically attacked they would physically resist?—Oh, no; it defends the rights of property.

52,573. By constitutional means, of course?—To be sure.

52,574. By open constitutional means?—Certainly.

52,575. What methods does it generally pursue to that end?—We sometimes make communications to the press; we endeavour to interest members of Parliament in our view of matters when the properties or interests of members of the Association are, we think, being unduly attacked in Parliament.

52,576. And do you hold public meetings?—No.

52,577. Do you take any action at the time of Parliamentary or local elections?—No, we never interfere with elections.

52,578. Are the objects and the Articles of Association in print?—No.

52,579. Do you hold regular stated meetings?—There are meetings of the Council of the Association from time to time as they are required.

52,580. And the meeting of which we see the report was not, you say, a meeting of the Association but a meeting convened under its auspices?—Exactly.

52,581. Can you refer me to any other meeting that was a public or a semi-public meeting like this one, which has been held under its auspices?—There was a former meeting of landlords.

52,582. In 1885?—In 1885; but I think the Association rather grew out of than preceded that meeting.

52,583. But to all intents and purposes, with the single exception of these meetings, the society may be said to be a secret society?—It is a private society, of course; but we, from time to time, address communications to all the landlords in the Highlands as well as to our own members; and to the members of the Association a report drawn up by myself is sent every year.

52,584. Has the constitution been committed to writing?—No. When the Association was formed, a circular was sent to the members setting forth the

Inverness. George Malcolm.

objects of, and how the Association should be constituted; but there was no drawing up of a formal constitution, or rules of membership, or procedure, or anything of that sort.

52,585. You cannot then hand in a copy of its constitution?—No; nothing of the kind exists.

52,586. You are the Secretary of the Association?—Yes.

52,587. And I understand Lochiel is the President?—Lochiel is Vice-President.

52,588. Who is the President?—The Duke of Sutherland.*

52,589. And what other office-bearers have you?—There are six or seven members of Council, the President and Vice-President, and myself as Secretary; these are all.

52,590. Do you refer to the late Duke of Sutherland, or the present Duke?—The late Duke of Sutherland was President, and the present Duke of Sutherland accepted office as his successor.

52,591. It was offered to him, and he accepted it?—Yes.

52,592. Then, the statement which you read to us yesterday is a statement on behalf of that society?—Yes. It, of course, sets forth my own individual views as well.

52,593. Doubtless; it would have been remitted to you to write it, and the Association accepted the responsibility of the views which you, as their Secretary, have embodied in that report?—Quite so.

52,594. Now, as to your own qualifications for writing such a report, Mr Malcolm; you stated, I think, that you have been for a long period of years in the Highlands?—I have been for 34 or 35 years engaged in the management of land in the Highlands; I have been 30 years at Invergarry, where I am now.

52,595. May I ask you how old you were when you first came to the Highlands?—I am 56 years of age now, so that I must have been 22 at that time.

52,596. And before that, what part of the country had you had experience of? Where were you brought up?—I was brought up in Edinburgh, and came directly from a Chartered Accountant's office to the north.

52,597. I do not want you to go into particulars, only that you are not a native of the Highlands. You express very freely opinions regarding the history of the Highlands, the development of industries, and the social conditions that now exist. You do not deny that, of course?—Oh, no.

52,598. Had you ever any experience as a crofter?—Not personally as a crofter.

52,599. Have you ever been a farmer?—Yes, I have been a farmer, in the capacity of having to farm land for the estate.

52,600. While you were factor?—Yes.

52,601. Have you ever been a gamekeeper?—No. But I have had a good deal of intercourse with gamekeepers.

52,602. As a factor?—Yes.

52,603. Have you ever been a shepherd?—No; but there again, I know all about shepherding, from the personal experience of managing a sheep farm.

52,604. As a factor?—Yes.

52,605. Have you ever been a deer forester?—I have the same answer to give to that.

52,606. You are only a deer forester as a factor. You had to do with deer forests principally, I presume, in the way of forming them?—Well, there are two or three cases of deer forests that have certainly gone through my hands, but I have had far more to do with them in a general way.

52,607. Forming them?—No; I have formed no deer forests, as far as I recollect, outside our own estates.

52,608. And, of course, you always received the rents for them,—that was part of your duty?—Yes, on our own estates.

* Mr Malcolm has since written explaining that, in stating the Duke of Sutherland is the President, he made a mistake,—the President being the Duke of Atholl.

52,609. That, then, is your experience in regard to these matters. You have frequently given evidence on this subject, have you not?—On Highland matters generally; I have done so twice or thrice, I think, publicly.

52,610. That would, of course, fall to your position as Secretary of the Association?—Only once since the Association was formed, I think.

52,611. And I have no doubt that is part of the Association's propaganda?—When they think it necessary that I, as representing them, should give evidence before any body or committee having to do with their affairs, they do expect me, I suppose, to do so; on these occasions I receive instructions.

52,612. So that you may be not unfairly described as an expert witness?—Well, I should not like to call myself an expert, but I profess to know something of these subjects.

52,613. The fact that you were called upon by these bodies you have referred to justifies you, I suppose, in being called an expert witness?—They might call me so; I should not like to describe myself as an expert.

52,614. But you will admit that the subject could not have been brought before us from your point of view in a more complete form than that in which you have brought it?—I have, of course, endeavoured to bring it before you very completely,—I am afraid at greater length than any of us would have liked yesterday, but I could not avoid that.

52,615. From the fulness of your knowledge of the subject from your point of view, you could not do less?—No.

52,616. Do you then in accordance with your modesty admit that you are the very best witness the landlords could have brought forward from their point of view?—It is not for me to say that.

52,617. Of course, but it would not be unfair for me to say so of you?—Well, I could not, of course, say that of myself, but if anybody else says it, I cannot object.

52,618. I wish to give you credit for what I believe you possess,—the best qualifications possible to advance this subject in the interests of those whom you represent?—I do not dispute it, if you say so.

52,619. You gave us a *resumé* of the history of the Highlands?—Yes, with reference to one particular aspect.

52,620. What was that particular aspect?—Its bearing upon the objects of your inquiry.

52,621. That is with regard to the land available for certain purposes?—The land that you may be able to find capable of advantageous or profitable occupation.

52,622. I would like to ask a question or two about that, because you mention it in that way. What object could it serve, or how could it help us, to tell us about the feuds and the 'fights,' the reivings and the raidings, the plunder and the 'pillage' that took place two or three hundred years ago in the Highlands?—That was merely to show when the attention of the Highlanders was given to agriculture,—when it actually began.

52,623. It is simply a garnishing of the subject?—It was just to point to a date when this subject might with any usefulness be taken up.

52,624. Which subject, please?—The subject of the crofting system.

52,625. Do you hold the crofting system responsible for these things?—Oh, no; but I wanted to bring out that there was no necessity for going further back, in respect that little or no attention was paid to agriculture in the shape of crofting or in any other form, until a certain date, and I merely incidentally mentioned the state of the country before that date.

52,626. I am finding no fault with the subject being mentioned by you, but you stated yourself that it was to help us in this inquiry, and I wished to connect it with the objects of our inquiry?—Well, I drew a parallel between the state of the Borders and that district, and the state of the Highlands, and I men-

tioned that the decay of the crofting system or small tenancies began in the Lowlands or in the Border lands a century earlier than in the Highlands, and I had to show how that had taken place.

52,627. Then with regard to the picture you drew of the Highlands, you used some very strong language, Mr Malcolm?—Not so strong as many of the recognised authorities do.

52,628. Such as?—Such as Burt, and Pennant, and Knox, and Walker; and in the present day, Skene.

52,629. I attach more importance to what Skene says than to anything said by those other Englishmen?—You will find in my paper several extracts from Skene.

52,630. Does he record only such things as 'feuds 'and fights, reiving and raiding, plunder and pillage, 'and frequent crime of even deeper dye' which you say 'continued to stain the moral and political life, 'and ruin the social condition, of the Highland people, 'till upon the complete collapse of the rising of the 'clans in 1745, adequate measures for the subjugation 'of the disloyal chiefs and their followers were at last 'successfully applied?'—You may deduce that from many passages in Skene, I think.

52,631. Is Skene's history not more taken up with the social institutions of the Highlands?—It is chiefly that, and in describing the progress of ownership and occupation of land, and a good deal is taken up with ecclesiastical matters; but he also deals with the social state of the Highlands.

52,632. But the result of Skene's researches goes to show that there was a state of matters in the Highlands, social and otherwise, as far advanced as there was in any other part of the country?—Yes, I admit that both the Lowlands and the Highlands were in the same condition at one time.

52,633. Then, I presume, you were not comparing the Highlands of that time with the Lowlands of that time; you were rather comparing the Highlands of that time with the Highlands of to-day, or the Lowlands of to-day?—In one part of my paper I do compare it with the Lowlands, and I showed that the Lowlands got into an improved condition quite a century earlier than the Highlands. That was my main object in describing the condition of the Highlands up to a certain date.

52,634. What was the nett result of Mr Skene's researches, with regard to the ecclesiastical system in the Highlands, for instance?—How do you mean?

52,635. What state of civilisation did it show?—Oh, at one period he states that the Highlands were in a comparatively civilised state. But as far as I recollect, that was at a very early age, from the sixth to the ninth century.

52,636. And what state of matters obtained at that time with regard to the land, when this civilisation existed?—I don't think we know very much about the state of the land at that time.

52,637. What does Mr Skene say on that point?—I do not recollect any special statement of his upon that subject.

52,638. What does Cosmo Innes, from whom you quoted, say as to the social system of the people at that time, and particularly with regard to land?—All the authorities that I know state that from the sixth to the ninth century there was a better condition of the population as regards social affairs than there was for several centuries later.

52,639. What system of land tenure existed at that time,—was it the feudal system?—It was Celtic feudalism.

52,640. You may as well talk of a white negro as of Celtic feudalism. Do you know any Celtic country that had a feudal system while it was a Celtic country?—Yes, Scotland was in that condition.

52,641. When,—at the time you refer to?—Yes, and for some time after.

52,642. What was the time of the Celtic feudalism?—You might describe it as the tribal epoch, perhaps.

52,643. Was not that the very antithesis of feudalism?—It grew into feudalism afterwards.

52,644. But by your admission, and by Skene's researches this state of high civilisation in the Highlands existed contemporaneously with the tribal system?—I should not say it was high civilisation.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

52,645. Comparatively?—Comparatively, yes.

52,646. And then the 'feuds and fights, reiving 'and raiding,' &c. came in with the feudal system, or was contemporaneous with the existence of the feudal system in the Highlands?—Well, you may take it so.

52,647. You do not deny it?—I don't think we have any very reliable information to go upon, earlier than this.

52,648. You mean written information?—Yes, or any information.

52,649. Except the information from philosophic inference?—I have not dealt with that.

52,650. But is it not a perfectly legitimate inference to draw that if you have a state of comparative civilisation, the social institutions must have been beneficent at that time?—I do not mean to say that these institutions were in the same backward condition; they must have retrograded after that date.

52,651. That is clear?—Yes.

52,652. I understand that the material that is available in the study of the language of the people is not accessible to you?—No.

52,653. And do you think it would be right to make any sweeping inferences with regard to a system of social polity not written, without a knowledge of the spoken language?—I must be content to take it through other sources, of course.

52,654. But, would you not think that one of the first qualifications for any gentleman who was making sweeping assertions of this kind, would be to make himself acquainted with all the materials, and to acquire the language?—I don't know whether that is quite necessary, and I am quite sure that most of the historians and others who have written upon that subject were not personally acquainted with Gaelic.

52,655. Do you include Mr Skene?—Mr Skene I do not know about.

52,656. Do you know that Mr Skene devoted several years of a laborious life to the acquisition of the language, before he ventured to write about it?—Very likely.

52,657. Mr Skene, a high authority on these matters, thought it necessary to acquire the language, and the deductions he drew are of a far less sweeping character than those you have drawn?—Of course, I could not devote any years to the acquiring of the Gaelic language for such a purpose as this.

52,658. But you admit you would be better equipped for the work if you had been able to do so?—No doubt; that follows.

52,659. And you will also admit that a Highlander by birth and extraction would be more likely to enter more fully into the subject?—Yes, if he had the same qualifications as the historians have.

52,660. And that being qualified in that one important element, he would be more likely to be well qualified from all points of view, all round?—Yes, but I am afraid we have unfortunately not got any of those historians.

52,661. So well qualified as you, and with the knowledge of Gaelic in addition?—No, but so well qualified as those historians on whom we rely,—the authorities from whom I have quoted.

52,662. Are you acquainted with the Irish historians?—I have read some Irish history of this subject, but I am not fully acquainted with it.

52,663. Nor with the writings of Dr Maclachlan and some others?—No.

52,664. Then, as to the picture you drew of the 'rievings and the raidings' and the disloyal Highland chiefs, I am not going to deny, Mr Malcolm, so far as I know that there may not be a great deal of truth in what you say when we come to a certain stage of Highland history. Then, you go on to attribute a good deal of what afterwards happened in the Highlands to two circumstances—the rebellion of 1745, and the suspension of the heritable jurisdictions. Then you make a state-

Inverness. George Malcolm.

ment which rather surprised me, I must confess, that the system known as the crofting system was established in 1746. I think that statement calls for a little explanation?—I think I stated that it was then or about then that they were first established as independent tenants.

52,665. In 1746?—Or thereabouts.

52,666. Do you know the particular locality in the Highlands where this doing away with the sub-tenants was carried out on the largest scale at one time?—It greatly spread over the whole of the Highlands from that date,—that is what I mean.

52,667. I take it that there was what was called a tacksman who paid rent to the superior, and that the tacksman again had tenants under him?—Yes.

52,668. And, I presume, that what you mean in this statement, is that in 1746 these middlemen were done away with, and the man who cultivated the land actually paid rent direct to the superior?—I mean that it began about that date, but, of course, it took a considerable time to establish itself in all parts of the Highlands.

52,669. Are you aware that when the 'Sutherland 'clearances' were carried out between 1818 and 1826, that was adduced as a reason for doing it,—the doing away with the middlemen?—There may be some parts of the Highlands where the system had not established itself at that time.

52,670. And, as a matter of fact, there are parts of the Highlands where the older system still prevails?—There are many cottars and squatters who cling to the tacksman still.

52,671. Do you know in what part of the country that obtains most?—No, I don't know any special part of the country.

52,672. Then, I observe that you say that 'on the 'fusion of the crowns, and consequent transference 'of the Scottish monarch with many of his powerful 'nobles, from these immediate scenes of turbulence 'and lawless exactions to the English capital, a great 'improvement was affected.' Do you mean to say that the removal of the Scottish nobles to London was attended with great benefit to Scotland?—No; what I go on to say is that the power of the Crown was in that way so augmented that they were able to apply measures to the Highlands which reduced them to a state of comparative peace.

52,673. Which brought the rebellious nobles to their senses?—The chiefs in the Highlands, rather.

52,674. The element of turbulence was you say removed from the Highlands?—I said it began to abate at that time.

52,675. But you attribute what followed in the Highlands afterwards to the removal of the turbulent elements to the English capital?—Yes; I attributed it to the fact that the Crown was then made a great deal stronger, and was able to apply measures with more success to that end than formerly.

52,676. And great benefit was effected by the removal of the turbulent element of the nobles and chiefs to the English capital from Scotland?—The nobles and chiefs I refer to were rather those who went from the south of Scotland with the monarch to London, and were able there to concert measures for the reduction of the Highlands to a better political condition.

52,677. I don't deny it; that is the chiefs who were continually taking the law into their own hands, setting law and order at defiance, were removed and their power was broken?—They were not removed, I think.

52,678. The tendency was to draw them to London?—No, I don't say that the Highland chiefs were drawn to London at all; I say that their power was curtailed by means of the augmentation of the power of the Crown.

52,679. And that was a good thing?—Yes, inasmuch as it brought about a more peaceful condition of the Highlands.

52,680. They emigrated, in fact?—No; the point I make is that after this there was less fighting amongst themselves, and the Highlands were brought to a more peaceful and necessarily, I suppose, a more industrial condition.

Inverness. George Malcolm.

52,681. You took the turbulent element away, and then peace succeeded?—To a great extent it did.

52,682. I need not follow that part of your statement much farther. You then refer to advances and improvements that were effected since that time. I take it for granted that the strides forward that took place in all directions in the meantime were not confined to the Highlands alone?—No.

52,683. These apply to the development of the Lowlands and to the development of England in the same way?—Yes, and the effects were felt earlier in the Lowlands than in the Highlands.

52,684. I hope I am not mis-stating your opinions when I take it from the connection in which you mention these things that they followed as a result of certain events that took place in the Highlands and which we need not more specifically mention, but which have sometimes been euphemistically called a 'change in the 'rural economy' of the Highlands?—You are getting now to the age of sheep farming; yes, the sheep farmer followed the state of matters which we were discussing lately.

52,685. I take it also that you are under the belief that sheep farming is more scientific than the agriculture which preceded it?—Certainly, than the agriculture which existed in the Highlands applicable to sheep farming at that time.

52,686. Was the state of agriculture in the Highlands at that time very different from the state of agriculture in the Lowlands?—The Lowlands, as I have said, were about a hundred years in advance of the Highlands at that time, as regards the state of agriculture.

52,687. You quoted, I think, or referred to Sir John Sinclair?—Yes.

52,688. Sir John Sinclair was president of the Board of Agriculture at that time, and he was the moving spirit in collecting the Statistical Accounts as you may be aware?—Yes.

52,689. Have you read those Statistical Accounts?—I have read a good many of them.

52,690. Have you read those referring to the Lowlands?—Yes, some of them.

52,691. Do they show an advanced state of agriculture?—They certainly show a more advanced state of agriculture than in the Highlands. Reference is made in some of those writings to the Highlands at the same dates.

52,692. And is there as wide a gap between them as you have led us to suppose?—Yes, but I don't rely upon the writings of Sir John Sinclair alone as to that.

52,693. Who are the others?—Well, there are Walker, Anderson, and Burt's letters; and there are various other authorities, whom I have named in my statement.

52,694. You are no doubt aware how the Statistical Accounts were compiled,—not written by Sir John Sinclair, who was merely editor?—They were chiefly written by the parish ministers.

52,695. Were they not likely to be well-informed on the matters with which they dealt?—Yes, I should say so.

52,696. Have you any reason to doubt the accuracy with which these Statistical Accounts were compiled by the parish ministers?—I have not, and you will see that in a later portion of my paper I rely upon those Statistical Accounts in another phase of the question which I support.

52,697. And do these Statistical Accounts, in your opinion, show a state of matters in the Highlands a hundred years behind the Lowlands in point of agriculture?—Yes, they do, in some instances; they exhibit a state of agriculture in the Lowlands a good deal in advance of that in the Highlands.

52,698. 'A good deal'; that may mean more, or it may mean less. Your statement, however, is 'a hundred 'years'; do you not want to stick to that?—Well, you must take that roundly, because I took into account other authorities than the Old Statistical Accounts.

52,699. Compare the state of farming at Invergarry and Glenquoich at that time; was there much differ-

ence between the system of farming carried on at Invergarry Castle and that carried on in Glenquoich?—An immense difference.

52,700. In the two places, beside each other?—Oh, no, I thought you meant as compared with elsewhere. There was nothing to farm at Glenquoich in those days,—I mean to cultivate.

52,701. What is your authority for saying that?—The old accounts of the estates, and the old maps. They show no trace of cultivable land there at all.

52,702. You say so?—Yes.

52,703. I say different, and I have been there. Of course, that is a matter of opinion?—If I had been along with you, I probably could have explained what you had seen.

52,704. Now, with regard to the improvements that you have mentioned, and their bearing upon our inquiry. Those advances of which you speak have undoubtedly taken place?—Yes.

52,705. Then, if there was a distribution of population upon the land, would not all those advances and all those improvements in science to which you referred tend to overcome any difficulties they might have had before?—Do you mean in the last century, or when?

52,706. The various advantages you enumerated,—the improvements in farming, improvements in means of communication, the daily post, the money order office, and all those other advantages mentioned in your paper?—I beg your pardon,—you are referring to our own local estate at present?

52,707. To anywhere you like?—And your question is that if these had existed last century there would have been a different state of matters? Of course, anyone would admit that; if they had had the same appliances and the same advantages, the state of agriculture would have been very much more advanced.

52,708. As far advanced as you will find anywhere in the country?—As anywhere in the Highlands, having the same climate, and otherwise the same natural conditions.

52,709. Do all these improvements not amount to an enormous change, in your opinion, Mr Malcolm?—They do.

52,710. Take for instance what has been brought forward over and over again as a difficulty in the way of re-peopling these glens,—the wintering question. It has been admitted by landlords before us over and over again that if you could get over the difficulty of wintering in those glens, their objections would be removed?—As to sheep farming only.

52,711. Sheep farming particularly?—There is no doubt that wintering is the great difficulty with regard to sheep farming in the Highlands, coupled at present, of course, with the very low prices that are obtained for stock.

52,712. Have you ever seen any hay imported into this country?—Yes; I have imported hay.

52,713. Which helped, I suppose, to winter your stock?—We bought it for arable farming stock and for horses, chiefly; we never use hay for sheep.

52,714. Have you seen it imported for wintering deer?—No, not in my experience.

52,715. Have you heard of it?—I have heard of it.

52,716. You have every reason to believe it has been done?—Yes.

52,717. Do you not think that habit is likely to increase, as the price of carriage goes down, and the price of hay also goes down?—Do you mean that there would be a larger importation of hay for the feeding of deer?

52,718. No, but available for any purpose?—Well, it depends on the necessity for it in particular seasons; certainly, if farmers have to buy hay to winter their stock, they will get more and more into difficulty.

52,719. How?—Because it would take from the receipts of the farm very largely to buy hay.

52,720. Have they not to send away sheep at present?—Yes, but they could not support sheep on hay alone as wintering.

52,721. And turnips?—Turnips and hay; but even these would not be nearly so good as a mixture of grass with them.

52,722. Possibly not so good, but it might suffice?—There would be a much larger mortality among the young sheep; and how would they be wintered? Would they be folded, or how would you get the turnips and hay to the sheep?

52,723. Bringing them to where the people were on the farms?—Well, there are two observations I have to make about that; you would have then to bring the sheep down from the hills to the low ground and give them the hay and the turnip there, bringing them all within a limited space.

52,724. As a matter of fact, that is what is done now?—The consequence of that would be that the ground upon which they stood would very soon get foul.

52,725. Certainly.—And if they got a single diet of turnips and hay, those sheep would never return to the higher ground.

52,726. Why not?—Because they would rather wait for more turnips and hay, and starve.

52,727. But shepherds put sheep, not where the sheep wish to be, but where the shepherds wish them to be?—The shepherds would no sooner be away than the sheep would come down again. There is the other alternative of taking the hay and the turnips up to the sheep.

52,728. Where,—to the mountains?—I was just about to say, you know that is impossible.

52,729. Of course; that is not done now?—No, and that is why I may be allowed to say that the system of silos has not been applied to hill sheep farming, nor is likely to be.

52,730. We know, as a matter of fact, that sheep are brought down from the high ground and kept on the lowest ground,—that the shepherd can put them on and off?—Not on a sheep farm; the young sheep are taken away.

52,731. But I am talking of sheep generally?—Of course, but they are distributed over miles and miles; you could not do that with turnips and hay.

52,732. They would soon gather for the purpose. It is done every day. Then, you talk a great deal about the destitution that existed in the Highlands, and you trotted out some of the well-known old quotations regarding it,—particularly one that speaks of the people having been reduced to mix oatmeal and blood. Are you aware of the origin of that particular quotation?—No, I do not know of any special origin of it.

52,733. Do you know where the thing took place?—I expect it took place in many places.

52,734. Did you read Fraser-Tytler's history of Scotland?—Yes.

52,735. Did you read Major Fullerton's account of the state of Ayr about that time quoted therein; and are you aware that it is there mentioned for the first time? And did you ever hear it quoted against the Lowlands?—I think it is sometimes quoted against the country generally, when there was a great deal of destitution.

52,736. And you said in regard to this, which was first written in Major Fullerton's Statistical Account of Ayrshire, that it took place in the Highlands?—Yes; I don't think the fact of its having also taken place in the Lowlands makes it any better.

52,737. But would that be an argument against re-peopling the depopulated parts of Ayrshire?—Well, whatever can be said against it in the Highlands may of course be said against it in the Lowlands.

52,738. And, do you think that is a state of matters, even if it ever did exist in the Highlands, that would be likely ever to recur?—No, I do not say it is likely to recur.

52,739. Then, you were very liberal in attributing motives to people who held different opinions from yourself in this matter; I am not going to trouble you with quotations to prove that, but, I suppose, you will admit that it is the case?—I would like to say that I rather strove to avoid that.

52,740. Well, I don't think you were very successful.—I am of a different opinion; I don't think I have improperly imputed motives to people.

52,741. It would take up rather too much time if I

Inverness. George Malcolm.

were to look up the particular quotations I refer to, and we have already spent a good deal of time over this matter, and they speak for themselves?—Of course, in one or two cases it was impossible for me to avoid alluding to the motives of people who were opposing our views of the question,—that would have been quite unavoidable, but I do not think I have said anything which could be construed into a personal charge against anybody.

52,742. I refer to attributing an unworthy motive to a person who wishes to impress upon the public what he considers to be the truth?—I don't think I have attributed unworthy motives to any such individual.

52,743. You have even, if you will excuse me, attributed ignorance to the Secretary for Scotland.—Well, he is a public man, quite open to be criticised; and it is easy to see that on the particular occasion I allude to, he was not well-informed.

52,744. He was ignorant?—He was not well-informed, and, therefore, of course, he was ignorant on certain points.

52,745. And you thought that a perfectly justifiable statement to make?—Certainly; a man like he, occupying a public position, is surely open to criticism on an occasion like this. It is a thing that is done every day, and upon all sorts of questions.

52,746. Then, referring to the Parliamentary Return on the subject of deer forests; you say there is grave reason to suspect many inaccuracies. Now, I want to know on which side it errs,—does it understate the area under deer, or overstate it?—You will see my position if you allow me to read a few lines of my reference to the matter. After mentioning that the Royal Commission of 1883 ascertained the existence of 109 deer forests with an acreage of 1,955,209 acres, I go on to say:—'The return of deer forests in 1891 brought the 'number up to 130, and increased the acreage to '2,552,383; but in this return, hastily prepared as it 'was, there is grave reason to suspect many inaccura- 'cies. For example, while in the return of 1883 the 'extent of each forest is clearly headed "Area in '"statute acres," with replies that are believed to be 'correct, the corresponding column in the return of '1891 is headed "Estimated extent," with figures 'following which are in many cases mere haphazard 'estimates indeed. Here in no fewer than 65 cases, 'being exactly one-half of the whole, the acreage is 'stated in round figures terminating in three ciphers. 'In several cases alternative areas differing to the 'extent of 5000 acres are stated. In 72 cases common 'to both returns, the acreage set down in 1891 differs 'from the acreage stated in 1883. In 49 of these cases 'the areas are larger in the return of 1891 to the 'extent, *in cumulo*, of 319,900 acres. In the remain- 'ing 23 cases the areas are less to the extent of 43,786 'acres, leaving an unaccounted for difference of 276,114 'acres.' Then I go on to show more reasons for holding the Return to be untrustworthy.

52,747. Do you know what means were taken to compile that Return of 1891?—There was simply an order sent to the Crown Agent to have it compiled, and it was all done within a few days or a few weeks. [*The Chairman.*—Were there not two editions of it?—Yes, but the only difference between the first and the second edition was that the lowest altitude was given as well as the highest in the latter.]

52,748. That was omitted from the first edition, and the House of Commons returned it for the order to be carried out?—Yes.

52,749. Well, then, let us understand the authority for the returns you are comparing. You say that the return of 1891, which was a Parliamentary return, and consequently an official return, contained 'grave inac- 'curacies,' and you have pointed out what you consider to be inaccuracies. The Crown Agent, I presume, would have sent out to the various landlords notices to supply him with information?—He did, I believe; a circular with a schedule attached was sent.

52,750. Therefore, if there are any inaccuracies it would not have been the Crown Agent's fault?—Not at all.

52,751. The fault must have lain in the information which was supplied to him?—Yes.

52,752. And it was supplied by the landlords?—Yes, so far as I know.

52,753. What motives would the landlords have for overstating the acreage under deer?—The fact that so many of the returns made are in round figures, consisting chiefly of ciphers with some other figure in front, leads me to suppose that they took no trouble about the matter; they were only asked to send in an estimated extent; they were not asked to send in the actual extent.

52,754. In fact, they did not order a special survey to be made for the purpose?—No; and therein I point out the difference between that and what was done on the occasion of the Napier Report. [*The Chairman.*—Did you make any communication to the Crown Agent of that kind, before putting down the statement we find here about the return?—No, because I did not know about it till the return appeared. Q. But I mean before you wrote this passage in your paper?—No, I did not.]

52,755. Then as to the return of 1884, how was it made, and what is the authority for it?—The Commissioners of that day sent a request to the landlords to fill up all the particulars with regard to their deer forests; first of all, they were asked whether they had any deer forests, and if they had, they were asked to fill up the particulars called for, and to produce maps or plans of the deer forests. The Commissioners got all that information; they also got the maps, and they employed a surveyor to measure those maps for themselves; and the results of that quite independent inquiry are given as an appendix to their report. I presume scarcely anything else could have been done to make that return accurate.

52,756. But it was based on information supplied by the landlords, as in 1891?—Of course, the Commissioners could not get the information otherwise; but they had the maps to check it all with.

52,757. What is your particular objection to ciphers at the end?—I have no objection to ciphers, but they lead me to suppose that those who made such Returns could not have taken great trouble to get at the true extent of their deer forests.

52,758. Well, I am looking over the list of deer forests in Scotland as supplied by the Highlands and Islands Commission of 1883, and I find that every area except two ends with a cipher?—But that is a very different thing from three ciphers alongside each other.

52,759. I find some with three ciphers there also. May I ask what was your part, Mr Malcolm, in the compilation of this abstract in the Report by Lord Napier's Commission?—I had nothing whatever to do with it, beyond providing my share of the information. But previously I had prepared a list of deer forests of my own, which probably started the Commissioners to make an independent inquiry; and I am glad to say that the results I had arrived at months before the Commissioners took up the matter at all, tallied within a very few thousand acres with what they themselves found to be the case.

52,760. You mean that both of you measured the maps?—I did not measure the maps, but I got information from all the landlords,—probably the same information as regards the extent which they supplied to the Commissioners; but the Commissioners not being satisfied with the figures alone, called for maps, and had the maps measured to check the figures they had got from the landlords.

52,761. You find fault with the return of 1891 on the ground that it over-estimates the amount that was afforested subsequent to 1883?—That is one point.

52,762. Are you aware that deer forests have been omitted from the Return altogether?—I don't know of any, but I know there are some put into the Return of 1891 as having been made prior to 1883 which are not in the 1883 Return.

52,763. And some areas that are deer forests now are not returned in either of them?—A few deer forests may have been made since 1891.

52,764. But some that were made in the year 1890?

—I don't know about that; I am not aware of any one that was not included.

52,765. Then, with regard to Highland clearances, you said that sweeping statements and gross exaggerations were indulged in by certain parties. What do you refer to particularly there?—I refer to certain books which I have read on the subject, but I do not want to be personal.

52,766. Would you include books that were written by eye-witnesses of those clearances?—I should take them as the best authorities.

52,767. I suppose you have read Donald Macleod's 'Gloomy Memories'?—Yes.

52,768. Is that book included within the sweep of your condemnation?—Yes, I think that writer is not at all a good authority on the subject.

52,769. Who is the best authority, do you think?—I don't know that there is any special authority to be quoted; but what we know as the 'Sutherland clearances' formed the subject of a judicial inquiry.

52,770. No, I beg your pardon; I think you are in error there.—Well, of a trial, at any rate; a criminal trial.

52,771. That was merely an incident, was it not? [*The Chairman.*—Specific charges against one man arising out of the clearances formed the subject of a judicial inquiry].—Well, that led to a very full investigation of the subject.

52,772. What better means of knowing could you have than the statements of the eye-witnesses who saw those things?—My conclusions are drawn from reading all the evidence on the subject which I could get.

52,773. You saw nothing of them yourself?—I thought the accounts given by some writers were apparently very much exaggerated, and that to a great extent they were not the statements of eye-witnesses at all, but statements to the persons who wrote those books, by people whose statements were never tested in the ordinary way.

52,774. Have you ever read Donald Macleod's 'Gloomy Memories?'—Yes.

52,775. Was not Donald Macleod on the spot, and did he not see those houses burning?—If Donald Macleod was really an eye-witness of all these things, how came it that he was not a witness at the trial of Mr Sellar?

52,776. He was not cited, I presume?—But he might have had himself cited.

52,777. The Sutherland clearances were not what was at stake in the trial?—Well, he writes about the Sutherland clearances, and he complains that the evidence at that trial was not fully gone into; and yet there he was, probably the strongest witness that could have been got for the Crown, and he never appeared.

52,778. Perhaps that was not the only irregularity with regard to that trial.—Perhaps so; but he states that he himself saw part of what happened, and if so, he would have been the best witness to speak about it.

52,779. He was in a position to know all the facts, and we have his unshaken word to this day. Then, I observe that you refer to objections on the score of the climate. We have had these objections so often that I am not going to put many questions to you on the subject. You state that the climate would be an obstacle to the creation of such holdings as we have been talking about; but do you not live here all the year round?—Yes.

52,780. Do you find any difficulty in the matter of weather?—No, personally I do not, but what I speak about in that connection is the effect of the climate upon cultivation.

52,781. Do you cultivate any yourself?—Scarcely any, I am sorry to say.

52,782. Have you a farm?—Yes, I look after a small home farm.

52,783. Do you get good crops?—No, we do not.

52,784. Are the crops very bad?—Not very bad; but some years they are so much destroyed that they are practically unfit for human food.

52,785. What destroys them?—The rain, and sometimes snow overtakes the crop before we can get it in.

52,786. How many years are you able on an average to secure a crop?—At Invergarry we are able to get a crop in some shape or other every year; but further up the glen that is impossible.

52,787. Where there are no crofts?—There are patches of arable land up the glen; but there they make no attempt to ingather the crop in a ripe state; they gather it unripe.

52,788. Where is that?—About Glenquoich.

52,789. Do they belong to the gamekeepers?—No, there are some small tenants and crofters there, as you saw the other day, as well as gamekeepers.

52,790. But you who live in the glen have an average crop?—I would not say it is an average crop when compared with other parts of the country.

52,791. Do you not raise fruit about Invergarry?—We raise small fruit; we all know that small fruits grow well enough; but we cannot grow well the larger fruits,—apples, pears, and the like—in the garden at Glengarry. Most of the fruit is raised in hot-houses.

52,792. What is the difference in height between Invergarry House and Loch-Quoich?—Upwards of 400 feet.

52,793. What is the whole height of Glenquoich?—The level of the loch, which is practically the level of the house, is I think 555 feet.

52,794. And what do you say is the difference between that and Invergarry?—Loch-Oich, upon which Invergarry House stands, is only 98 feet above sea-level.

52,795. Is the house on the same level as Loch-Oich?—It is about 20 feet above it.

52,796. Where is the highest cultivation in the Great Glen, do you know?—They do cultivate up to 600 or 700 feet, I suppose, in patches.

52,797. Will they reach 1000 feet?—Not to my knowledge.

52,798. Nine hundred feet?—Not to my knowledge.

52,799. Do you know Glen-Urquhart?—Yes.

52,800. Do you say there is no land in cultivation every year in Glen-Urquhart above 900 feet high?—I don't say they do not attempt it, but I say they do not cultivate it successfully.

52,801. Is it not the only cultivation they have got?—Yes.

52,802. And they are very glad to have it?—They must have it if they are to carry on their crofts every year.

52,803. And they have a crop every year?—They have a crop, of a sort.

52,804. It is good?—No, not always.

52,805. It is not good always anywhere?—I mean that the crops at Glen-Urquhart are often overtaken by storms in the autumn.

52,806. But the same thing happens in the south; the hop crop in the south of England is often destroyed by frost,—are you aware of that?—No, not nearly so often.

52,807. No, but, as a matter of fact, it does so sometimes?—It may be so in the higher parts of England.

52,808. I am talking of the hop country in England, where the crop is frequently destroyed by frost?—And by snow?

52,809. By frost, at all events?—Frost happens everywhere, but I never heard of hop crops in Kent being destroyed by snow.

52,810. But if they are destroyed by frost, is it not the same thing?—I admit the result is the same.

52,811. What is snow but rain that falls in a frozen state?—Yes.

52,812. The important point is that when it goes below the freezing point it does not matter much so far as the effect is concerned?—It may be a very exceptional thing in the south.

52,813. Then you made a very strong statement [I forget in what connection] about the existence of 'outrages, lawlessness, and intimidation.' Is that the case on the estate over which you have the control?—No, certainly not.

52,814. Where did this occur?—Cases of it occurred in Skye, and cases of it occurred in the Lews.

52,815. Do you refer to the Ben-Lee trouble, and

the subsequent imprisonment of certain people in Edinburgh?—That was one instance, but there were later cases, especially in the Lews.

52,816. Are you aware of what happened in regard to that particular case you have alluded to, at Portree?—Yes.

52,817. Is it not the case that the people claimed the right of grazing on Ben-Lee?—Yes.

52,818. And that the landlord denied that they had the right?—That is not what I complained of at all.

52,819. But I am taking this case as a sample of what happened, and I want to test the value of your statement about these things. Let me refresh your memory in regard to it. The people said they had got this grazing on Ben-Lee, and that in virtue of it their rent had been increased; they alleged that the landlord subsequently denied that they had got that right, and gave the right to a neighbouring large tenant. The people persisted in their demand and they drove their cattle and sheep on to the hill, but an Interdict was got from the Court of Session to prevent them. They disregarded the Interdict; they were arrested; they were tried; and they were imprisoned in Edinburgh. That is so, is it not?—Yes.

52,820. John Macpherson of Glendale, being one of the men?—Yes.

52,821. Afterwards the Crofters Commission was appointed by an Act of Parliament; on being applied to, they investigated the circumstances, and Sheriff Brand here compelled the landlord's factor to produce the very document the existence of which had been denied in the House of Commons; am I correct so far as you know?—I am not here to dispute all that.

52,822. Now, sir, I ask you, who were guilty of the lawlessness and the outrage?—All that surely did not justify the people in resorting to violence?

52,823. Were they not right after all?—They may have been right, but there was lawlessness all the same.

52,824. Did not a judicial tribunal impartially appointed, find that these people were right? Have they not the grazing to this day?—I admit all those facts, but do you ask me to believe that they justified the resorting to violence?

52,825. I do not ask you as to that, but I ask you if that is according to your belief, and according to fact?—I have said that I do not dispute it.

52,826. You attribute to people who were so ill-used as that, outrages, lawlessness, and intimidation?—I say there were several cases of these; and no matter what the circumstances were, the people were not justified in resorting to violence to man or beast, as occasionally happened.

52,827. What was the violence to the man, that you refer to?—There were attempts at it; I remember one occasion when a vehicle was being driven along a road in Lewis, stones were placed on the road, evidently with the intention of doing damage to the vehicle and its occupants.

52,828. And what damage was done?—And we know that damage was done to cattle, their tails being cut off.

52,829. Where did that happen?—In the Lews; I do not remember the exact place at this moment.

52,830. You had better do that; it is well to be very accurate, you know, because we will have them investigated?—I am told it happened at Galson.

52,831. What was done at Galson?—I believe there were several cases of cattle being maimed.

52,832. Do you refer to the cattle belonging to Mr Helm, the tenant of Galson farm?—Yes.

52,833. Well, what more?—I am not prepared to name the number of cases.

52,834. But you spoke in the plural number?—I read them fully at the time, in the newspapers.

52,835. Now, as to intimidation, what have you got to say? Who was intimidated?—The neighbouring tenants were often intimidated.

52,836. Tell me their names?—Mr Helm was intimidated, for one.

52,837. Who more?—There were raids in the Park deer forest, which intimidated a number of people, the servants there.

52,838. Servants of whom?—Servants of the proprietor or lessee of the deer forest.

52,839. What did they do in consequence of the intimidation?—These people were prevented from the use of their occupations.

52,840. Is that all the intimidation? Were the servants driven away?—Everything was driven away for a time.

52,841. Were the servants driven away from the service in which they were employed?—No, but they were prevented from performing their duties at the time.

52,842. Did they suffer in any way from that? Did they lose their wages?—That I cannot tell you.

52,843. Were they dismissed from their employment?—I expect not.

52,844. They continue to be in the employment to-day?—So far as I know, they are, but I really do not know.

52,845. So that example vanishes. I hope your other statements have more foundation, Mr Malcolm. You have stated that your own inquiry as to the area under deer in Scotland was confirmed by the Napier Commission; I presume that refers to the investigation as you have already mentioned?—Yes.

52,846. Then the total in the Napier Report is not your total?—No.

52,847. Was it drawn up by you in the form in which it now appears?—Not at all; it may be more or less in the same form as my own, which you will find in a later volume of the report, but I had no hand whatever in drawing up the official figures.

52,848. You also referred to the Sutherland reclamations being a failure?—Yes.

52,849. In what way do you say they were a failure?—They are obviously a failure, inasmuch as they were undertaken for the purpose of creating farms to be cultivated, and that upon its being found that crops would not ripen there, the lands have been allowed to go out of cultivation.

52,850. I think it is only fair to you to say that you have qualified your statement with regard to them by saying that they were not from the beginning meant to be small holdings?—Yes.

52,851. Are you aware also that it was publicly announced that the object of the reclamations was to so increase the amount of improved pasture, that it would be unnecessary for the sheep farmers who held these farms to send their sheep to Ross-shire to winter?—I never heard that.

52,852. That is a statement of the Duke of Sutherland, which I heard?—The present Duke, or the late Duke?

52,853. The late Duke, who carried out the reclamations. He stated that the object was not to make small holdings [in which respect your statement is quite correct], but to increase the amount of permanent pasture on the sheep farms, so as to obviate the necessity of sending the sheep to Ross-shire to winter?—How could that be?

52,854. But that is so; it is not a question of opinion, it is a question of fact?—It is not according to my information.

52,855. But it is a fact, according to my hearing; it was stated publicly by the late Duke of Sutherland at a meeting at which I was present?—Well, I am not in a position to admit that.

52,856. Indeed! But you admit that the reclamations were not undertaken for the purpose of making small holdings?—I understood they were for larger farms.

52,857. Are you aware that some small holdings were made in those reclaimed lands, both at Lairg and at Kildonan?—They might have been made subsequently out of the wreck of the affair.

52,858. Not altogether; some were. The process has been the other way, I am sorry to say; the small holdings I refer to were made from the commencement, and are you aware that it was proved to our satisfaction at Lairg, that the small holdings that were so made are

the only ones that are now under cultivation?—I know that a small part of the reclaimed land is still in cultivation, and this may be the part you refer to.

52,859. But is it not a remarkable fact that while the land that was reclaimed and let in large holdings, is all out of cultivation, every small holding that was made there has never been out of cultivation, and is in cultivation at the present moment?—That is just another instance of the determination of some crofters to crop, no matter what the circumstances are.

52,860. And they are very well pleased to have the land?—I do not know the state of these small holdings; indeed it is not according to my information that there are any.

52,861. My colleagues here will bear me out.—Oh, I accept it from you as a fact.

52,862. Don't you think it is a remarkable testimony to the efficacy of small holdings?—I don't know all the circumstances, and therefore cannot speak about that.

52,863. But would it not be well for you to be acquainted with all the circumstances, before making such sweeping statements?—I had supposed I had done so; I took no end of trouble to procure information for this Commission.

52,864. If you read the evidence given by Mr Maclean, the Duke of Sutherland's factor, at Lairg, you will see that it is so. You referred to the supreme industry of the Highlands, I think. What did you mean by the 'supreme industry of the Highlands'?—I may have referred to sheep farming, but I don't know that I used that precise expression.

52,865. I am bound to say that was my impression at the time. However, you did refer to sheep farming?—Yes.

52,866. Then the removal of the people was followed by the introduction of sheep farming?—The two things took place about the same date, but I do not admit that the removal of the people was entirely owing to the introduction of sheep farming.

52,867. But the removal of the people was followed by the introduction of sheep farming?—Yes, the introduction of sheep farming occurred about the same time.

52,868. What may be called a 'concatenation of circumstances?'—I suppose so.

52,869. This 'supreme industry of the Highlands' followed the occupation of the people when they were cleared off the land; and how long did it last successfully?—It was in the end of the sixties or the beginning of the seventies that sheep farming began to decay.

52,870. But now, I suppose you will admit sheep farming is a failure?—I say, of course, that it is not a profitable occupation at present.

52,871. Not profitable even to the landlord?—No, not in comparison with other opportunities he may have of letting that sort of land.

52,872. So the supreme industry has given way to the most supreme industry, I presume?—I hope that sheep farming may yet revive.

52,873. But then, what will become of the deer forests?—The land in deer forests is, generally speaking, land that is not so well adapted for sheep farming as for the object to which it is at present devoted; and I expect that all that land, or nearly the whole of it, will remain as it is.

52,874. And only the area that is at present devoted to sheep will be devoted to sheep in future?—I expect there will be no great change.

52,875. Have we not heard that frequently before?—Heard what, may I ask?

52,876. That the area under deer forests is fixed once and for all?—No, I don't think anything was stated quite dogmatically about that.

52,877. Did you convene the meeting of landlords in Inverness in the year 1885?—I think I did.

52,878. Do you remember the statements that were made at that meeting?—I remember them generally, but it is so long ago that they are not fresh in my memory.

52,879. Are you aware that it was because of assurances given by the landlords at that time—that sheep farms as they fell vacant would be given to the people, —that the Crofters Bill was allowed to pass with all the restrictions as regards enlargement of holdings?—I never heard of assurances of the kind being given by anybody, as far as I recollect.

52,880. Were they not given by the landlords at that time?—No.

52,881. Was the meeting I have referred to not convened to consider the Crofters Bill which had been printed?—The meeting took place before the Crofters Act was passed.

52,882. That is exactly what I state; that the Bill was printed, and before it was passed, when it was perfectly well known what the intentions of the Government were?—The meeting, according to my recollection, took place at least a year before any Crofters Bill appeared; and it was because the Crofters Bill appeared, and the legislature had undertaken to deal with the question, that no further action was taken upon the lines of the landlords' meeting.

52,883. And the landlords assured the Government that in any legislation they might pass they—the landlords—would look after the giving of the land to the people, and that the present time was particularly favourable, as sheep farms were going out of lease?—I never heard of anything of that kind being done. I am sorry that I did not bring with me a copy of the resolutions which were passed at that meeting.

52,884. It may not be in the resolutions, but it certainly was in the speeches?—Well, the resolutions were the outcome of the meeting, at all events.

52,885. No doubt.—I assure you that what you have just stated is entirely new to me.

52,886. Are you aware also that the Commission of 1883 made a strong recommendation against further afforestment of land?—No, they made no such recommendation; they made a recommendation that no further afforestment should take place below a certain limit.

52,887. That further afforestment should not take place?—Below a certain altitude.

52,888. Have deer forests been formed since below that altitude?—Yes, some of them have, or parts of some have; but, of course, that was merely an expression of opinion, and I don't think it was even one of the conclusions of their Report. I may also state that they distinctly recommended that no interference should take place with existing deer forests, either at that time or in the future.

52,889. But they strongly deprecated the formation of more deer forests?—No, only to that extent, below a certain altitude.

52,890. Did Lochiel, who was himself a Commissioner, not state here yesterday that they made an absolute recommendation?—Yes, but Lochiel made a mistake. He inadvertently fell into a slight error in agreeing with a question put to him as to whether the Napier Commission had made such an absolute recommendation. [*The Chairman.*—Did Lochiel ask you to make that correction upon his evidence?—Oh, no; but if I am asked whether I agree with what Lochiel said here yesterday, I answer that Lochiel was slightly in error on that occasion.] The question was put to him whether all afforestment was not forbidden or deprecated by the recommendation of the Napier Commission, and Lochiel agreed to that. But you will see from the terms of the Report itself, pp. 94–95, that that recommendation is limited or qualified in the way I have stated.

52,891. But you do not deny that a great deal of land has been afforested since, that is under the 1000 feet limit?—Oh yes, I do not think that that recommendation has been observed in all cases.

52,892. And that no attempt has been made by the landlords as a whole to give the land back to the people?—The landlords have discovered if they did not know it before that it would be quite impossible to adhere to a limit of that kind. [*The Chairman.*—But have not the landlords deliberately set at naught these words of Lord Napier's Report:—'Provisions should be 'framed . . . by which the areas which might hereafter 'form the most appropriate scene for expanding cultiva-

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

'tion, and small holdings, should be preserved from curtailment'?—Does that apply to the whole subject, my lord, or only to the part below the 1000 feet?—That applies to the whole subject; these are the general observations made introductory to the statement about the 1000 feet.—We have the fact that 21 deer forests have been made since that was written in 1883.—Which deer forests are a setting at naught of this direct opinion and advice to the Government by Lord Napier's Commission?—Of course, to that extent it is.]

52,893. And contrary to what I hold to be the direct promise of the Highland landlords at this meeting?—No, I dispute that.

52,894. You do not admit that?—I know nothing about that.

52,895. We will have to refer to that again. Then, you told us of a great deal that would happen if deer forests were interfered with, so far as public burdens are concerned; you say that rates are paid upon deer forests, and if the forests were done away with, the rates that are at present exigible from forests would necessarily cease?—They would not altogether cease, but I say that the rental upon which the rates are imposed would in the case of the succeeding subject of taxation be so much smaller, that necessarily the amount of the rate would be smaller also.

52,896. Why would it be smaller?—Because the rental would be smaller.

52,897. You assume that?—I do.

52,898. That implies that acre for acre, the land in possession of the crofters in any given area pays less rent than is paid by deer forest?—Yes, that is so.

52,899. You hold that to be true?—Yes.

52,900. Did you hear Lochiel yesterday upon the subject of tenants' improvements?—Yes, I heard Lochiel's examination.

52,901. Do not all improvements increase the value of a subject?—They are expected to do so, but I am sorry to say they don't always do it.

52,902. Improvements do not always increase the value of the subject?—Take the Sutherland reclamations, for instance; I don't think the value of the Sutherland estate has been increased by these improvements.

52,903. You think not?—No.

52,903A. Are you aware how much the valuation of the parish went up in consequence of these reclamations?—I am aware that the representative of the Duke of Sutherland when he was being examined before the Napier Commission said that the result financially had been *nil*.

52,904. Who is your authority for that?—I think you will find it in evidence in the blue-book.

52,905. But who is the authority for the statement?—It was Sir Arnold Kemball, I think, who was talking,—the Duke's Commissioner.

52,906. Would you accept the Valuation Roll of the parish in which the reclamations were affected as a better authority?—The Valuation Roll, of course, should be conclusive.

52,907. Would you be surprised if the valuation of that parish has been increased 25 per cent. in consequence of that expenditure?—I would be very much surprised if it could be shown that the increase of 25 per cent. arose altogether from those improvements.

52,908. But does it not follow that land that was before black heather and bog, is more valuable when it is grass?—The increase may be due to some extent to other alterations in the parish.

52,908A. But if it is not?—I should be surprised to find that it was due altogether to the reclamations.

52,909. But, as a general matter, do you hold that improvements in land do not increase its value?—Oh, not at all, quite the other way; but I say there are exceptions.

52,910. What is the use of talking of exceptions and leaving out of view the general rule?—I stated from the first that there were exceptions.

52,911. Does land that is occupied as a deer forest increase in value by improvements made on it?—Yes, in some cases.

52,912. Such as?—Roads, fences, building of houses.

52,913. Do not all these things take place where crofters are situated?—Not in the same way; I do not know of crofters who make roads.

52,914. But does not the subject increase in value as every improvement is made; and, as a matter of fact, have not rents been increased upon improvements made by crofters?—If it is a useful improvement, of course it must increase the value of the subject.

52,915. Is it not the case that crofters are improving tenants, as proved by evidence over and over again, while deer forests are not improving?—I do not admit that. I think a good many improvements which are useful to the whole community are carried out in deer forests, as well as those which are simply carried out for the convenience or comfort of the tenant.

52,916. Do you say that land in occupation of small holders does not increase in value and is not rated on the same scale as deer forests?—If the effect of their improvements is that rents are raised, and that increase of rent gets into the Valuation Roll, then, of course, they are to that extent contributing more to the rates.

52,916A. Is it not the fact as we heard yesterday that a man who was situated on a moor up at Lochgarthside, where he got land that was not worth many pence per acre; that he has improved that land, and now is paying a considerable rent for it. Has the value of that land not been increased by the amount of that man's labour?—Certainly.

52,917. Have you known a tenant of a deer forest do that?—They don't reclaim land, certainly.

52,918. Then, is it not the case that the rates would be paid upon the land, whoever held it?—Certainly, upon whatever the rental was.

52,919. It amounts to this, that if the tenant of the deer forest pays a large gross sum for rates, it simply shows that he holds an enormous extent of land?—Very likely, in connection with other things.

52,920. And if the land were held in any other way, the rates would be exactly the same?—Oh, no, because he pays a great deal for what might be called the amenity of the place, over and above the agricultural value of the land.

52,921. He pays upon the rent, simply?—He pays upon the rent, of course.

52,922. Like any other subject?—Yes.

52,923. And if acre for acre you increase the value of the land, you increase the valuation, and you increase the rates?—Certainly.

52,923A. And it does not at all follow that if the land were in the occupation of other parties, the rates would not be still exigible, and got?—I say that the same subject occupied as a deer forest yields a much larger rent than if occupied as a sheep farm.

52,924. Compared with the sheep farm, you get a bigger rent from the land as a deer forest?—Yes.

52,925. What is the difference, now?—It varies, of course.

52,926. Give us the case of the parish with which you are best acquainted. What was the rental of the Invergarry estate before there was a deer forest?—I don't know; there was a deer forest before I went there.

52,927. But what difference does it make upon the rent, when a sheep farm becomes a forest?—It varies in different cases, of course; but I should say that sometimes you get twice as much rent, and at other times half as much again.

52,927A. Let us be specific; you know the particulars of what took place since you came to Invergarry. What land, since you were responsible for the management, has been changed from sheep farm to deer forest?—Take Glenquoich; two farms were there afforested,—at least, they are deer forest now,—and I think that when the leases were given up, one of them was paying £800 and the other £650 or £700,—take it at £700.

52,928. That makes £1500. As deer forest what does it pay?—We were getting, I think, £800 for the shooting at that time.

52,929. That is £2300 in all, as compared with what?—We are now getting £3400.

52,930. Or £1100 of a difference?—Yes.

52,931. Now, what is the valuation of the parish?—The estates are partly in three parishes, but the whole valuation of the estate, as I have stated, is £7700 odds.

52,932. Would you kindly tell me what difference per £ would be made by £1100?—I cannot say.

52,933. Would it be a halfpenny in the £?—I cannot say.

52,934. Would it be a farthing in the £?—I cannot say, for this reason, that the rates are spread over three parishes.

52,935. But I should think you would have a general idea?—I cannot tell you without having the particulars of the rating.

52,936. Does it amount to a farthing in the £?—I really cannot say without having the rating of the parishes before me, and the total amount of the valuation.

52,937. I would have thought that a gentleman like you, who has advocated the system upon this ground so often, would have made that elementary calculation; certainly it is not unreasonable to expect that you would have done it?—I never had occasion to go into the subject in that way, and I do not think it is reasonable to expect me to carry in my head all the figures relating to the parishes.

52,938. This is a matter that is so often spoken about, and one that has been brought before us as an argument in favour of the continuance of the present system so often, yet you are not in a position to say that in the case we have been dealing with, the change would make a difference of a farthing in the £?—I believe it is much more than that; but as I say, I cannot give the exact figure, because I have not the particulars of the whole parish before me.

52,939. But you are not in a position to say that it would amount to a farthing in the £?—I am in a position to say that it would amount to a great deal more than that.

52,940. A shilling?—No, certainly not a shilling.

52,940A. A penny?—I cannot condescend on a figure.

52,941. Just so. Can you tell me, then, what additional expenditure has been made by the estate in order to obtain this increase in the valuation?—I gave the particulars, I think, in the statement I read yesterday.

52,942. I thought that was with reference to the expenditure by Lord Burton himself?—I gave both, though they were not detailed.

52,943. Then, can you say what return this increase affords upon the expenditure made?—No, I cannot say.

52,944. Does the difference of £1100 yield one per cent.?—I really cannot say; I have not the particulars.

52,945. It is very important to know that, but we can make the calculations afterwards. Now you say with regard to this subject, as to which you make such qualifications now, and concerning which you have not advanced a single statistic, that the withdrawal of the deer forest would be followed by financial collapse; and yet you are not prepared to say that the increase in the rental amounts to a farthing in the £ on the rates of the parish you are interested in?—If I have not given statistics, I have given what I consider to be very good reasons for my contention.

52,946. But you say distinctly that the withdrawal of the deer forest would be followed by financial collapse?—No, I think I conjoin with that something else,—I said the withdrawal of all the cultivated land and all the low-lying pasture as well as the deer forest.

52,947. I have taken it down and marked it with marks of quotation; however, we shall refer to the exact words. You say 'through the great rents 'obtained for the lease of sporting subjects, especially 'deer forests, the parish rentals are very largely in-'creased, and the pressure of taxation upon the poorer 'ratepayers is correspondingly alleviated. Over the 'whole of the sporting areas, this is computed to be 'not less than 25 per cent.; while in many Highland 'parishes the contribution of rates and taxes from 'sporting possessions is far higher, amounting in some 'instances to half of the whole rating In not a few 'of these parishes rates are abnormally though un-'avoidably high, reaching to 5s., 7s., and even 10s. per '£ of rental; and in such districts it is evident that 'a withdrawal of the sporting rental would be speedily 'followed 'by financial collapse.'—Yes, —in such districts.

52,948. But listen to your own words:—'Over the 'whole of the sporting areas, this is computed to be 'not less than 25 per cent.,' that is over the whole?—Yes.

52,949. What is your authority for the 25 per cent.?—I went into the matter minutely some years ago; I went over the whole of the valuation rolls in the counties we are dealing with at present, and the result is what I have stated; and in some parishes it is very much larger. I think I can find the paper containing my calculations on the subject. One of the papers which I wrote a year or two ago had reference to the subject of rating in Highland parishes, and in it I gave the result of the investigation I have just alluded to. I see it applies to Inverness-shire, Ross-shire, Sutherland, and Perth, and there is here a long list of parishes (giving the names of the parishes) the total rental, the sporting rental, and the percentage of the assessment contributed by the sporting rents. I have no objections to hand that in, if you wish it.

52,949A. By 'sporting rentals' do you mean the rents of deer forests?—No, they include also shootings and salmon fishings.

52,950. Oh, indeed; and who proposes to take these away?—I am not talking of them being taken away.

52,951. Then, what is the relevancy of them?—I am talking of the effect upon the rates.

52,952. But don't you see that the whole difference in making land for occupation out of the deer forests would be the difference between the pastoral rent plus the sporting rent, and the rent you now get for deer forest,—that is all that is attributable to deer forests. In your own case, you stated that difference as £1100, and you are not able to say that that difference amounts to one farthing per pound in the rating?—Oh, yes; I have stated that it must amount to a great deal more than that.

52,953. But don't you see the fallacy of your calculation?—No, I do not.

52,954. You say that if deer forests were done away with, all the sporting rental is done away with. Does that follow?—No, certainly not.

52,955. Before the land was made into deer forest, you got pastoral rent, I suppose, plus sporting rent, for it?—Yes.

52,956. So that all that is attributable to deer forest is the difference between that, and what you get now?—Yes.

52,957. That amount is all that you can legitimately ascribe to deer forest?—And that is by far the larger proportion of the rent.

52,958. Do you say that that amounts to 25 per cent. of the whole rates when it is distributed?—Yes, according to the calculation I made at the time.

52,959. But now you are proceeding in justification and in confirmation to read to us a statement which includes the whole sporting rent, and the fishings?—Very well, but let me explain that the percentages which I bring out here are much above 25 per cent.

52,960. How much is shown there?—There are up to 40, 48, and 60 per cent. The 25 per cent. refers to deer forest rents alone, not to the salmon fishings or the grouse rents. When you take these also into account, the percentage of the rates contributed by sport of all kinds is much higher than 25 per cent.

52,960A. How much higher is it?—I will give you examples, if you like:—In Harris, 40 per cent.; in Kilmonivaig, 48 per cent.; in Boleskine, 38 per cent.; in Laggan, 55 per cent.

52,961. What is about the average?—I expect the average would come out at something like 40 per cent. The lowest here is 25 per cent.

52,962. What is included in that?—The deer forest, the grouse moor, and the salmon fishing.

52,963. Now, can you give in these instances the value of the land when held as sheep farm, plus the other sporting value, and what they are now as deer forests where deer forests exist?—I said that the sporting deer forest rental alone contributes about 25 per cent., therefore it must be the difference.

52,964. And in the concrete example you have given, you state that the difference amounts to £1100; that is the enhanced rent as a deer forest?—Yes; £1112 is the exact figure.

52,965. And what percentage is that increase of the whole income of the parish?—It seems to me it is about a third of the whole rent, so it would be about 33 per cent.

52,966. And what would that amount to in the pound?—I really cannot say without having the valuation roll before me, because you cannot make the calculation without knowing the total valuation of the parish.

52,966A. No, that is true, but it is so elementary a fact in the computation that I am surprised you have not got it, and that before making a statement like this you should not be able to say how much it amounts to in the pound?—I can give the percentage, which I thought was quite enough.

52,967. Percentage does not give the rate per pound. Then in reference to our inquiry, you have told us I think that it is not feasible to make these new holdings, nor if feasible would it be desirable?—Yes; these are the propositions I started from.

52,968. And then you endeavour to make them good. Instead of that system, you suggested, I think, that there should be emigration?—Yes, that is one of the suggestions made.

52,969. Are you speaking here in your capacity of Secretary of the Highland Property Defence Association?—The Highland Property Association is the proper name.

52,970. That is your conclusion?—Certainly.

52,971. You said you were not a crofter, you were not a farmer, you were not a gamekeeper, you were not a deer forester, but you are an emigrant?—Oh, no, I am not an emigrant, although I am in favour of emigration.

52,972. You did not emigrate yourself?—No, I had no occasion to do so. If everybody were in the same position as I am, there would be no need for emigration.

52,973. If every man were an advocate of emigration, no man would emigrate,—they would all be advocating emigration. You migrated to the Highlands?—I came here to—

52,974. I hope you have not found it to your disadvantage to do so?—Oh, no.

52,975. You went on to say that all the emigration schemes hitherto had failed,—that they were deficient schemes?—Yes.

52,976. Do you think these schemes that have so notably failed were not gone into with great care?—No, I don't think they could have been, or they would not have been the failures they have turned out.

52,977. There was a Committee on Colonisation which, I think, had the benefit of evidence from yourself, and which afterwards formulated a scheme?—Yes.

52,978. Do you say that that was not an efficient scheme, which had the benefit of your own recommendations?—I had no hand in preparing that scheme; but I do say [I think I say so in my paper] that it is a scheme from which we may expect good results yet.

52,979. That is the only scheme, I think, that has been devised?—Yes.

52,980. Was it drawn upon your own lines?—Oh, no; I had nothing to do with the drawing of it.

52,981. But you gave evidence which, no doubt, influenced the members of that Committee?—I merely gave the same evidence as I gave yesterday, in favour of emigration.

52,982. But you have expressed approval of that report?—Yes.

52,983. And was that the first Committee on emigration before whom you ever gave evidence?—No, I gave evidence in favour of emigration before Lord Napier's Commission.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

52,984. They made recommendations also for Emigration?—They did.

52,985. Which have not been carried out?—No.

52,986. Why?—I explained that in my paper.

52,987. What did you say?—That no sufficient or well-organised scheme of emigration has yet been devised.

52,988. Except this one?—It remains to be seen whether this is to be successful.

52,989. Have you any reason to suppose that this one may not turn out a failure like the rest?—It may, but I say it has some hopeful features about it.

52,990. Are you aware that the essential part of it was a guarantee of £150,000 by the British Exchequer to the Government of British Columbia?—Any emigration scheme must involve an outlay of that kind.

52,991. Are you aware that an Act was passed empowering the Treasury to expend the sum of money I have mentioned?—Yes.

52,992. Are you aware that that has remained a dead letter?—So far, I believe, it has not been taken advantage of except in one or two cases.

52,993. Are you aware that the Columbian Government have never called upon the British Government to advance the amount of that guarantee?—No, but I expect that by-and-bye they will do so, and that the Act will be put into operation.

52,994. Are you aware that the Colonisation Board, appointed to carry out that scheme, was most carefully selected; do you know its composition?—No.

52,995. Do you know that the Secretary for Scotland is *ex officio* a member of it?—He may be, I do not know.

52,996. Do you know that the representative of Canada in London is also a member of the Board?—Probably he is.

52,997. And that the Land Companies of America and the Railway Companies of America are also represented?—Probably they are.

52,998. And is that not a strong Board, seeing that every interest is represented—except the interest of the people that you are going to deport?—Quite so.

52,999. Does not that satisfy you?—No, it does not; what I do say is that sufficient time to test that Act and that scheme has not been given.

53,000. How long do you suppose it should be before the result can be known?—It may take several years; we may have to wait for a more or less successful revival of the agriculture of America, including British Columbia.

53,001. Is the climate not good?—I believe it is.

53,002. There is no snow there?—I cannot tell you.

53,003. No frost, no rains, no blizzards there?—No, but the state of agriculture there is exceedingly depressed at present, as well as in this country.

53,004. What is the depression there owing to?—Low prices.

53,005. And will these revive in your opinion?—I expect so; I hope they will have a revival.

53,006. Will the production decrease, or the consumption increase—which of them?—The consumption of the crops they raise?

53,007. Yes.—I expect both the consumption and the price will increase.

53,008. And will the area from which the product is raised increase?—I would expect it to increase, if a large scheme of emigration were put into operation in British Columbia.

53,009. So that the result of your scheme of emigration would be to bring more land into cultivation, and bring down prices?—I have not said so: I do not expect that emigration from the Highlands of Scotland would have that general effect.

53,010. Then it is acknowledged that all these schemes of emigration have been a failure?—I acknowledge all previous schemes have been a failure, but I say that this one is in abeyance.

53,011. And that this one also has up to this time been a failure?—No, I do not admit that it has been a

failure, because the time has not arrived to say it is a failure.

53,012. Has it not been acknowledged by the responsible Minister in his place in Parliament that the money could not have been devoted to a worse purpose?—Sir George Trevelyan stated that the other day, I believe.

53,013. Now then, to bring this question of emigration home, you yourself in your statement brought before us a most notable fact. There is a section in the Local Government Bill of 1889 empowering County Councils to raise money for the purpose of assisting emigration?—Yes.

53,014. And you remarked upon the astonishing fact that in no county in the Highlands has the County Council put that section into operation?—Simply because there have been no applications under it.

53,015. For emigration?—None that I know of.

53,016. What does that prove to you?—It proves,—at least it suggests to me, that there is no demand for emigration; and I admit that at present such is the case.

53,017. Only you are going to continue your crusade of enlightenment?—My opinion is that you will never get a solution of this question without the employment of emigration along with other remedies.

53,018. But then you wish to put the emigration into force before you put the other remedies into force?—I do not want to put emigration into force at all; I want voluntary emigration.

53,019. You are a member of the Inverness-shire County Council, are you not?—Yes.

53,020. Did it never occur to you to bring this section of the Act before the notice of the County Council?—It could only be brought before the County Council in the shape of an application for assistance.

53,021. Where do you find that?—Do you suggest that the County Council were going to canvass for people to apply to be emigrated?

53,022. Yes.—I do not think that would ever enter their minds.

53,023. Why not; if I were as enthusiastic an advocate of emigration as you are, I would certainly consider it my duty to bring before the County Council, if I had the honour to be a member of it, a proposal that this should be done?—For one thing I do not believe that the County Council is the proper instrument, so to speak, to carry out a scheme of emigration.

53,024. But is that not in the Act of Parliament?—Yes, it is there, but there is a great deal of other useless matter in the Act of Parliament, I am afraid. [*The Chairman.*—Do you describe the Local Government Act of 1887 as an Act which contains a great deal of useless matter?—I say there are some matters in it that are practically a dead letter. *Q.*—That should not have been there?—I do not say they should not have been there, but perhaps it was a mistake to put them there.]

53,025. Of course, you and I are agreed on that point, as I moved in Parliament that it should be left out of the Act; but other counsels and wiser ones evidently prevailed. Why did you not bring this matter forward; really and truly, why if you thought it was a beneficent and a useful thing, did you not suggest it to the County Council?—I remained under the impression, for one thing, that it could only be brought forward by someone who wanted to get the benefit of that clause.

53,026. Would it not occur to you as a propagandist, and a very ardent one on this point, that it would be a very good opportunity for you to enlighten the County Council of Inverness on this point by making even an abstract motion with regard to it in order to raise a discussion?—No, I never thought of that at all, but if I had I should have come to the conclusion that the County Council would not listen to me on such a subject.

53,027. The County Council would have none of it?—Yes, I believe that would have been so.

53,028. And they represent the people of Inverness-shire?—But it must be kept in view that the matter has never been brought before them in this county.

53,029. I must say that I am somewhat surprised at your position; if I were in your position and wanted to enlighten the public I would have brought this matter forward?—I am very much obliged to you for the hint; I may act upon it some day.

53,030. But you have not hitherto done it, and you have admitted that if you had done so, you would have got very scant support?—Yes.

53,031. How do you think so?—Because I do not think the County Council would consider itself the proper medium for such a thing at all.

53,032. Then, who would be the proper medium?—If you are to have a proper scheme of emigration you must have an Emigration Board.

53,033. But do not you see that before you could have an Emigration Board you would have to convert public opinion on the subject?—Oh, yes, I am assuming all the while that the demand for emigration will arise.

53,034. Then, with regard to the people who will not emigrate, are you surprised to find that they are averse to emigration?—Yes, I am very much surprised.

53,035. You are surprised that the Highlanders do not express a desire to leave their country and allow it to become deer forests?—No, that is not what I am surprised at; but I am surprised that they do not some of them go abroad for the purpose of bettering their condition.

53,036. Do you know the extent of land in the Highlands there would be for every man, woman, and child in it?—No, I do not think I do.

53,037. Would you be astonished to learn that it amounts to more than sixty times the average area of a croft in the Highlands?—I suppose that calculation is based on the whole area in the Highlands, but a great part of that consists of land, or loch, or whatever it is, upon which it is utterly impossible for any human being to live.

53,038. And that included in the divisor are all the people in the large towns, which far more than counterbalance that objection?—I think it is no use taking into account land upon which it is impossible even to live.

53,039. But surely that is far more than counterbalanced by taking in the population of the town of Inverness and all other urban inhabitants?—As an arithmetical calculation it may be.

53,040. And the arithmetic of it is very striking, is it not?—Well, I do not know; many arithmetical calculations are certainly striking.

53,041. And still in the light of that calculation you are surprised that the people of the Highlands do not emigrate?—I am.

53,042. But are you aware of the immense emigration there has been from the Highlands?—In former times I believe that was so. Only this very morning I read a paragraph in the newspaper in which it was stated that the Macdonalds of Glengarry who went away from this country I think in 1802, were making preparations to celebrate the hundredth year of their stay in Canada; and amongst other things stated they congratulate themselves upon the position they have reached in that Colony; so that in that case at least I conclude it must have been a good thing for the people to have emigrated.

53,043. But was it a good thing for the Highlands?—I think it was a good thing that a number of people went at that time; just as I think it would be a very good thing if more people went now.

53,044. But are you aware of the emigration from Glengarry, to prevent which the intervention of the King had to be called in?—No, I am not.

53,045. You never heard of that?—I know that these particular people were a portion of the Fencible Regiment which was disbanded at that time, and that they elected to go to America instead of remaining in this country.

53,046. Are you aware that the intervention of the King was called in in order to prevent the Highlanders of Glengarry from leaving the country?—I know that the Government deprecated the emigration that was going on about the beginning of the century in 1803 or thereabouts.

Inverness.

George Malcolm.

53,047. You quoted Dr. Johnson yesterday; have you read his views with regard to the depopulation of the Highlands?—Oh, yes.

53,048. You did not quote any of his diatribes against emigration?—I do not remember anything about it in Johnson; you may be quite right, but I don't remember it at this moment. I am quite aware, however, that so many people were leaving the country at that time that even the landlords took steps to prevent it.

53,049. Why do you say 'even the landlords'?—Well, they thought their estates were going to be depleted of people I suppose.

53,050. I suppose they had no other policy at that time than to keep the people there?—I do not know about that.

53,051. Did their power and their influence and their very income not depend upon the people being there?—I expect that may have been what influenced them—a fear that there would not be enough people remaining to take up their lands.

53,052. But there are enough people remaining now to take up all the land they can get?—Oh, I suppose so.

53,053. So it amounts to this; you are not able to give us any further assistance with regard to the land we are looking for than to tell us that there is none in the Highland district available for our purpose?—I have done my best to show what land you could get.

53,054. But you are not the individual just now, neither are you the representative of the Glengarry estate; you are the representative of by far the largest number of the Highland landlords at present. You tell us in the name of the gentlemen for whom you are here that there is no land in this wide district fit for the purpose for which we are deputed to inquire?—I do not say that; I say that there is not sufficient land for the purpose of your inquiry.

53,055. What do you mean by sufficient land for the purpose of our inquiry?—I say, that if you take all the arable land and all the low-lying pasture—

53,056. What have we got to do with that; you have read the terms of the remit, I presume?—Yes.

53,057. We are here to find out what land, if any, exists?—Yes.

53,058. And you say there is none?—No, I do not say that.

53,059. What do you say then?—I was about to tell you when you interrupted me. I have given in my paper an estimate of the arable land which may be got, and I have stated that if you take all the arable land, and all the low-lying pasture land from existing holdings, and give that to crofters, you would destroy the rest of the holdings as valuable subjects. I do not say that it is impossible to assign that land to the extent to which it exists, but I say that if you do so you will destroy other interests.

53,060. Such as?—The sheep farming interest, and forestry, and the sporting interest.

53,061. But if all the land is taken over how is any interest injured?—All that is fit for the purposes of the remit only.

53,062. If nothing be taken but whole holdings as they exist at present the proper equilibrium that you have referred to before would be maintained?—If you take the whole holdings of course it would.

53,063. No, but if the land that is taken is coterminus with holdings that already exist no damage will be done to any place, because there would be no portion of any individual sheep farm or of any individual deer forest left?—Of course, that would be the only way of doing it.

53,064. But would your objections be overcome if that were attended to?—Well, I think that the same rents could not be got for such holdings as are got for the present ones.

53,065. Then even that would not satisfy you?—No.

53,066. You would require satisfaction also as regards the rent?—Yes.

53,067. If satisfaction were given in that respect, and if satisfaction were also given with regard to seat, would your objections then be overcome?—No, I may state broadly that I am not in favour of the present system, or of a perpetuation of it.

53,068. But the object of any inquiry is to change the existing system?—Or to extend it.

53,069. Extension involves change, does it not?—Well, of course, if the change could be made without injustice to any one—

53,070. I will put it in this way. Are you and those you represent here to-day opposed in any form to the creation of more smaller holdings than exist at present?—They are opposed to it if it can only be done by the sacrifice of other interests, in which they are involved or which belong to them.

53,071. Let us be a little more definite. What are the other interests you speak of?—The interests of sheep farming; the interests of sport.

53,072. That is to say they are in favour of its being done if no sheep farm is interfered with and no deer forest is interfered with?—They are in favour of its being done, if it can be done without inflicting injustice on the present proprietors or lessees.

53,073. Let us consider what they understand by injustice. Is it not this, that at present they are perfectly willing that it should be done, provided no sheep farm is interfered with, or no deer forest as these exist at present?—I think that is practically the whole case.

53,074. They are in favour of something being done, but they object to anything being done which would interfere with the present arrangements, is that so?—They do not object to its being done, if it could be done without injustice to them.

53,075. Then, is it the case that they are perfectly willing that it should be done provided it be done at the expense of the crofters' holdings; is that what you mean?—I do not understand the question.

53,076. The distribution of land at present broadly speaking consists of deer forests, sheep farms, and crofters' holdings. We are appointed to look for land that, in our opinion, would be fit for forming small holdings. You say that those whom you here represent to-day are perfectly willing that smaller holdings should be formed, but you say that they object to their being made out of deer forests or sheep farms. Therefore, all that remains for us is to look at the crofters' holdings to see if new holdings can be made out of them?—Oh no, they do not object to their being formed out of sheep farms and deer forests, if that can be done without sacrificing the interests of other people.

53,077. Which people?—The landlords.

53,078. And the interests of the landlords I take to be the present arrangements?—Exactly, the present arrangements as far as they affect them.

53,079. They are in favour of its being done if the present arrangements are left alone, is that your position?—Yes, or safeguarded.

53,080. *Mr Munro.*—Your position as regards deer forests and sheep farms I understand to be this, that if any of these farms could be converted into small holdings without detriment to the landlords, you or the Association you represent would have no objection to that being done?—Exactly, that is my position; but, unfortunately, I hold the opinion that it is impossible to do that.

53,081. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Before putting any questions to you about the statement which you read yesterday, Mr Malcolm, I wish to put some questions to you about a pamphlet which you have published, entitled, 'The population, crofts, sheep-walks, and deer forests of the Highlands and Islands.' This pamphlet is very much the evidence you gave before the Napier Commission, revised and corrected?—It is an exact copy of it, as far as I recollect.

53,082. Now, this as well as the statement which you gave yesterday is intended to justify the afforestment of land in the Highlands, and the general drift of your argument is that crofting is a pernicious system, that large farming is unprofitable, and, in fact, impracticable, and that deer foresting has proved beneficial. Is that your position?—Well, that is practically what it

amounts to,—that I do not think crofting or the extension of the crofting system at any rate desirable, and that I think that deer forests have been very beneficial to the Highlands.

53,083. And also that crofting has proved a very bad system—has been the bane of the Highlands?—I stated I think that it has been bad in respect of the congestion which it creates.

53,084. But you even hold that although you did enlarge the crofts it would still be a very bad system?—No, I am in favour of a certain extent of crofting remaining; I am only in favour of a reduction of it, and against an extension of it.

53,085. But you say this 'May it not be, that some 'wholesome root of enlightenment may remain, which, 'gradually spreading over the Highlands, may open 'the eyes of the Highlanders generally to the fact that 'there are other and better ambitions than a Highland 'croft can present, even if it should be enlarged at 'the expense of their neighbours, and that they are 'likely to become better men and women, more pros-'perous in a material sense, and enjoying more of the 'consideration of the world, in other spheres than in 'that of a constant and too often hopeless struggle 'with insurmountable natural impediments at home?' And then you go on to describe all the evils; so that however much you enlarge their crofts you still think it an unprofitable occupation?—I think you will find that that refers only to a portion of the crofting system being given up. In other parts of the pamphlet it will be found that I am not in favour of the whole thing being given up.

53,086. You specify the Western Highlands and speak in stronger terms than those against it. I have quoted what you say upon the general question, but when you come to the Western Seaboard you say 'It 'is too evident to every unprejudiced person that the 'system which obtains in the Western Seaboard and 'islands is one that it is most undesirable should be 'perpetuated, with all its squalid misery, its tendency 'to indolence, its chronic poverty, cheerless prospects, 'and predisposition to disease.' You will observe that when you deal with the Western Seaboard you speak in much stronger language?—Yes, that refers to perpetuating of crofting in its then condition.

53,087. When you describe crofting in those terms, of course, you look upon it as a most pernicious system. And then you say that sheep-farming has proved unprofitable and impracticable, and you go on to a justification of deer forests. The first thing that you do in justification of that system is to show that it has not injuriously affected the numbers of the people in the Highlands, which is, of course, rather a negative claim. Now, if you turn to p. 10 of that pamphlet you will find that you say regarding population 'There has been 'really no depopulation. From the earliest times of 'which we have reliable record, the numbers of the 'people in the Highlands seem to have been steadily 'advancing.' Now, if you will look at your own Table at the beginning you will see that that statement is hardly borne out by the facts. According to your own Table the population in the Highland counties never reached so low an ebb since the Census began to be taken as in 1881. Still you say that it has been steadily increasing since the earliest times of which we have reliable record. How do you reconcile the statement with the facts?—What Table are you referring to?

53,088. Table I.—Well, will you kindly look at Table II. below it.

53,089. But I am dealing with the Highlands, and in Table II. you take in the whole northern counties?—Yes, look at the same column in Table II. and you will find that what I have stated is correct.

53,090. Then this statement does not refer to the Highlands?—The counties mentioned in Table II. are Highland counties as well, some of them.

53,091. What you say is—'The population in the 'Highlands has been steadily increasing.' Now, you have Table I., referring to the Highlands, which shows that the population of 1881 was the lowest since the Census began to be taken?—That refers only to five counties, in which there was a very slight reduction in 1881 as compared with 1871; but I think in another part of the pamphlet that is admitted and the percentage of decrease is given. It is only over the whole of the northern counties that I allege an increase of population.

53,092. Yes, but you see this pamphlet is entitled 'The Population of the Highlands,' and you are speaking distinctly of the Highlands; and yet the population of the Highlands never reached so low an ebb as at the time of which you say 'That there was no depopu-'lation' and 'That the population has been steadily 'increasing?'—Well, it depends upon what you define as the Highlands.

53,093. Well, we define as the Highlands the seven counties with which we are dealing just now?—When this pamphlet was written the area of the Highlands was not defined in the way in which it is now; what we now call the crofting area was not defined at all. [*Mr Sutherland.*—What was the date of the pamphlet?—1884.—The Highlands were first defined in the Education Act of 1872?—Yes, but the crofting area is what Mr Maccallum speaks of.]

53,094. I point out how very misleading it is; the population in the Highlands has been steadily decreasing—the very opposite of what you state—and the population in the Highlands in the year 1891 again is still lower—it has decreased in every county with which we have to do. Take Argyll for instance and look at the decrease there during the period. The population of Argyll has decreased since the Census began to be taken from 100,973 to 75,000, or a decrease of 25·7 per cent.?—I do not want to dispute your figures; if you are confining yourself to the counties of the crofting area or to three or four counties, I admit that. But my figures were intended to apply to more counties: The crofting area as I say had not been defined at the date when that pamphlet was written.

53,095. You say at p. 9 'When the *whole* of the 'northern counties are considered, it will be seen that 'there has been no diminution at all, but quite the re-'verse; and if we consider by themselves the ten 'counties of Aberdeen, Argyll, Banff, Bute, Caithness, 'Forfar, Inverness, Perth, Ross and Cromarty, and 'Sutherland, in which counties alone the deer forests 'and large Highland sheep farms are placed, it will be 'found that during the past fifty years the population 'has increased by 23·3 per cent., which seems strangely 'to be always forgotten by those persons who are con-'stantly referring to depopulation of the Highlands.' You say that those who have been speaking of the depopulation of the Highlands forget that there has been an increase in Dundee, in Aberdeen, and in other large towns. Do you see the relevancy of that? You are speaking of the population of the Highlands and you say that those who speak of depopulation forget that there has been an increase in such towns as Dundee and Aberdeen. Do you not get all the increase from these large towns? You have already stated that the main object of writing this pamphlet was to defend deer forests?—That was one of the objects. My reason for going to Forfarshire and the other counties was to take the populations of the counties in which deer forests exist, and I think I was quite justified in doing that.

53,096. I quite see that; but then you see you are speaking of the Highlands, and that does not justify you in making Forfarshire a Highland county? Is it necessary for me to say again that if you take the whole of the northern counties in which you find deer forests you will get an increase, but if you take only the few counties which you are referring to, there is a certain percentage of decrease?—I admit all that.

53,097. There has been a depopulation in the Highlands although you say that the population in the Highlands has been steadily increasing?—The rural population in the Highlands has decreased no doubt as it has decreased everywhere else.

53,098. But even when you take the population of the towns the population of the Highlands has decreased and is decreasing?—In these few counties it is the fact; I have said so two or three times.

53,099. In all the Highland counties?—In all the

Inverness. George Malcolm.

northern counties, including all the counties in which there are deer forests, it is not the fact.

53,100. But in the Highlands they are decreasing?—Very well.

53,101. Then you bring forward your Tables to show that afforesting has not led to depopulation, and you say 'It may be noticed, that in the county of Inverness, 'which is considered the county of deer forests *par* 'excellence, the population has increased during the ten 'years from 1871 to 1881 by 2439, or nearly 3 per 'cent.—and this during the period when the number 'of deer forests has been considerably augmented.' Now, you take Inverness as the county of deer forests, *par excellence*, and I suppose you would say that the parishes in that county that would be called deer forest parishes *par excellence*, would be Kilmallie and Kilmonivaig?—Yes. There are others, of course; there are all the Badenoch forests and those of Laggan, and there are some in Glenelg.

53,102. But in Inverness-shire, don't you think that these include a greater proportion of forest than any other parish?—I think Inverness-shire has the larger number, 44—no, I rather think they are more in number in Ross-shire, but not in extent.

53,103. But I refer to Inverness? Now, in seeking to prove by your Tables that the deer forests have not caused depopulation, you see that you include towns in the Highlands; but let us exclude from these parishes the urban population, and you will find a great depopulation in Kilmallie and Kilmonivaig during the time you refer to. Is not that so?—I have no doubt that is correct; but is it fair to take two parishes and put them against my statement?

53,104. But you see the whole object of your Tables is to show that deer foresting does not depopulate, and I select the parishes that are deer forest parishes *par excellence*?—I thought everybody admitted that.

53,105. I want to get your proof, and the proof here is the Tables that you give, from which I am quoting?—These Tables were formed mainly for the purpose of showing that depopulation all over the Highlands—if there was depopulation—was no greater than the depopulation that was going on in the south.

53,106. Let me point out to you the use which you yourself make of the Tables. Take p. 23: 'A very 'frequent objection to deer forests is, that they necessi-'tate, or at least lead to, depopulation of the districts 'afforested; but with regard to all the forests which 'have been created, in recent years at all events, no 'statement could be more inaccurate than this. This 'has already been shown by reference to Tables I. and 'II.' You see the proof which you give that the deer forests have not depopulated the country lies in your Tables?—That just brings me back to the statement which I have made over and over again since you began your examination,—that if you take the few deer forest counties now embraced in the crofting area, there has been a reduction of population; but if you take the whole deer forest counties, all the northern counties and all the deer forest counties, there is no reduction of the population. So you are just back to the same point.

53,107. But your Tables do not prove what you say. They are given here, you state yourself in this pamphlet, that they are given to prove your statement, but they do not prove it?—That is your opinion. It is open to question.

53,108. Pardon me, I give your own words; 'This 'has already been shown by reference to Tables I. and 'II.'; you say that Tables I. and II. prove that deer forests have not depopulated?—Yes, and I have given an explanation of it.

53,109. But I point out to you that they do not prove that, and that if you take out the urban population, the rural population in Kilmonivaig and Kilmallie has diminished to a very great extent,—has diminished since the year 1851 by 4610.—I am not disputing that.

53,110. So that your Tables do not prove what you say here?—With the qualification which I have mentioned so often already, I admit that.

53,111. I only want you to admit that it does not at all prove what you state it does, viz., that the deer forests have not produced depopulation; that is perfectly clear and obvious. In these statistics, too, you include not only Dundee and Aberdeen and such towns, but you include, of course, the towns in the Highlands themselves; and how did these towns become formed? Are they not to a great extent composed of people who have been cleared out of the land?—No, I am not aware of that.

53,112. Are you aware, for instance, of the villages of Bowmore, Port Ellen, and Port Charlotte in Islay, and can you tell me how these were formed?—No.

53,113. You do not know?—No.

53,114. It is not within your knowledge that the people who are in these towns and villages are descendants of those who were cleared out of the land?—Cleared out of deer forests?

53,115. Oh, no, but from the land generally?—I do not know the circumstances, and I cannot speak of it at all as regards that locality.

53,116. Then, you call sheep farming by far the most important agricultural interest in the Highlands. Now, is there much agriculture on the sheep farms?—Well, the word agriculture is a general term; it means pastoral farming as well as arable cultivation.

53,117. You take it to include pastoral in this case?—Yes, as well as arable farming.

53,118. But the characteristic of sheep farming is that there is very little agriculture?—There is not much arable land upon them, comparatively.

53,119. Compared with what?—With the great arable holdings in the other parts of the counties.

53,120. Of other counties?—Of the same counties.

53,121. Now, would you call the large sheep farms a more important interest than the interests of the crofters?—Yes, I certainly should.

53,122. Are there more people engaged in sheep farming than on crofts?—I would not like to say; I have never entered into that comparison.

53,123. But don't you know perfectly well that the large sheep farmers are very few as compared with the crofters?—I know that the interests involved are very much larger in the case of sheep farmers; but as to the comparative number of people employed I cannot say.

53,124. And when you speak of the interests, do you mean the money involved?—Yes, the financial part of it.

53,125. But the crofters cultivate to a greater extent than sheep farmers, do they not?—That I cannot say.

53,126. Did you see the cultivation, for instance, in the crofts in Islay? Did you see how well they cultivate there?—They may cultivate there; but I thought the question was whether the extent of the arable land which they cultivate is greater than the extent of the arable land cultivated by the sheep farmers.

53,127. Yes, you may take it in that form?—That is a question I am not able to answer.

53,128. But still you have decided that the sheep farming industry is the greater industry?—Yes.

53,129. There have been occasions—but this you admit—where, in the creation of the large farms, many small holdings were effaced. That is one of your own statements. (See p. 11)?—There is no question about that.

53,130. So that the people have been removed in order to make these large farms. You admit that 'many small holdings and crofts were effaced.' And with regard to these farms you say that they are unlettable and unprofitable—these large farms which are composed of former small holdings?—Do you mean at the present time?

53,131. Yes, or at the time when you wrote this. You say they were unlettable and unprofitable?—Yes, that was the case with regard to a number of them.

53,132. Now, why not try to form small holdings like these again—seeing that these farms are made up of, and have effaced, former small holdings, why should it not be quite possible to try and form small holdings like these again?—I stated in answer to Mr Sutherland, that I have no objection to that, and those I represent

have no objection to it, if you can do it without sacrificing the interests of other people concerned.

53,133. Let us consider, then, these interests. You find that sheep farming has become unprofitable and sheep farms unlettable. What are the very great interests, then, that have to be conserved? They are in the hands of the proprietors, who cannot let them, who cannot make a profit out of them. It should not take very much to conserve the interests of such as these?—There are two points connected with that; there is, first, the question of how, in creating small holdings, to get as much rent for them, we will say, as they still yield in the hands of the proprietor; and there is the alternative of afforestment, which certainly brings a larger rent; so that you have to consider all those interests.

53,134. You find large farms unlettable. You say, for instance, at p. 12, 'Excellent and most desirable holdings, which eight or ten years ago would have produced an embarrassment of offers, have been utterly without tenders for them; and in many cases no inquiries even have been made about them, although it was well known that landlords were prepared to make large reductions of rent.' You see that is a very strong statement to make?—Yes.

53,135. Now, you say they are excellent and desirable; excellent and desirable for what?—As sheep farms.

53,136. But excellent and desirable sheep farms would surely make desirable small holdings?—I admit that; I say it is all a question of returns and of not interfering unduly with interests which are involved besides the crofter interest.

53,137. You say these large holdings are now in the hands of the proprietors unlettable, and you wish that their liberty to turn them into deer forests should not be interfered with?—Yes.

53,138. You think that though they are excellent and desirable as farms, still the proprietor should have liberty to make them a waste wilderness?—I think it is not right to interfere, to the extent that such interference would be, with the property of other people.

53,139. Now, you also give the reason why they are unlettable and you say farms are unlettable on account of the methods of valuation of stock in the Highlands; and you say that this practice now prevails?—Yes.

53,140. Your own words are—'It is unnecessary to enter here in detail into these objectionable features of sheep valuations, some of which may, however, be briefly enumerated, such as (1) the practice, now all but universal, of mulcting a landlord of 2s. or 3s., or perhaps more, for each sheep, than a tenant would be required to pay;' and then on p. 17 you say 'To such an extent have these improprieties been carried in recent years, that, as already said, while every tenant of a farm whose lease has come to an end of late has, as may be imagined, determined to give up his farm, and take advantage of the prevailing exorbitant valuations of stock—on the other hand, deterred as they are by these valuations, no incoming tenants for these farms can be found, and landlords have had to stand in the gap, at very great personal sacrifices in some instances.' Now, these are very brave words. First of all, with regard to standing in the gap. May I ask to whom you refer when you use that martial language? Who had to be defended when the landlords had to 'stand in the gap'?—It is, perhaps, not a very happy expression that, but it is meant to show that they had to take up the situation themselves.

53,141. And they had to make 'very great personal sacrifices'; for whom were these sacrifices made?—The sacrifices of the reduction of rent are what are here referred to.

53,142. A sacrifice is generally supposed to be made for somebody else; but in this case they made the sacrifice for themselves?—I am not going to split hairs about the meaning of words.

53,143. It is not splitting hairs. You speak in praise of landlords who have 'stood in the gap,' and who have made 'great personal sacrifices,' but when these sacrifices are for themselves, where is the merit in the act?—It is not for the benefit of themselves. They have had to accept reduced rents, and they have had to borrow money perhaps.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,144. For whom, then, have they made the sacrifices?—'Personal losses,' I should have said, perhaps.

53,145. Now, don't you see that you have made a most serious charge against the farmers in the Highlands here when you say that the practice is almost universal of mulcting the landlords of 2s. or 3s., or perhaps more for each sheep that the tenant would be required to pay; is it not just pure fraud that you charge those valuators with?—No, it is a custom that has grown up, and I do not think the farmers themselves would seek to deny it. Many of them have told me so.

53,146. But custom will not turn a dishonest transaction into an honest one. Is there any reason why a proprietor should be charged more than a tenant when you are simply going to value stock?—None at all; I think it is very improper to do so.

53,147. And it is fraud?—Well, fraud is a very strong word to apply to a question—

53,148. But is it too strong? You see those valuators are put in a most responsible position—they are set up to value these sheep according to the best of their judgment, and they go and add 2s. or 3s. or 4s., because it is a proprietor who is buying them. Does that make the sheep any more valuable?—No, but I should be very much surprised if you were not aware that that practice does exist in your own county as well as other counties.

53,149. Well, I am sorry to hear that opinion you have expressed about the farmers. I do not agree with you that they do these things; and it is a most serious charge to bring against valuators, and one which is certainly not in accordance with my knowledge.—It is a thing that is notorious to everybody connected with sheep farming.

53,150. That where the landlords are concerned, valuators almost universally carry out a custom which amounts to a fraud?—It seems to be an understood custom, and you will find sheep farmers everywhere defending it. [*The Chairman.*—Do you say that farmers combine as valuers to cheat the landlord?—I do not call it cheating. *Q.*—But the effect of it is cheating?—It is making him pay more than he ought to pay. Everybody knows that such is the case; it has grown into a custom.]

53,151. And the landlord is defrauded, is he not?—Of course, he is made to pay more than he ought to pay.

53,152. But you see with regard to other matters, as to the extent the stock is more valuable from being on the ground and acclimatised, there may be a difference of opinion; but can there be any difference of opinion with regard to this point—charging a proprietor more than a tenant? This is not a matter of opinion at all, but must be pure fraud if it is done?—It sometimes applies to tenants as well as to landlords. I admit that tenants also are sometimes made to pay more than the proper value of the stock.

53,153. I do not doubt that valuations are sometimes too high; that is a matter of judgment. The valuators may make a mistake in judgment, but when you say that they add on 2s. or 3s. simply because the person who is giving it is a landlord, then that is not a matter of judgment—it is simply and purely a fraud?—I agree with you that it is a very wrong thing, but I have found over and over again tenants seeking to justify it. [*The Chairman.*—Have you yourself ever made valuations on that footing?—No, I have never been a valuer.]

53,154. Can you give me the name of any person who justified that course?—Oh, no, I beg to decline to give any names.

53,155. But can you give the name of any person who would justify such a thing as charging the proprietor more,—valuing the sheep higher because the proprietor would get them?—I have no doubt I could, but I do not want to do it.

53,156. But can you do it?—I have said so.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,157. You say you can, but won't. Well, you have not left much character, I must say, with the sheep farmers in the Highlands.—It is all but a recognised custom and it is not, I am sorry to say, looked upon in the light in which it ought to be. [*The Chairman.*—You regard it as a custom that is utterly indefensible?—Yes, I do. *Q.* And deserving of strong condemnation?—Yes.]

53,158. I observe that you have been recommending that the Free Church ministers should preach emigration to the people; but would it not be better that they should preach honesty to the large farmers?—I assume that they do that already.

53,159. With little effect, apparently. Then, you give Tables of prices to show that farming has become unprofitable. You have a Table with regard to wool at p. 14. You give this Table to show that farming has become unprofitable because of the decline in the price of wool, which you say is the most important item in a sheep-farmer's account. Now, what authority have you for the figures in that Table?—I got them from the published prices at the Inverness wool market, and from the various wool-brokers with whom the Highland sheep farmers deal.

53,160. You got them from a variety of sources?—Yes, I went to the wool-brokers in Leith and in Glasgow, and there is a Table of Prices published by one of the newspapers in this town, from the institution of the wool market in Inverness; and in the transactions of the Highland Society you will find such Tables from year to year.

53,161. I suppose you would accept those Tables given by the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland as authoritative with regard to the price of wool?—I really do not know; I do not know from what sources they get their information.

53,162. But you know the Society?—Yes, I am a very old member of it.

53,163. Then, would you not suppose that such an authority as that would be better than a newspaper return?—I think the sources of authority that I had were the very best possible, because they came from people who had actually bought and sold the produce.

53,164. Well, may I compare your prices with the prices given by the Highland Society, which I consider fully as good an authority as a newspaper report? You give 'prices the highest of their respective classes, 'and for stone of 24 lbs.' Now in 1883 your highest price for laid cheviot is 13s., while in the same year the Highland Society's figure is 18s. How do you account for that great difference?—I cannot account for it.

53,165. Then, what force can we attach to your Tables, seeing they differ in so great an extent as that from the Tables put forward by such a Society as the Highland and Agricultural Society?—When I say I cannot account for that difference, I remain of opinion that my figures are correct.

53,166. You say that the Highland and Agricultural Society is altogether wrong?—I say that the figures I put forward are correct.

53,167. The difference is a very material one; it is the difference between 13s. as the highest price and 18s. as the highest price. You say 'It is frequently 'remarked in these times that the sheep-farmer would 'be in a better position were he to obtain 3s. or 4s. more 'per stone for his wool, even if he should receive 6s. to '8s. less per head for his sheep than at present is going; 'and there is no doubt some truth in this, seeing that 'the revenue from wool applies always to the whole flock 'of the farm, while that from carcases in any one year 'is derived only from sheep which have arrived at 'maturity,' so that a mistake in your figures there is vital. Then I am afraid it is not a case of one solitary mistake—I turned up a few more cases, and in 1882 your figure is 15s., while the Highland Society's figure is 18s.; and in the year 1881 you have 16s., while they have 21s?—May I ask whether these figures you are quoting refer exclusively to the Highlands?

53,168. I will show you the book; there are the prices for laid cheviots given; they do not say for what, so I suppose they are for the whole of Scotland? Inverness. — George Malcolm.—That probably explains it, because there is always a difference between wool grown in the south and wool grown in the Highlands, except in Sutherland.

53,169. But you gave the highest as 13s., while they gave it as 18s.?—If you take into account cheviot wool grown in the Border counties, of course the difference must be in favour of the Highland Society's figures, for my figures refer to the Highlands alone.

53,170. But you do not state that in your paper, and are you prepared to say that there is a difference of 5s. between the cheviot wool of the Highlands and the cheviot wool of the Borders?—I beg your pardon, it states at p. 13 'It may be well to give the follow-'ing tables of average prices of the two breeds of sheep 'and the two corresponding kinds of wool which are 'raised in the Highlands for the past 23 years.'

53,171. Yes: you gave the prices of the cheviot and blackfaced because they are the two breeds raised in the Highlands, and you have stated that you got the prices from woolbrokers in Leith and Glasgow?—But you are now comparing two things which are not the same.

53,172. The Highland Society's figures may be the figures for the whole of Scotland?—Yes, and mine are the figures for the Highlands alone.

53,173. Do you think, now, that there is a difference of 5s. between the wool grown in the Highlands and the wool grown in the rest of Scotland?—Oh, yes, there may be quite that, and there is even more difference in the prices of sheep.

53,174. Then I have also looked over your prices with regard to sheep, and compared them with those given by the Highland Society; I find that you give a higher price than they give per average for the sheep. How is that?—What is the price stated in 1883?

53,175. But one question first of all. Is there laid cheviot in any other part of Scotland except the Highlands?—There is very little laid cheviot in any part of Scotland now; scarcely any; I do not know any.

53,176. But this was in 1883?—Oh, yes, there was very little else than laid cheviot at one time all over Scotland.

53,177. But you see the great difference now between this Table and yours?—Yes, but I have explained that by stating that your figures apply to the whole of Scotland, and mine to the Highlands alone.

53,178. Where, now, will the difference come in? Where was the laid cheviot that fetched 5s. more? Can you give me any idea where the laid cheviot was that fetched 5s. higher than the best of that grown in the Highlands?—Oh, no, these Tables refer to average prices.

53,179. No, it is the highest price that is given?—Well, the highest prices in one district as compared with another district.

53,180. Let us take the difference at 5s.?—I have only to say generally that the price of wool in the south is always higher than the price of wool in the Highlands with the exception of the county of Sutherland. [*Mr Macleod.*—Was there any laid wool in 1883 in the south of Scotland?—There is no doubt there was laid wool at the time he mentions in 1883.—*Q.*—Where was it?—I cannot say, but we have seen it in the market. I do not know the names of the farmers.]

53,181. Can you refer us to the sources of your figures? Are there any published records that you could give us in justification of your statistics?—I have already stated these. I got these statistics from the wool-brokers of the day.

53,182. Are there any published official statistics that we can get to justify your Tables?—There is the annual statement issued by the *Inverness Courier*, from the institution of the Wool Fair, I think; and now with reference to the question whether there was any laid cheviot wool in the south at that period, and any in the north, you have got it there in your book. It says it applies to the whole of Scotland.

53,183. Yes, but if it were in the north alone, it would still need to go in?—Well, as a matter of fact, I

know that laid cheviot wool was grown in the south as well as in the north of Scotland at that date.

53,184. Is there any wool in the south that fetches more than Sutherland wool?—That I cannot say; I should think that cheviot Sutherland wool brings about as much as wool from any part of Scotland.

53,185. Quite so, and it is from Sutherland that the laid cheviot wool went in that year, so that there is no accounting for this difference?—Well, I think I have accounted for it by the simple fact that your figures deal with the whole of Scotland and mine only with the Highlands.

53,186. Now, you speak of the dearest wool grown from the Highlands?—No, one county only.

53,187. But it is from that county that it goes; you see that from the poor places there is no cheviot wool sent to market?—Do you mean me to infer that the cheviot wool from the Highlands goes from the county of Sutherland only?

53,188. To a great extent?—Well, I dispute that.

53,189. It does to a great extent, does it not?—I say that the Sutherland wool is more valuable; that is all I say.

53,190. So that you include in your statistics the dearest cheviot wool that is being sold, and yet you are 5s. under what I get in the Highland Society's table?—Which, in my opinion, is quite sufficiently accounted for by the fact that the cheviot wool which comes from the other Highland counties is much lower in price than cheviot wool which is grown in the south.

53,191. Is it 5s. less?—Quite. I have already said so.

53,192. Have you anything further to say about the difference between your Tables and the Highland Society's Table?—Nothing more.

53,193. And you think your explanation is quite enough?—Yes.

53,194. Your explanation is this, that the price in the Highlands is lower than it is all over Scotland?—Yes.

53,195. The Table you give states the highest price of wool?—Yes.

53,196. And you have admitted that the highest price of wool is in the Highlands?—No, I have not admitted that, except with reference to the county of Sutherland.

53,197. But it does not matter which county it is, so long as it is in the Highlands; you give the highest, and therefore if Sutherland is the highest, you must have given the Sutherland price?—Well, of course, I am giving the highest.

53,198. So that your highest should be the highest in Scotland?—The Sutherland wool I stated was, generally speaking, as high as the wool in the south, but there may be parts in the south where the wool is higher even than the Sutherland wool.

53,199. But you are going away from your explanation—your explanation fails now. The explanation which you gave was utterly fallacious, because you see you are speaking of the highest price, not of a slumping of prices. There is still that unaccountable difference between your figures and the statistics which I have before referred to. But this valuable wool comes from Sutherlandshire, from glens that have, I suppose, been cleared of old crofter population; is not that so?—Yes, certainly.

53,200. Now, you account for the collapse of sheep farming very much by the low price of wool; that, along with many other things, has been going down?—Yes; and the low price of the carcase also.

53,201. But is it not the case that the price of wool now is as high as it was when the people were cleared off the land?—That is very probably the case.

53,202. The success of sheep farming depends very much upon the price of wool, and if the price of wool is not any lower than it was when the people were cleared, and the carcase is very much higher, why should not sheep farming be as profitable now as then?—For one thing, they pay much higher rents, and their expenses are very much heavier.

53,203. I thought the rents were coming down?—Yes, that is exactly what has produced the state of matters; but the rents they were paying were so much higher.

53,204. So it is the rents that have caused the collapse—too high a rent?—That is one of the elements.

53,205. That is a very important statement to make—that it is the rents that have ruined the people and not low prices. Farming, you say, was a most successful industry on the clearing of the glens, when the prices for wool were no higher than they are now, and when the prices for the carcase were lower than they are now?—Yes, you asked me why farms could not pay now as they paid in the days of old, and I said one of the reasons was that they pay a much higher rent. But there are other considerations than rent which have led to the depression of sheep farms at present.

53,206. Yes, but you are chiefly accounting for it by the price of wool being so low; yet at the time when prices of wool were as low as now, the people were put away and the sheep farming instituted?—What I said led to the giving up of farms was that the prices which can be got now are so much less than the prices when sheep farming was in a state of prosperity. It was not a comparison between this and the state of these counties in the days before systematic sheep farming was established.

53,207. But you gave the difference as beginning with 1831. Now in 1831 the price of laid Highland wool was 7s. 6d., and in the year 1883 it was 8s. 6d.?—My Tables begin in the year 1860.

53,208. But you make reference to what caused the depopulation, and you say it began in 1831 when sheep farming was instituted, and when it became such a successful business. Then I ask you whether the price of wool was not as low then as it is now, and you admit that that is so. Then you defend deer foresting in this negative sort of way, that the afforestment of land has only an inappreciable effect upon the food supply?—Yes.

53,209. That is not much to say in its favour, but you make it inappreciable by comparing the number of sheep displaced with very large things?—Yes.

53,210. You can make anything small in that way by comparing it with a greater thing, can you not?—Surely, in a question of that kind, the proper comparison is between the whole food of that nature wanted by the country, and the food of that nature which those deer forests could produce. You can make no other comparison than that.

53,211. You give us the number of sheep displaced as established by the inquiry of 1872–73, as 400,000 at the highest estimate. That is on p. 28?—That was in the year 1872–73.

53,212. Before deer foresting became the great thing it is now. Now, do you think that the displacement of 400,000 sheep is a very small matter?—Yes. I should point out that I had nothing to do with that finding—it was the finding of a Parliamentary Committee which sat upon the Game Laws in that year.

53,213. But do you think that to displace 400,000 sheep is a small matter?—That depends entirely upon the area afforested at that time, of which no one has any record. As you know, the Napier Commission arrived at the conclusion that five acres of deer forest land are required for the keep of every single sheep. It was in that way that they arrived at their calculation of the displacement of sheep by deer forests, and it was in that way that I arrived at mine.

53,214. But do you think that that is a small sacrifice to make for deer forests—400,000 sheep?—Four hundred thousand sheep is, of course, a considerable number if you merely take the area of these deer forests.

53,215. Then, I think you make it out that that is 1·4 per cent. of the sheep stock in Scotland?—Yes.

53,216. Why should the whole of Scotland submit to 1·4 per cent. of a diminution of their stock for the sake of deer foresting?—I do not know why they submit: I suppose they find it no grievance.

53,217. Still you know the needs of this nation are year by year getting greater, are they not?—Yes.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,218. And is it your argument from that that it does not matter how much you afforest?—I said that the small displacement of mutton caused by deer forests can very readily be supplied from other sources, and is, as a matter of fact, now being supplied from foreign sources at a cheaper rate than it is supplied from some parts of the home country.

53,219. But when our needs are every year becoming greater and we depend so much on foreign supplies, would not the reasonable conclusion from that be that we should try to conserve as much as we can the food supply raised in our own country?—I have two observations to make about that—first, that it is in the power of the people to obtain their food wherever they choose to obtain it; and in the second place that the small displacement of sheep by deer forests is much more than counterbalanced by the advantages which deer forests provide for the Highland people especially.

53,220. We will come to the advantages again. But 1½ per cent., you know is not a small thing. Every person in Scotland has to suffer that loss, and you make it small only by spreading it out over the whole country. In the same way you might say of all the Gaelic-speaking people in the Highlands that when you compare them with the population of the whole country, their number is altogether inappreciable; but you would not say on that account that it does not matter what becomes of them?—But against that you may say that there are other industries or other concerns which are superseded upon the fact becoming apparent that they can be more readily supplied from other sources, and I say that is precisely the condition in this case.

53,221. I suppose you could get people for the Highlands also, supposing you did away with the whole Celtic race?—I cannot speak about that.

53,222. I point out that it is by comparing these things with great things that you make them appear little. You may make the Highlands little by comparing them with the whole kingdom in the same way?—This was simply a question of food supply,—and, of course, you could have no other comparison than the food supply possible from the deer forests with the food supply of the whole country.

53,223. But apart from that, would you say that the rise in price will be in exact proportion to the diminution of the supply?—The rise in price of what?

53,224. Of mutton?—No, the price of mutton has been falling rather than rising.

53,225. But, of course, if you diminish the supply, the tendency is that the price will rise, and you make out that there is a diminution of 1½ per cent.?—Yes; but by the enormous importations of foreign mutton, the price has been falling instead of rising, notwithstanding the withdrawal of these sheep from the deer forest land.

53,226. Might there not be something that would interfere with that foreign supply?—I do not think that is probable.

53,227. It may not be probable, but we can conceive, for instance, of a war occurring. Now, you have not answered my question, whether it is reasonable to suppose that the rise in price would be in exact proportion to the diminution of the supply?—No, under the circumstances of the country, I do not think it would be so.

53,228. For instance, if you reduce the whole supply by half, do you think that the price would not be much more than double; would you not have famine prices then?—No, not if that deficit could be supplied from elsewhere.

53,229. So that the price might rise much more than the diminution of the supply?—No, I have stated exactly the reverse; that the price is not likely to rise by the diminution of supply from the deer forests.

53,230. Then I see also that you defend deer foresting as a temporary expedient resorted to in order that the lands may recover their fertility. You say that that furnishes 'a sound economical reason for resorting, for a time at least, to a different system of occupation of these lands, in order that they may recover their fertility.' (p. 23). That is how you speak of deer foresting, and then you say:—'It would seem then 'quite justifiable, on economical as well as personal 'grounds, to devote these deteriorated lands at least to 'a period of use as deer forests.' You are speaking of a temporary use of them as deer forests in order that they may recover their fertility. Now, when they do recover their fertility, what do you intend to do with them?—If they can be let as sheep farms on favourable terms and not as deer forests, I should see no objection to that.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,231. But is it not the large sheep farms that caused the deterioration of the land?—Yes. I think you are talking of sheep farms which had deteriorated but which had recovered as deer forests.

53,232. I am asking you what you would do with the land in the deer forests when it has recovered its fertility? You say it might go back to a large holding?—Yes.

53,233. Would you put it back to that which has caused the barrenness? Why not go back to small holdings?—Yes, but if these were let as small holdings with pasturage attached, and stocked with sheep, which they certainly would have to be whoever the tenants were, would the infertility not repeat itself just as much under that system as under a system of large holdings?

53,234. But the small holder has cattle and sheep; that is always the case with the small holder?—The sheep farmers keep cattle too.

53,235. Not to the same extent as the small farmer, and is it not your view that the small holdings would be more beneficial to the land, and would keep it in a state of fertility longer than if you turned it under sheep?—No, I do not believe that, because I do not believe in a mixed stock of cattle and sheep going together on the same land.

53,236. Still they retained this fertility, and it was the pure sheep farming that brought about the infertility?—They retained their fertility, if you use that expression, because there were in the old days much fewer stock upon them than there are now. I say again what I said in the morning, that if you can let them in any form which will not involve injustice to existing interests, I really do not care how they are let.

53,237. But would you not rather prefer small holdings as being more beneficial?—I certainly should like to see a number of small farmers. I would call them small sheep farms.

53,238. And these men treated the proprietors much better in every way than the large farmers have done?—Well, I daresay we have not a great deal to thank some of the large farmers for.

53,239. You have told us that they have been cheating the proprietor?—I did not put it in so strong a form as that. I said a system had grown up which has almost obtained universal sanction now, under which when valuations took place where a landlord was concerned, he always got the worse of it.

53,240. Well, you see how differently the landlord was treated by the small holders in old times. For instance, when the estates of Lochiel were forfeited, what did the tenants do to their landlord? They paid a rent to him, did they not, as well as a rent to the Government?—Yes, I have heard that.

53,240A. In order to contrast the treatment which the proprietors got from the small holders whom they displaced for the large holders, I may just give you a quotation from Dr Clerk in his 'Memoir of Colonel 'Cameron of Fassifern,' where he says (p. 17) that on their return to their holdings after the suppression of the Rebellion of '45, 'the Government received them 'as their own tenants, exacting rent from them . . . . 'But impoverished as they were by the spoliations of 'the soldiery, they remitted a *second rent regularly and* '*faithfully* to Lochiel in France.' How very differently they treated their landlord from the way in which he is treated by the large farmer; and yet these are the men who were removed for the large farmers. Would you not therefore try and bring back some of these

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

faithful and honest people and replace them upon the land?—Oh, I have no hostility to that if it can be done on reasonable and just terms.

53,241. Look also to the feasibility of the thing. These small holdings will have the benefit of all the renewed fertility which has been acquired by the land as deer forest; you say it has recuperated. They would have the benefit of that, and they would not have the stock to take at valuation, so that the feasibility of forming small holdings is not so utterly hopeless?—They would not have stock to take at valuation, of course, but they would require to find a stock somewhere.

53,242. Yes, but they would not have to deal with unjust valuations; they could buy in the open market?—We heard a great deal yesterday about insuperable difficulties in the way of getting stock.

53,243. Now, one of the benefits which you say has followed deer forests has been a great increase in the rental. We have been taking evidence throughout the Highlands, but I must say that for my own part I have not been struck with this, that the rental is so very much higher than the pastoral rent, plus the old sporting rent. Take for instance, the forest of Arnisdale, which I think you know?—Yes.

53,244. Well, we have had it in evidence that immediately before it was afforested, the pastoral and the sporting rent of Arnisdale amounted to £1200, and that it is returned in the Valuation Roll now at £750. Of course, it is impossible to go into them all; but I just give you that as a simple instance of what is coming before us. Mr Birkbeck is being examined, and in answer to a question by Mr Sutherland, he says:—"*Q.* £1200 or thereabouts?—*A.* Yes. *Q.* And 'what is the value of it at present?—*A.* I am afraid not 'much. *Q.* Is it less than that?—*A.* I am afraid very 'much less. *Q.* So that it is actually of less value now 'than it was before?—*A.* I am afraid so; I am afraid 'Scotch property has gone down very much during the 'last few years.' Then, in answer to a question by myself:—'But could you not give the figure it is returned 'at in the Valuation Roll?' he says:—'Yes, certainly, 'I gave it to you as near as I could, but I have got 'the Valuation Roll here. Deer forest, £600; house, '£40, that is my residence; Macmorran's rent, £51; 'crofters' rent, £21; total, £712.' [Q.Q. 18,601–18,605, p. 437, *ante*]—so that the afforestment there has resulted in a reduction from £1200 to £712?—Do you wish me to answer that?

53,245. Any remark you have to make?—The explanation that I have to give is, that Arnisdale sheep farm lease expired just about that time. It was one of the older leases, and the rent was one of the large ones that were got when the lease was entered into. There are two adjoining farms of the same class, Eileanreach and Scallasaig, which also at one time commanded rents as large as Arnisdale. They fell out of lease and could not be let. One of them could not be let; the other was let to the Master of Blantyre, and the rent fell from £1200 to £400 odds; and it was considered reasonable when Arnisdale lease of the same class fell out that a proportionate reduction of the valuation should be made in that case. That accounts for the difference. The shooting rental remains the same.

53,246. No explanation does away with the fact that immediately before afforestment it is valued at £1200 and immediately upon afforestment it came down to £712. Then, if you take other forests, the Park forest for instance, there you have an instance of a forest and a sheep farm in the same place. The farmer pays £700 of a rent, and he is getting for it as a deer forest, even when he had sheep on it, £1100, showing that it is not necessary to clear land of sheep in order that you may have sport upon it. You may take these facts from me as the evidence that we had at Stornoway—that while it was a farm it was also used as a forest and paid £1100 of rent; and that now it is only put down in the Valuation Roll as £1700 or so. Of course, if we get numerous instances like that your argument about the rates fails entirely?—That may be, but it is hardly fair to quote one or two instances as ruling the whole question; if I had time to do it I could show you scores of instances which are quite the reverse.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,247. Then with regard to your argument about rates generally; you say, for instance, pp. 27 and 28, that in the three parishes with which you are immediately concerned the 'rates recovered from the shooting rents are to the whole rates of the parish in one 'case 19 per cent., in another 24 per cent., and in the 'third 8 per cent. These percentages, it may be added, 'do not include the values of other sporting subjects, 'such as salmon fishings, the value of which, in the first 'of these parishes, is equal to about 11 per cent. of the 'whole rental of the parish, and contributes to the rates 'in that proportion,—making 30 per cent. in all for that 'parish as the contribution of shootings and fishings to 'the rates.' Then, you draw this conclusion 'it is easy 'to see that this must greatly lighten the burden of 'taxation to every ratepayer of that parish.' Now, the other ratepayers in that favoured parish pay 70 per cent. of the rents, so that it is easy to see that they must greatly lighten the burden of taxation to every shooting tenant?—Of course, the shooting tenants share in it themselves.

53,248. But they only pay 30 per cent., while the others pay 70 per cent. What argument is that in favour of a deer forest? If deer forests paid at a higher rate than other subjects there would be some force in the argument that they lighten taxation; but where they pay only at the same rate how can it be said that they lighten the taxation of the other subjects?—The point is this; you admit that 30 per cent. goes for sporting rental; if that were absent the other ratepayers would have to make up the whole of the 100 per cent.

53,249. Quite so, but there is 70 per cent. derived from other subjects. If these subjects were done away with in the same way, the sporting tenant would have to make up the whole?—Yes.

53,250. So that it tells equally whichever way you look at it. They only bear their own share of taxation. Now, in reference to the way in which these subjects are rated, is it not the case that they are more favourably rated than any other subject in the parish? What of the houses occupied by these shooting tenants? Are they not rated at a mere fraction of their cost, while the feuars' houses in the parish are valued on their actual cost and sometimes over their actual cost?—All the rating is of course done by the Government assessor and presumably he does his duty; but I may explain that many mansion-houses throughout the Highland counties would be unlettable subjects, if they were separated from the lands or shootings attached to them, and you must take into account both subjects in considering this question. In that view the valuation put upon the most of them is I think sufficient. But this is not a question in which I have any particular interest; the work is done by the Government assessor.

53,251. I know it is done according to law. But does not the law favour these large mansions?—Not in the view that I have stated—namely, that many of these large mansions would not be lettable at all except in connection with other subjects which are certainly fully valued.

53,252. They would not be lettable because they were not built for useful purposes but for enjoyment, and these houses which were built for the enjoyment of the rich are rated at a very small percentage of their actual cost; is that the state of matters?—No, that is not the state of matters. If you take into account what goes along with the houses it is not at all the state of matters.

53,253. Take, for instance, the mansion-house of Inverlochy Castle, which cost £40,000, and is rated at £216, and which is let along with the forest. Is it not very favourably rated for the man who enjoys that house? He has put out a large capital to build that house, £40,000, and yet it is only rated at £216?—Well, so far as I know there is nothing in the state of the law to prevent the assessor raising these assessments

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

if he sees fit, and an appeal may be taken on the one side or the other; it is open to anybody to challenge those assessments, and if an appeal is taken it comes before a committee of the County Council, which, as we all know, is now on a popular basis. Therefore, I do not see where any grievance comes in. There being a right of appeal to the Valuation Committee of the County Council, if matters remain as they are, presumably it is because everything is correct.

53,254. But the point is that the state of the law favours these houses that have been built for enjoyment?—The state of the law provides for such valuation being put upon these subjects as is considered just and fair.

53,255. These large houses now are included in the valuation of the forests?—Yes, many of them are.

53,256. And when you make up a big rental for the forests very often there has to be taken in these large houses that have cost perhaps £40,000, £60,000, or £100,000?—Those large houses and all houses have to be separately valued for other purposes than local rates or county assessments. They would not, in many cases, be entered as separate subjects at all if it were not for the necessity of assessing them for inhabited house duty and property tax.

53,257. Then, you refer to the character of the Highlanders both in the pamphlet and in the other statement which you read before us, and you certainly do not give them a flattering character?—I do not think I have decried the character of the Highlanders at all.

53,258. Do you not think you have spoken rather disparagingly of them?—No, I do not think so.

53,259. What have you left them at all? You deny then even the martial spirit?—I do not believe that there is a martial spirit amongst the Highlanders; and I honour them for it.

53,260. You do not want them to enlist in the British army?—No, I do not believe in or approve of the martial spirit at all.

53,261. That shows that you are not a Highlander—to my mind at least. Now, you show that, by saying that the people do not enlist now, and you say that there are as many people in the Highlands as there were before, and therefore there must be some other reason for their not enlisting. But are there really as many people—you have admitted already that there are not so many people in the Highland glens as there used to be?—In some parts of course there are not so many.

53,262. Take, for example, Dunoon; you include the population of Dunoon in your figures, but you do not suggest that Glasgow merchants living in Dunoon would enlist in the army?—No; I do not wonder at anybody not enlisting, because I am not in favour of maintaining standing armies at all.

53,263. You are not in favour of maintaining standing armies at all?—No.

53,264. Well, I am not going to enter into that question, but I do not know how you are going to have the food supply from foreign countries if you are not going to have an army and a navy to keep the road clear for bringing in supplies?—Probably standing armies are a necessity at present, but I think the time must come, if we believe in our Christianity at all, when we ought not to have standing armies.

53,265. But do you not think that if there is anything at all well established concerning the Highlanders' character it is this that they were a fighting race?—They were a fighting race among themselves; but I do not believe that the Highlanders ever were much given voluntarily to enlist in the army. We know the circumstances under which, as a rule, they did enlist, and I am not at all surprised that there is no disposition among Highlanders to enter the army at present.

53,266. But is not that to be accounted for by this, that the people have lost their rights in the soil—that they have been divorced from the land?—No; for the fact is, that of the Highlanders who go to the south, very few, I believe, now enlist.

53,267. Are not these the people I speak of who are divorced from the land?—Well, if a man is away from the land there is nothing to hinder him from enlisting if he chooses to do so.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,268. But the Highlander used to enlist in order to defend his native land—the land in which his people had a share?—I think altogether a great deal too much has been said about the Highlander's martial spirit and his desire to enter the army and to achieve the "glory" that resulted. All that, to me at any rate, is almost pure nonsense.

53,269. Well, I think if you deny the Highlander the martial spirit you may say that there is no martial spirit in the world. Is it not said of the Celtic race that they shook all empires?—If there was a martial spirit no doubt it would be shown in their enlisting, but it is not.

53,270. But are there not very good reasons why they do not enlist—that the glens are now depopulated, that they have not a home for which they should fight? Do you think that in the past they enlisted against their will?—We all know the sort of pressure that was brought to bear upon Highlanders to get them to enlist.

53,271. Is it not a wonder that people who went against their will into the army should make such good soldiers?—Oh, no, because even when you had the press-gang you never had better sailors.

53,272. You think that a love for military glory is not necessary for a soldier; you may take him against his will, and make him a good soldier?—I think that after a man has enlisted he probably gets to like the life of a soldier, and more or less of the martial spirit enters into him.

53,273. You say that they have been credited with martial spirit before their own compatriots chiefly?—Yes, I think so.

53,274. Have they not been celebrated by all the poets for their martial spirit and their martial deeds?—I do not believe in the least that that has exceeded the martial spirit in other parts of the country and in other regiments.

53,275. Have not their deeds called forth the wonder and admiration of the whole world?—Undoubtedly, and so have the deeds of other regiments of Her Majesty's army which were not connected with the Highlands.

53,276. But why should you single out the Highlander, and say that he has not the martial spirit?—I have not singled him out; it is yourself that has brought up this subject.

53,277. You say 'However this may be, it is at any 'rate not the case that Highlanders do not now enlist in 'the British Army because there are no Highlanders to 'do so; it is rather that they are not by disposition a 'fighting race in the military sense?'—Yes, all that was written eleven years ago.

53,278. Have they changed since then in disposition?—No, I still think they are not martial, and I still think they are right not to be so.

53,279. Do you not think that if you deny them the military spirit you may deny them everything?—I do not know that; I do not think a military spirit is an addition to a man's character at all.

53,280. Is it not a good thing to be a good soldier? Are not you a good soldier?—But I go behind that and say there ought to be no soldiers.

53,281. I do not think that you should deny the martial glory to the Highlander that has been so universally acknowledged?—Very well, I will concede the point.

53,282. Do you concede that they are a military people, and that you are wrong?—Oh, no, I concede that you think it is a good thing that they should be so.

53,283. That is no concession at all. I thought that you were withdrawing what you had said about them, and admitting that they are entitled to the credit that they got for military glory?—I cannot admit that I think the Highlander is imbued with a high military spirit.

53,284. Has there been any race that has shown more adaptability for military enterprise?—I cannot say.

53,285. If they are not a martial race can you point to any martial race that ever was?—I suppose every people that engage in war is more or less martial or imbued with military spirit.

53,286. Now, the soldiers that distinguished themselves so much by universal consent were drawn from glens that are now depopulated. Could you, for instance, find a regiment now in Glengarry? Could you find a regiment now in the Cameron country outside the town of Fort-William?—I should think not.

53,287. Then you say that no emancipated Highlander preaches the gospel of what is called repopulation of the Highlands by Highlanders. Do you think that that is correct? Do you think that every one who says that the Highland glens should be repopulated is unemancipated?—I have never met a single Highlander in the south at all events who would go the length of saying that these glens ought to be repopulated because they were so in the last quarter of the last century.

53,288. And what would your own gospel be if not the gospel of repopulation; is it the gospel of depopulation?—In some cases I would let the people alone, and in other cases offer them inducements to go elsewhere.

53,289. But your gospel, generally speaking, I think may fairly be taken as a gospel of depopulation?—Certainly not.

53,290. You advocate emigration upon a large scale?—Depopulation means, I suppose, removal of all the people; I do not advocate that.

53,291. Depopulation does not mean the removal of every person; there may be depopulation to a certain extent, but removal of all the people would be utter annihilation?—I only mean that in congested districts a certain number should be removed in whatever way is found best for the people themselves.

53,292. You just wish for emigration—that the people should be put away?—I have also advocated migration to other parts of the country as well as emigration. I have also recommended that some of the people should go to the busy industrial centres in other parts of the country.

53,293. Still that is depopulation of the Highlands, is it not?—But you stated that I only recommended emigration.

53,294. But you do recommend emigration, for you say 'it seems to be an indispensable preliminary to the 'successful working of any proposals for emigration on 'an extensive scale from the Highlands to such countries 'as Canada, and the United States of America, or Aus-'tralia, or New Zealand, that the people should be 'systematically and faithfully instructed in the advan-'tages they are likely to derive from such a step,' and for that purpose you would like to engage 'some of the 'more intelligent and observant pastors of the Free 'Church;' do you think that that is a scheme that would appeal to the Free Church ministers of the Highlands?—I mentioned the Free Church ministers rather than other ministers, because, as we all know, the great body of the Highland people belong to that union; but I should not have the slightest objection to some of the Established Church ministers doing the same.

53,295. You would employ them all in the same gospel?—Observe, the whole thing would be voluntary.

53,296. But that gospel is not preached by them generally—a gospel of depopulation?—Oh, no, some of them do and some do not—it is not depopulation but emigration that I mean.

53,297. Does that not mean depopulation of the Highlands?—Well, I daresay there are reasons which we need not enter upon why the Free Church ministers do not want the people to remove from the Highlands.

53,298. They have not adopted this scheme of yours to promote an extensive emigration from the Highlands?—No, unfortunately they have not.

53,299. Now, do you think there could be any other gospel for the Highlands but a gospel of repopulation, and do you think that depopulation is a gospel at all; is it not the greatest curse that can be pronounced upon any country, that it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation?—These are not my views.

53,300. But it is your view that the population should be very much diminished, and that the land should not be so much dwelt in as it is now?—That the population should be re-distributed.

53,301. Not in the Highlands I think; to industrial centres in the south?—Yes, wherever these may be found.

53,302. Then, with regard to your statement about there being few applications for enlargement of holdings under the Crofters Act. You draw some conclusions from that. You say that from the establishment of the Crofters Commission in 1886 down to the end of 1893 only 564 applications from crofters for extensions have been lodged, while no fewer than 18,269 applications have been received for the fixing of fair rents. Now, you take no notice of the fact that these applications are not from individuals but that each of these applications involves an application from five or more persons?—Yes, that is quite the case, but I take the number of parcels of land that are applied for.

53,303. But you take no note of the fact that each application is from a body of men?—I believe it is necessary that there should be five individuals for each application.

53,304. So that the number of applications when you consider individuals was 2455?—Yes, that is quite right.

53,305. That is a much larger number than you make it?—Yes. I had in my mind the individual applications for land.

53,306. But would it not be fair to have stated this? A person who did not know the Crofters Act would be utterly misled by your figures. You see you compare that with the individual applications for fixing Fair Rents, and any person reading it would suppose that there were only 564 *individuals* who applied?—I do not know whether that inference would be drawn or not. It was not present to my mind when I wrote that passage, but I allude to it at another part of my statement.

53,307. You compare those corporate applications with individual applications. But there is something more than that. You use this as an argument to show that the people do not wish to migrate?—I only say that it is suggestive that they do not wish to migrate—I do not put it positively.

53,308. Why should it be even suggestive? What has that to do with migration I should like to know?—These applications were to go to other lands.

53,309. No, that is what they were not?—Well, I am aware that they must be upon the same estate or in an adjoining parish, but that in many cases would involve a removal.

53,310. *The Chairman.*—But you are aware surely that under the Act of Parliament the Crofters Commission have no powers of migration at all—the power of migration is not conferred upon them by the Act?—I should count that migration if they were to go into an adjoining parish.

53,311. But the Commission has no power to remove a crofter or transfer a crofter?—No; that I have explained in my statement, but it has power to give them enlargement of holdings at a distance from their present crofts.

53,312. But not to leave their holdings?—I do not know about that.

53,313. The additional holding becomes a part of the old holding, but the old holding is the principal holding?—Yes.

53,314. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Why did you conjoin the two things at all? Is it not uttterly unfair?—I think it is quite right to mention that.

53,315. To mention what is not correct? There is no connection between the two things at all, between the number of applications for enlargement and the desire of the people for migration?—I was putting it as a test whether crofters generally wanted more land or not, and I had to take those figures as showing the number of people who wanted more land. [*The Chairman.*—But wanting more land, arable or

Inverness. George Malcolm.

grazing, in addition to subsisting holdings is surely a totally different matter from congested districts and consequent migration to totally new holdings?—I admit that.—If you admit that we are agreed.]

53,316. You speak of it as if there were power under the Act to migrate and that they had failed to avail themselves of the power under the Act to migrate. You suggest 'it is probable that a consciousness of hopeless 'inability to stock and carry on new or enlarged holdings 'may have mainly induced this indifference of crofters 'to local migration; at all events, there is not sufficient 'evidence that they have been deterred by the statutory 'conditions regulating the process.' Now, Mr Malcolm, there are no statutory conditions regulating such a process?—To a great distance; I admit that.

53,317. Then, is not that statement utterly wrong as well as utterly misleading? First of all by giving the number of applications when you are supposed to give the number of individuals, you give figures that are misleading; then in saying that there are statutory conditions regulating the process of migration of which the people have not availed themselves, you state what is wrong?—I stated that 'it is probable that a con- 'sciousness of hopeless inability to stock and carry on 'new and enlarged holdings may have mainly induced 'this indifference of crofters to local migration.' Yes, I admit that.

53,318. You admit that you are wrong?—I admit that this does not refer to the present state of the law, and I have explained that in my statement.

53,319. That there is no statutory provision for migration, and therefore the people could not have shown indifference to it?—Only for enlargement of holdings; I have admitted and explained that.

53,320. Well, the number of people who have applied is far greater than the number which is stated by you. Now, really, it is utterly impossible to go over and show the fallacy of your statistics, but that I think is a fair specimen of the misleading statements that are made here. You give us an instance showing the supreme difficulty of forming new holdings out of large farms. You have had something in your mind there; you say that you have had some farm in your mind, and you showed how impossible it would be to break it into small holdings. May I ask you with regard to that farm which you say contains 160 acres arable and 360 pasture, and of which the present rent is £130,—is that farm cultivated?—Yes.

53,321. Why do you take a farm that is cultivated and show us that it would be difficult to break it up, seeing we have nothing to do with arable farms?—This was the case of a small farm rather than a croft.

53,322. How then do you think it is a subject for us to operate upon at all?—The argument may apply to farms just as well, that are let out in grass.

53,323. But the instance that you bring before us, and that you say is supremely difficult, is the case of a farm that is cultivated; what is the use of giving us a farm that is cultivated?—I contemplated a case that perhaps might come up when all this is over and your report appears; it may embrace cases of this kind as well.

53,324. You seem to be going pretty far ahead. The difficulties of the day are sufficient for us, and in the meantime we do not deal with such matters as these. But taking your own farm, do you not think there is some mismanagement in the working of that farm? You would not call that a well managed farm?—I do not know; what are the results?

53,325. Do you think the thing has been well planned? For instance, you say that the rent is £130 and the buildings have cost £1850. Do you think that is a proper proportion for the steadings?—There may have been more money spent on the buildings than was right; I am not in a position to say whether it was so or not.

53,326. Then you see when you deduct interest on the £1850 spent upon the houses there is really very little paid by the land?—But surely you would not take interest on the whole £1850?

53,327. No, but you would take £90 or so?—£80 would be more than the whole interest at 4 per cent.

53,328. At 4 per cent., but that is not surely the interest that would be sufficient upon house property?—It depends upon what bargain was come to with the existing tenant.

53,329. That shows really that such farms as you have in view pay very little for the land; that they have got great privileges in having costly houses and steadings built for them, and that the rent they pay for the land is really less than is paid by the crofter, for whom very little has been done?—Yes, but the new holdings formed out of a farm like that would have to be provided with buildings also, and the total amount of these new buildings would be even more than £1850.

53,330. That is your opinion, but you see small holdings have been formed without any outlay at all by the proprietor in the beginning. Then you say that artificial remedies had been tried which have brought no permanent relief, and this is the reason 'being economically unsound they were doomed to 'failure.' Now, can there be any more artificial remedy for the Highland question than the formation of deer forests, or can there be anything more economically unsound?—That is not my opinion; I think it is the proper use to make of that class of land.

53,331. Looking upon it from an economic point of view the land is wholly wasted; there is a great deal of labour wasted, and I am quite willing to believe with you that 'being economically unsound they are 'fore-doomed to failure?'—If that is applied to deer forests of course I do not agree with you.

53,332. *Mr Macleod.*—You appear here not as an individual but as a representative?—Yes, I appear rather as the secretary of the Association. Of course, my own individual views are also involved in my statement.

53,333. Were you appointed at a public meeting to appear here?—Not at a public meeting.

53,334. Have you been specifically appointed?—Yes, by the Council of the Association.

53,335. Then I think you told Mr Sutherland that the Association had no constitutional rules?—We have no printed or regularly drawn up rules.

53,336. Nor any stated meetings?—No, meetings of the Council are just held as occasion arises.

53,337. Then, might I ask if you have a list of membership?—Yes, we have a printed list of members.

53,338. Could that be put in as showing your constituency?—I have not consulted the Council about that, but I am not aware of the least objection; I think that very likely I shall be permitted to send it to you at a later date. [*Mr Sutherland.*—We can order it?—Very well; if you ask for it I believe it will be supplied.]*

53,339. Mr Sutherland had something to say to you with regard to the Glenquoich forest, and I would like to know a little further. Could you give us the expenditure upon the forest by the estate management since it has been converted into a deer forest; or have you given us that already?—I have given it in slump; I am sorry to say I have not the details with me.

53,340. Then the difference, as I understand it, between the old sheep farm rent and the sporting rent together, and the present deer forest rent was some £1100?—I think that is what we brought out.

53,341. You cannot tell me what capital expenditure there has been since the forest was made?—I have given the expenditure since Lord Burton went there, which is I think the date of the afforestment. It is in my local statement.

53,342. You cannot give it to me just now, can you?—I think it amounts to £224,000 for 20 years, if I recollect rightly.

53,343. How much of that would you consider to be in the shape of permanent improvements apart from the annual expenditure for upkeep?—I should think, speaking without book, that, at any rate, the half of it would be of that description during the 20 years.

53,344. In other words the return that you have

* See after question 53,634, page 1362.

got for an expenditure of something over £100,000 is £1100 a year?—But that is not expended by the estate, it is expended by the lessee.

53,345. I was speaking rather of the estate management. The question I ask you is what expenditure has there been by the estate management on Glenquoich since it was converted into a deer forest?—The estate has spent very little indeed on Glenquoich; it has been all done by the lessee.

53,346. Is that a common thing?—Yes, there are a number of cases of that sort in the Highlands.

53,347. But you would not say that it was a common thing?—It is not the general case, I would suppose.

53,348. I would wish you to be perfectly frank; I am not pressing you in any way, but do you think it reasonable for us to be asked to believe that in the case of shootings or deer forests which are let on very short leases, the lessees would be prepared to make any large capital expenditure?—No, when they are let on very short leases the lessee cannot be expected to do so, and, as a matter of fact, it is not often done.

53,349. And, as a matter of fact, the great majority of forests are let on short leases?—I cannot say positively, but I should think most of them are let on leases not exceeding five or seven years.

53,350. Can you give us the expenditure, be it large or small, by the estate management on the Glenquoich portion of the property since it was converted into a deer forest?—No, it probably amounts to no more than a thousand or two, but I have not the particulars with me.

53,351. Of course, you will confess that in order to make a fair comparison it is essential to take into account what has been spent in that way in making it a deer forest?—Yes.

53,352. Do you think you could supply us with the information?—I can at a later stage, after I go home, if you wish it.

53,353. Very good?—Thank you.

53,354. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You were asked a question as representing the proprietors of the Highlands as to their views on the subject of our inquiry. I should like to ask you this question; if a scheme could be framed involving no injustice to the proprietors on the one hand or crofters on the other, would those whom you represent look favourably on the scheme to increase the number of small holdings?—I should think so, certainly; I think they would be only too delighted if we could come to an agreement on such a basis.

53,355. *The Chairman.*—You say, I think in your report, that Lord Napier's Commission was a very strong Commission?—Yes.

53,356. And their report is one which has carried much weight with it in the opinion of most men?—Yes, that is my idea of it.

53,357. Now, you say of Lord Napier's Report that it is 'loaded with and marred by a vast quantity of 'unveracious and worthless matter.' I take it that as you are representing the landlords in making your statement you represent Lochiel?—Lochiel read the statement some time before it came before you.

53,358. Then, we have it from you as a responsible witness that Lochiel is of opinion that that Report which he signed is 'loaded with and marred by a vast 'quantity of unveracious and worthless matter'?—Yes, but there I refer not to the evidence that was taken by the Commission, but to a great many statements which were sent in by parties.

53,359. No, it is Lord Napier's Report you are speaking of?—Yes, but I referred to these Appendices to the Report. What we generally call the Report is in the first volume, and ends with the signatures of the various Commissioners.

53,360. And that is what you refer to?—Oh, no, I do not refer to that. I refer to some other matter which appears in the later volumes.

53,361. Do you not refer to the statement submitted to the then Government of Her Majesty, and signed by the Commissioners?—No, I do not refer to that.

53,362. Then, why do you not say so?—Perhaps I ought to have specially said so.

53,363. You do not say 'Minutes of Evidence;' you say 'The Report.' Now, the Minutes of Evidence and the documents that were printed with them are appendices to the Report; but the Report by the Commission is the special statement which the Commissioners make setting forth the conclusions at which they have arrived based upon the evidence?—I daresay I ought to have been more explicit at that place.

53,364. Now, you say that the Act (you mean the Act of 1886) has failed because it has omitted to give effect to some of Lord Napier's recommendations. To which recommendations in particular do you refer?—Do I say that it has failed? I do not recollect having said that; I said that some recommendations in the Napier Report were not carried out in the Act.

53,365. What recommendations made by that Commission would, if carried out, have made the Act in your judgment a success?—There was an improving lease recommended instead of fixity of tenure.

53,366. Here is the sentence, 'that it has not done 'so'; that is to say that the Act has not succeeded 'is 'now known to everybody. The existence of this 'honourable Commission,' that is the Commission now sitting, 'is conclusive proof of it, and there is a strong 'probability that this failure is mainly due to the omis- 'sion to give effect in the Crofters Act of 1886 to some 'of the strongly enforced recommendations of the very 'strong Commission who reported in 1884.' Now, to what recommendations do you refer?—One was that there should be an improving lease rather than fixity of tenure.

53,367. Do you think that has led to the failure of the Act?—That is one of the elements.

53,368. Do you mean by an improving lease security of tenure?—I mean the improving lease which Lord Napier elaborately recommended in the report.

53,369. But is there not ground for the conclusion that the improving lease given by the Act itself and the security of tenure connected with it is better than an improving lease by way of private contract?—These Commissioners state the reverse.

53,370. Then, do you say, speaking as a responsible and experienced man, that that is one cause of the failure of the Act?—That is one of the elements.

53,371. The absence of provisions for improving leases and the presence of a provision for security of tenure?—Yes, I think that Lord Napier and the others were all against fixity of tenure.

53,372. But I would like to get from you how you reach the conclusion that the Act would have succeeded had there been improving leases, and has failed because of the statutory security?—We believe that would have been the case.

53,373. Tell me why?—It might have failed after all even if that had been done.

53,374. On what logical statement do you base the conclusion that that would have been the result?—Simply that we think an improving lease would have been a better expedient.

53,375. I quite follow that, but what I want to get you to tell us, if you are in a position to do so, is this; why would an improving lease have succeeded where statutory security has failed?—Because the tenants would have had opportunities of starting on fresh ground, and there would have been no difficulty probably in providing ground for them in that case.

53,376. Started on fresh ground; do you mean got new holdings?—Got new holdings to improve.

53,377. And how would the buildings have been provided?—That was, I think, set forth in Lord Napier's Report also.

53,378. But what is your view?—The view is that the tenants themselves would have to find the money somewhere.

53,379. And the stock?—And the stock.

53,380. And to undergo such privations as necessarily accompany transference to new ground requiring a certain amount of reclamation and cultivation?—Of course, the old tenants would remain in their old holdings; it would only be tenants of the new holdings who would require to provide new buildings.

53,381. But I thought you pointed at the old tenants getting new holdings?—Some of the old tenants might go; but I thought rather of the taking of so many of the tenants out of the congested districts and putting them on new ground.

53,382. Then, your view is that if that course had been pursued, so far as that goes the Act would have been more successful?—I think so.

53,383. You are aware that on the statutory security of tenure very great improvement has taken place on crofters' holdings in certain districts?—I have heard of new houses being erected in several districts.

53,384. You heard the passage which Mr Sutherland quoted from Mr Roger Macneil, M.B., Medical Officer of Health for the county of Argyll, p. 33 of his third annual report, to the effect that a great improvement had been carried out in the dwelling-houses in the island of Tiree. 'During the past three years 'about thirty houses have been almost entirely re-'built. This has been voluntarily done by the crofters, 'cottars, and others, on the strength of the security 'afforded under the Crofters Act?'—I should not consider thirty a very great number.

53,385. In Tiree?—Since the passing of the Crofters Act.

53,386. In Tiree?—I should think not.

53,387. The Act was passed in 1886, and this report is dated 1893; but he speaks of a period of three years; that is on an average ten new houses in a year in one island?—Yes.

53,388. One of the smaller outer islands?—Well, I am very glad to hear that.

53,389. Then, you are also aware, I daresay, that there has been an enormous building of new houses in certain other quarters—in certain districts of Sutherlandshire, for instance?—I do not know about Sutherland; I have heard that in Skye some forty to fifty houses have been erected since the passing of the Act.

53,390. So that this statutory security of tenure has, to a considerable extent, led to improvement of the holdings, and an improvement of the crofters' buildings?—Oh, yes, but I should suppose that some of that would have gone on in any case.

53,391. But, having regard to that, are you not of opinion that the Act has so far at least been attended with success?—It has in that direction no doubt, to a certain extent.

53,392. What other recommendation made by Lord Napier's report has not been adopted, which, if adopted, would have led to the success of the Act?—There was some provision for the purchase of crofts.

53,393. By whom?—By the tenants if they could find the money.

53,394. Where is that mentioned in the report?—I think you will find it upon pp. 41 and 42.

53,395. And you suggest that as a cause of the failure of the Act?—I say it is a recommendation which was passed over when the Act was passed.

53,396. No doubt; but observe your words that the Act had 'failed because it had omitted to give effect 'to some of Lord Napier's recommendations.'—Well, I should say that the Act would have been more successful had there been provision for the purchase of crofts in cases where that was feasible.

53,397. But the words of your statement are that he Act had failed because of its omission to give effect to these recommendations?—I rather think that I stated that the failure of the Act was in finality.

53,398. I shall read the passage again: 'this failure 'is mainly due to the omission to give effect in the 'Crofters Act of 1886 to some of the strongly en-'forced recommendations of the very strong Commission 'who reported in 1884.' To put it briefly, do you now adhere to that statement?—Yes, I do with some additional explanations. Further on in that passage which you have read it is stated 'the authors of these 'recommendations were much more likely to be right 'than the originators of that irresponsible advice which 'has so conspicuously failed in that utility and finality, 'which Sir George Trevelyan so much desiderated in '1886 and is again unfortunately in search of.'

53,399. But whom do you mean by the 'originators 'of irresponsible advice'?—I really do not know who they were.

53,400. But to whom do you refer?—The advisers of Sir George Trevelyan.

53,401. Who was badly advised?—I think he might have been better advised.

53,402. He was in the hands of dangerous men who gave him bad advice, and he put that advice into a Bill which the legislature made an Act. Is that what you mean?—I do not say dangerous men.

53,403. What exactly do you mean?—I mean men who were probably not fully qualified to give him the best advice.

53,404. Then, Sir George Trevelyan was misled by bad advice, and being misled he misled the legislature. Is that what you mean?—I say he might have got better advice on certain points.

53,405. By going to whom?—By going perhaps to people in the counties concerned who knew the circumstances of the counties fully.

53,406. But, at any rate, however it came about, that Bill became law by too much attention being paid to bad advice?—Yes.

53,407. Now, in connection with that, you are aware that the Bill passed the Lords as well as the Commons, and was discussed in committee particularly by the late Lord Abinger, the Duke of Argyll, and several other noble lords who took a special interest in this question? Were they the victims of bad advice?—I do not know the opinions of some of the gentlemen you have named, but I know the opinions of the late Lord Abinger, at any rate, were not in favour of the Act as it now stands.

53,408. Yes, but his proposals were not given effect to by the House of Lords?—No.

53,409. Now, would you tell me where is the land to be got for improving leases if there is no land available?—The land would have to be got, of course, out of sheep farms or deer forests.

53,410. There would have been land in that case, suitable for new holdings under improving leases?—Yes, if the circumstances of the improving leases were such as could be carried out without injustice to other interests, as I have said.

53,411. And, of course, you are assuming that this injustice would have been avoided if such improving leases had been authorised by the Act, and the matter in fact, left in the hands of the landlord?—I should have expected so on the lines which are set forth in Lord Napier's report.

53,412. Now, are you of opinion that had the Act left the matter in the form of improving leases to be carried out by the landlords making such contracts as they were advised with the tenants, that would have worked a material improvement in the condition of the crofters?—They were not to be entirely carried out by the landlords; the conditions under which improving leases were to be granted were detailed by Lord Napier in the report.

53,413. But it would have been a matter of contract between the landlord and the tenant?—To a certain extent it would.

53,414. To what extent would it not?—The tenants were to be entitled (so many of them upon a representation) to go to the landlord and say that they wanted land for an improving lease.

53,415. And it lay with the landlord to grant the lease?—And unless the landlord could show good reasons to the contrary they would be entitled to have it.

53,416. Through what agency?—An agency would be provided no doubt.

53,417. Some Commission?—Some Commission.

53,418. In fact, it would have been a Crofters Commission for the granting of improving leases instead of a Crofters Commission for the fixing of fair rents?—Yes, and for any other work to be done under the Act.

53,419. Then, is this your objection, that the Act failed because it provided wrong machinery?—Not wrong machinery, but failed to take hold of the proper material for providing it.

53,420. You think, in short, that the Act took away too much from the landlord's position as owner of the land in the matter of rents, arrears, and enlargements?—Yes, and chiefly in conferring fixity of tenure.

53,421. Do you say, as a matter of deliberate opinion, that if these things had been left much more in the hands of the proprietor than they were by the Crofters Act of 1886, the condition of the crofter to-day would have been better than it is under the Act of Parliament?—I should think so; if the well-advised, well-thought-out means of the Napier Commission Report had been given effect to.

53,422. Now, tell me on this matter of improving leases,—since the Act passed have there been any improving leases granted on the Invergarry estate?—No, I expect that what the Act has done is to put an end to improving leases.

53,423. Why?—Because of fixity of tenure. There is no occasion for giving an improving lease if a man has fixity of tenure on his croft.

53,424. He may get another holding, a new piece of ground altogether on an improving lease, which would not be under the Act at all?—It is quite open to give improving leases outside the Act.

53,425. Would you try that experiment?—No, we have no people wanting more land.

53,426. Now, you say with regard to the matter of arrears that,—while I quite agree you make no personal observations with regard to the Act, you say the provisions as to arrears are open to abuse and have opened a door for crofters evading their just engagements which they were well able to fulfil. To what particular townships do you refer, or to what particular quarter?—I refer to the lists of people who made application to have their arrears cancelled as set forth in the Crofters Commission Report.

53,427. And do you say that they used the position which the Act gave them to avoid discharge of their obligations to pay rent and arrears?—I am afraid that is so in the case of some of them.

53,428. Do you make that as an observation having much general application, or only applicable to a restricted area?—I do not know how far it applies over the whole of the crofter area.

53,429. Has it any application to Invergarry?—No, because there were no applications from there.

53,430. Has it any application to any estate over which you have an oversight?—No.

53,431. Has it any application to any other estate of which you have personal knowledge and experience?—I am afraid it has; but I should be sorry to have to name the estates.

53,432. It is a remark, then, only applied to one estate?—No, to a number of estates.

53,433. But to one estate in your own personal knowledge?—No, more than one.

53,434. Now, you say that the arithmetical question of the extent of land suitable for the crofting industry is the main point for elucidation; but you go on to add that you do not enter upon that subject—you do not propose here to enter into large details upon that subject—but is not that the main thing we have to consider?—Yes; but, after all, I have considered it at a later stage of the paper.

53,435. You go on to say the quantity of arable land in sheep farms has not been accurately ascertained, and with regard to deer forests, 'the total arable area of 'all the deer forests would not suffice for the provision 'of 400 crofts.' But while you make that calculation—whether it is right or wrong—in regard to deer forests, you give us no similar calculation in regard to grazing farms?—Yes, I give an estimate in that case also at p. 25.

53,436. You tell us the total land and the pasture and the arable, but you do not tell us how many crofts might be made out of that land?—No, because that depends entirely on what the size of the crofts would be in respect of arable land.

53,437. But you see you mention 400 crofts in deer forests; was there anything to prevent you making a similar estimate with regard to grazing farms?—If the quantity of land had been so well assured in the case of sheep farms as I believe it to be in the case of deer forests, then I should have done so with safety; but I stated over and over again that no one has thoroughly ascertained what extent of arable land there is in sheep farms.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,438. You have given precise figures of the area of sheep farms—total area 3,119,959 acres; pasture, 3,112,303 acres; arable, 7656 acres; had you not the same materials for calculating the number of possible crofts that you had in making the similar calculation as regards the deer forests?—Quite so, if I could have assumed that that was correct—it was a mere estimate.

53,439. But you might have assumed it as correct for the purposes of calculation?—I might.

53,440. Then, did you not make the calculation because these figures are inaccurate?—I did not make the calculation because I went on to explain that it would be quite impossible to withdraw all that land from the sheep farms.

53,441. But it is equally impossible in your view to withdraw land from deer forests. Would it not have been just as easy for you to give us a calculation of the number of possible crofts upon grazing farms as upon deer forests with the figures you have?—Quite possible, upon these figures.

53,442. Taking these figures, how many crofts could be put upon the grazing farms?—At the same rate of apportionment of arable land there would be 765 crofts; but that is taking everything.

53,443. That is between 1100 and 1200 crofts altogether?—Observe, that is if you took possession of all the arable land that exists.

53,444. You mean all the old arable?—All that exists of any kind.

53,445. Not the land in rotation, but the old arable?—All kinds.

53,446. Now, is it not beyond doubt that on the grazing farm—I am not dealing with the question of material damage or the question of buildings, but is it not the fact that on the grazing farms there are considerable tracts of land available for the formation of new crofters' holdings?—Undoubtedly.

53,447. And the formation of such crofters' holdings, of varying sizes no doubt, if carried out and occupied by crofters or cottars who are at present in congested districts, would operate a vast relief to the crofting area?—Yes, at the cost of the destruction of the rest of the farm.

53,448. That may be. Now, you make a statement which I think is of considerable importance, and I should not like it to pass unnoticed. I do not say that I am differing from you. You say that rarely could crofters be set down in townships or groups. There are districts, are there not, where they could easily be set down in townships or groups?—Yes, but I say they could not be successfully set down because of the difficulties which I detail.

53,449. You know Strathnaver, I daresay?—I do not know it very well.

53,450. Have you seen it?—I have been only at the head of it.

53,451. That is a pity; it is a vast tract of gently sloping land running for a distance of something like 13 or 14 miles on each side of the river Naver; at one time thickly peopled, perhaps too thickly peopled with crofters and small tenants. Now, could you not have a number of townships or groups there?—Of course, there are places where you could put them, there is no doubt about that, but I referred to districts where the arable ground available was so limited that you could not put them in townships; and I also explained what the difficulties would be in connection with the formation of roads and the providing of schools and such like.

53,452. That is no doubt a practical question which may have to be considered afterwards; but take the county of Caithness—I do not know that there are any townships away from the fishing townships on the seashore; might you not in the grazing farms of that county manage to form a considerable number of new

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

holdings such as at present exist?—You could always form a township where you could get sufficient arable land around it.

53,453. And you are aware, no doubt, that in Caithness there are a number of farms from which such holdings could be made without having common pasture?—Yes; again I say at the expense of the rest of the farm.

53,454. That, of course, is a matter we need not enter upon at present. Now, let me ask you one question about the rainfall. Would you kindly look at the map in your paper. I think you will find there a red colour and a speckled red colour?—Yes.

53,455. The red colour shows an annual rainfall of 30 to 40 inches?—Yes.

53,456. And the speckled or half-red, half-white colour shows a rainfall of 25 to 30 inches?—Yes.

53,457. While the area which shows a rainfall about 80 inches is very much smaller than either of the other two?—Yes.

53,458. So that that map proves that the proportion of the crofting area where the rainfall exceeds 80 inches per annum is only a fraction of the whole?—Excuse me, I thought you referred to the red colours all over the country. If you take the colours within the crofting area only, I think the dark blue colour greatly predominates.

53,459. In the crofting area?—Yes. That is my very reason for producing this map.

53,460. Of course, if that is so, that is an answer to my question. Now, you gave us an account of charge and discharge, an account of receipts and expenditure, and we have from Cameron of Lochiel an account of receipts and expenditure at p. 133 of his Memorandum, which he corrected so far by saying that wedder lambs should be 50 at 8s. instead of 50 at 12s.; ewe lambs 12 at 10s. instead of 12 at 14s.; stirks £4 each instead of £6 each—but your account of receipts and expenditure does not quite agree with his own. I do not at this hour of the day propose to go into the different items; but which of these two accounts of receipts and expenditure shall we take as the more reliable?—Well, I consider my own more reliable.

53,461. Then, we are to cast aside Lochiel's and take yours?—It is a matter of opinion.

53,462. But your opinion is that yours is the better of the two?—Yes.

53,463. You consider yourself a better authority than he is on that matter?—I give my opinion here for what it is worth.

53,464. Now, I want to ask you a question or two about these deer forests. You say that the total number of deer forests is 130?—Yes, according to the return.

53,465. Now, of these deer forests 20 existed from time immemorial?—Yes.

53,466. Fifty-nine existed prior to 1872 and 13 have been created between 1872 and 1883; that is, at the rate of very nearly three forests a year. Between 1883 and 1891, 21 additional deer forests have been made?—That is all correct, I believe.

53,467. Now, can you tell me the area afforested since 1891?—No, my lord, I cannot.

53,468. Are you aware of some afforestment in process of being made just now—for example, have you heard of any afforestment being carried out at present on Sir Allan Mackenzie's estate at Kintail?—Yes, I heard quite lately that it is in contemplation to do so.

53,469. That the sheep stock are advertised for public sale, and that the expectation in the district is that that land will be afforested?—That has been announced for years past, and, I suppose, it is actually going to take place now.

53,470. That is your belief?—I have heard so.

53,471. Then, are you also aware that the sheep stock has recently been cleared from the farm of Comar?—Yes, that was done I think in the spring of this year.

53,472. Last year or this year—and it is proposed to afforest this land?—Yes, I know that.

53,473. Then, you are also aware, I daresay, or you may have heard, that proceedings are going on with a view to the afforestment in Sutherlandshire of the farm of Achmore?—No, I have not heard of that case.

Inverness. — George Malcolm.

53,474. So that there is a process of afforestment we may take it, I think, going on at this very moment?—Yes, there are these cases certainly.

53,475. Following upon the number of cases which you place between 1872 and 1883, and the further number which have occurred since 1883?—Yes.

53,476. All that, I think you will admit, is directly in the teeth of the opinion conveyed on p. 94 of Lord Napier's Report, that a provision should be framed by which the areas which might hereafter form the most appropriate scene for expanding cultivation of small holdings should be preserved from curtailment?—He goes on to say that no afforestment should take place below a certain altitude, which is the 'appropriate scene' he had in view, no doubt.

53,477. But before he states that, he adds to the sentence I have read, 'If this were done, the interests 'of the class for whom we are specially concerned would 'be effectually secured.' The absence of this provision, therefore, in the subsequent legislation seems to have had the effect of imperilling the interests of those (the crofters mainly) with whom this Report of Lord Napier deals?—Yes, if we assume that the crofters could be provided with holdings out of those lands that have been afforested.

53,478. But that is the assumption upon which Lord Napier's advice to the Government proceeds?—Yes, but we have had a great deal of evidence as to the difficulty of doing it.

53,479. Don't you think, then, that it would have been a much wiser thing for those who have been afforesting lands since 1883 to have given heed to this suggestion of a very strong Commission, a Commission of landlords?—I do not see how the landlords can be blamed for doing it, seeing they would have lost so much of their incomes if they had held these places as sheep farms, probably in their own hands, without being able to let them.

53,480. You heard Lochiel's statement that he was against afforestment which would outrage public opinion?—Yes, so am I, on any occasion.

53,481. Don't you think that any afforestment which has taken place since 1883 has been an outrage on public opinion?—No, I do not go the length of saying that.

53,482. Don't you think it has been unwise and imprudent, and not in the ultimate interests of the landlords themselves?—I would say it would be most inadvisable to do so if it could be avoided, without inflicting great loss on the proprietors.

53,483. I desire to refer specially to one of the Commissioners in that Report, viz., Sir Kenneth Mackenzie. The area of his afforested land when the Commission gave its Report was 42,750 acres, and the area of his afforested land at this moment remains exactly the same, so that he has not, so far as this return shows, afforested an inch of land since he signed the Report?—But probably Sir Kenneth was not placed in any difficulty of that kind. There are many others in that position.

53,484. I cannot tell you as to that. Now, you say that the area of the 109 forests is 1,955,209 acres; and the area of the 130 forests is 2,552,383; the difference is 597,174 acres, or shall we say in round numbers, 600,000 acres. But, then, you go on to say that there is grave reason to suspect many inaccuracies in the return of 1891. Are we not to take it that between 1872 and 1883 there has been an increase of 600,000 acres of afforested land?—Between 1883 and 1891 you mean. I myself doubt it, but we are obliged to accept the return as correct.

53,485. That Return you know was prepared by a very well known and eminent man in his own department, and was prepared, I suppose we may take it, upon information received from the owners of the land?—Yes.

53,486. Do you now, as representing the owners of land, say to us that this is an inaccurate return?—I do.

53,487. Then, either the owners of land gave in state-

ments with regard to the area afforested which they knew to be incorrect, or statements which they did not take sufficient trouble to verify?—I believe the latter occurred.

53,488. Could you give us any idea to what extent that inaccuracy goes?—Yes, I have read it several times already.

53,489. You say that this return may be suspected of many inaccuracies—can you make up for us a statement which will be accurate?—I think if the same course had been followed in 1891 as was followed in 1883, we would then have had a perfectly accurate Return.

53,490. What course was that?—The Commission of that day called upon the proprietors to furnish plans or maps of the deer forests with the boundaries clearly shown upon them; they submitted these to experts to be measured; and by this means they checked the figures which had previously been given to them.

53,491. But the inaccuracy here, in your judgment is, I take it, in the direction of an excessive statement of afforested land?—Yes; but there are several other features of the Return, besides the acreage, which are not correct.

53,492. And not creditable, in fact?—No, I think it is a bad piece of work.

53,493. I leave you to settle that question with the Crown Agent of 1891. Now, you gave us some rather important statements with regard to the question of forestry. You say that 905,759 acres, or a third of the whole land under timber, is in the Highland counties?—Yes.

53,494. And you say that of that there is in Inverness-shire 168,738 acres, which is greater in area than all other crops?—Yes.

53,495. The tree crop in Inverness is the largest of all the crops?—Yes.

53,496. That would suggest, therefore, the feasibility and the desirability of extending forests in many directions?—I am quite in favour of that.

53,497. How would you propose that it should be carried out; because I must invite your attention to this, that notwithstanding opportunities existing in the past for growing trees, these do not seem to have been grown so largely as they might have been by the landlords themselves. I think I am correct in saying that, except the Atholl estate in Perthshire and the Seafield estate in Inverness-shire, and I suppose your estate of Invergarry also, tree growing has not been carried on nearly so largely as it might have been?—I give reasons for it in this statement. The chief reason is, that the climate on the west coast will not allow you to grow trees to nearly the same altitude as in the midlands or on the east coast.

53,498. But I gather from you that successful tree growing might be carried on in the Highland counties to a much further point than it has been?—I say that there are still bits along the straths and sea coast where trees might be grown with advantage.

53,499. And you would be in favour of that mode of using the land being carried much further than it is?—Oh, yes, as far as it is suitable, and without, of course, destroying any more important interest.

53,500. Now, how do you propose that this should be done—that an impulse should be given to the growing of trees?—Do you mean how the expense of it should be overcome?

53,501. Everything about it. How do you propose that the enterprise should receive an impetus?—If it could be shown capable of being a commercial success, I suppose proprietors would find the means of doing it themselves; but in all cases where they were not satisfied that it would be a commercial success, of course they would not do it.

53,502. You do not suggest any assistance from Government in that direction?—No.

53,503. Now, you submitted to our consideration a concrete proposal, which was this; the acquisition by purchase of one or more of the Hebridean Islands, the expropriation of the landlord or landlords, and the planting of crofters there?—I recommended that as an experiment, at least, before anything on a much larger scale should be entered upon.

53,504. You do not mention the island that you referred to?—No, but I suppose either the island of Lewis or Skye might be obtained.

53,505. Have you been in the island of Lewis?—I have not been in the island of Lewis, I think.

53,506. You have never been on it?—I think not.

53,507. Are you aware that the island of Lewis is the very worst place in the world for an experiment of that kind?—I am aware that it is the most crying place for such an experiment; there is the most crying necessity for the redistribution of the people there.

53,508. Do you know the quality of the land, speaking generally?—Yes, I know it of course from other sources.

53,509. You know that it consists to a large extent of peat hags and absolutely waste land hardly worth a penny an acre?—I have heard a great deal about the excellent land that is in the sheep farms and deer forest there.

53,509A. But there are very few sheep farms altogether?—But all that land would of course be thrown into the general subject.

53,510. The north part of the island of Lewis is in the hands of crofters already?—Yes.

53,511. There the farms are the exception and the crofting area is the rule; this is the last place in the world where such an experiment should be tried with any hope of success. Don't you think it would be better to try such an experiment upon good land?—Wherever the land can be got; but it ought to be in the neighbourhood of, or not far from, a congested district.

53,512. Yes, but ought it not to be land regarding which experts entertain the opinion that it affords a reasonable prospect of profitable cultivation?—Certainly, you ought to have the best land you can get.

53,513. I hope you really do not seriously mean that such an experiment should be tried in the Lews, because we can all predict failure in that case?—I have not named the Lews or any other place; but many people have thought of it.

53,514. Don't you think that so far from going to a congested area like the Lews, it would be better to go to a unoccupied area with good land, where there would be room to put people with some hope of success?—Yes, I have stated that, if you could get the people to go to a great distance.

53,515. We cannot get them to go till we get a place to put them. Now, Mr Malcolm, we have kept you a very long time I must say, but if there is anything you would like to add to what has already been elicited, we shall be glad to hear it?—No, my lord, so much has been said that I really cannot recollect at this moment anything that has been omitted.

53,516. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—With regard to the disputed military spirit of the Highlanders, I should like to ask you this; are you aware that the late Edward Ellice of Glengarry stated before a Game Law Committee of the House of Commons in 1873, that the district of Glengarry sent to Prince Charlie's army a soldier for every pound of rent on the estate?—I suppose Mr Ellice said so; at least, I have heard it so often that it is perfectly familiar to me.

53,517. Is it not possible for you then to believe the statement which the editor of the *Scottish Highlander* made in his paper, and which you disputed, that 600 clansmen followed the chief at the battle of Culloden?—I do not dispute, and have not disputed, that that number of men may have gone with their chief.

53,518. And is it not a fact, within your knowledge, that the Highland regiments have always been put to the front in our great foreign wars?—I do not know whether that is the case or not.

53,519. I have been told that in your statement you used the words 'hired agitators'; I did not hear it myself, but I am led to understand that the phrase occurred?—I do not remember using that expression; I alluded to the Crofter agitation, no doubt, several times.

53,520. The reason I ask you is, that I have myself been asked whether I was a paid agent. Is it a fact that you are to-day a hired agent of the landlord party?—No, I am not.

53,521. Are you, as secretary of the Highland Property Association, paid for your services?—There is no salary attached to the office; at least there is no fixed salary.

53,522. But have you been remunerated by the Association for your services?—Yes, I have at intervals got some remuneration for my services.

53,523. And do you consider it contemptible or dishonest that men who act as agents for the people should be remunerated, while you believe it is quite the correct thing that the agent of the landlords should be paid?—I never said a word against the agitators being paid.

53,524. You expressed a desire that emigration should be conducted on a large scale, and that it would be very desirable that the Free Church ministers should preach emigration with the view of getting the people to go?—That was a suggestion I made in 1883; it is not repeated in this document.

53,525. Is it within your knowledge that the Free Church General Assembly was held in the capital of the Highlands, in Inverness here, three or four years ago, and that the Free Church in its supreme court unanimously passed a Resolution which was to Petition Parliament to devise ways and means for sending the Highland people back to the straths and glens?—I suppose that is correct; I do not know; but I quite admit that Free Church ministers are not at present furthering emigration.

53,526. But this to your knowledge is the act of the whole body of the Free Church?—I take it from you: I do not know about it myself.

53,527. It was carried unanimously. Now, that being so, do you not now despair and give up all hope of seeing the Free Church ministers of the Highlands making crusades with the view of getting the Highland people to emigrate?—No.

53,528. You still hold that they will cast aside the Resolution at which they arrived in General Assembly at Inverness?—I hope some of them will some day.

53,529. Now, with regard to the question of improving leases; we heard from yourself yesterday that there are 67 tenants in Glengarry, 18 of whom are crofters within the meaning of the Crofters Act; and 49 may be described as small tenants; and I think you said that of the 49 about one-half have potato ground, that being all the extent of their holding, and that the other half have none. Now, seeing that the improving lease you spoke about is in your opinion very admirable, did you give the benefit of an improving lease to any of the 49 small tenants who are outside the scope of the Crofters Act?—Your question has no application, in face of the fact that not a single person in Glengarry has asked for more land.

53,530. I am not speaking about an application for more land at all. You said that there were 49 small tenants on the estate who are outside the benefits of the Crofters Act, and you say that you could not give the benefit of the improving lease to crofters because of the Crofters Act. Was there anything to prevent your giving the benefit of an improving lease to any of the 49?—Certainly not to anybody who asked for it.

53,531. May I ask this; if the 49 make application to the Crofters Commission for the benefits of the Crofters Act, are you willing to support them?—Oh, there would be no opposition to anything of that sort.

53,532. You will give them the benefit of the Crofters Act if they choose to go before the Crofters Commission?—Anyone who is entitled to go before the Crofters Commission.

53,533. But I am speaking about the 49 who you yesterday told us were outside the benefits of the Crofters Act, and who need not apply to the Crofters Commission because they have no *locus* there. Are you willing to give them the benefit of the Crofters Act?—I cannot return an answer to that question at this moment.

53,534. Are you aware also that the improving lease to which you refer was to apply only to tenants paying £6 and above that?—Yes.

53,535. And are you aware that the whole crofting population of Lewis, over 4000 crofters who have got the benefit of the Crofters Act, would be excluded from legislation which had gone upon the lines of the improving lease recommended by the Napier Commission?—Yes, but I have not said that I approve of the £6 limit.

53,536. Are you aware that every crofter in Lewis would be excluded if Parliament had passed a Crofters Act on the lines of the improving lease recommended by the Napier Commission?—Probably that is so.

53,537. And also about nine-tenths of all the crofters in the rest of the Highland area?—Perhaps that is the case; I do not know.

53,538. So you are sorry that Parliament did not go upon the lines of the proposed improving lease, which would have had the effect of excluding nine-tenths of the crofting population?—No, because in that case I would not have had the £6 limit.

53,539. You appeared as a witness before the Royal Commission of 1883?—Yes.

53,540. Professor Mackinnon asked you this question:—'How many have you got on your estate?' of the crofting class of tenants; and you replied:—'Some 'hundreds altogether?'—That included their families.

53,541. Then Professor Mackinnon asked:—'How 'many families?' and you replied:—'About 60 to 80 'families?'—Yes.

53,542. That happened in the year 1883. Then, you appeared before the Colonisation Committee of the House of Commons in 1890 or 1891, did you not?—Yes.

53,543. And you were then asked by Mr Campbell Bannerman how many crofters are on the property? and your reply was that there were between 30 and 40?—Yes. We went over all that ground last night, Mr Macrae, and I explained then that what I stated before the Colonisation Committee was an off-hand statement. The question came to me without preparation, and I had to make an estimate of the number of crofters.

53,544. Is it not a fact that in reply to a further particular question before the Colonisation Committee, you spoke about the facts you gave us as 'thoroughly 'reliable?'—I do not remember making any statement of that kind.

53,545. You made reflections upon the statements made by Mr Alexander Mackenzie, and you referred to your own as actual facts?—Yes.

53,546. Now, you tell us that what you stated there was haphazard?—In regard to that particular matter it was. The facts that I said were correct were facts which I had ascertained before I went there. As to reflections, I think everybody who has studied that report knows that far more reflections were cast upon me than I cast upon anyone; I cast no reflections at all upon anyone.

53,547. Not personally at all, but reflecting upon the accuracy of statements made. Now, was there anything in the world more reasonable to expect of a gentleman in your position who would go all the way to London to inform the House of Commons,—is it not the most reasonable thing to expect from you correct statements of fact, when speaking about the property you yourself manage as factor?—Yes, but where is the incorrectness you speak about?

53,548. You said before the Napier Commission that there were betweeen 60 and 80 crofters on the Glengarry estate, and you said before the Colonisation Committee that there were between 30 and 40, and you say now that there are only 18?—Yes,—there has been some difference between these times. When I said 60 or 80 crofters to the Napier Commission, I must have meant all the smaller tenantry who have been spoken of here.

53,549. Your language is perfectly clear; no living man could use clearer language. Then, you wrote a pamphlet on deer forests, which I think you re-issued in the year 1890; is not that so?—Yes.

53,550. On p. 13 of that pamphlet, after referring to the manner in which the Napier Commission ascertained

Inverness.

George Malcolm.

the acreage under deer, you say that 'These figures, it 'may be added, remain unaltered, practically no 'additional afforestment having been made since the 'time of the Commissioners' Report.' You state in the year 1890 in your pamphlet, that no addition was made to the deer forest area as it existed in the year 1886, and as it was reported on by the Napier Commission?—Yes, but that was according to the state of my knowledge at the time, and that pamphlet was written some time previously.

53,551. But this pamphlet was revised by you and republished by you, and you went to London with it in your pocket, and you put it in evidence before the Colonisation Committee the same year?—The pamphlet first appeared as an article in a London magazine, and was republished in pamphlet form only once, immediately after it had appeared in the magazine.

53,552. Is it not a fact that in the year 1890 you reissued this pamphlet, and said in it that no additional afforestment was made since the time of the Napier Commission Report?—Read the passage, please.

53,553. I will read the passage for you:—'These 'figures' (that is, the total acreage as returned by Lord Napier) 'it may be added, remain unaltered, practically 'no additional afforestment having been made since the 'date of the Commission Report.' [*The Chairman.*—Do you adhere to that statement now?—No, it is found that there were afforestments.—Then, you withdraw that statement?—Yes, I withdraw it].

53,554. Do you then, after getting this pamphlet republished with this statement in it, go to London and put it in evidence before the Colonisation Committee of the House of Commons?—No, I put in no pamphlet, and the pamphlet was not re-published.

53,555. Did you offer it to the Colonisation Committee?—It was perhaps referred to, but I lodged no documents except the statement I read there.

53,556. Did you offer it to them?—No, not that I remember. [*The Chairman.*—Did you call the attention of the Committee to it?—The Committee spoke to me about it. *Q.* Then you referred to it as a document to which they might appeal?—No, my lord, I gave them on that occasion a special statement about deer foresting, which brought out a clearance between 1883 and that date of between 200,000 and 300,000 acres. *Q.* But was that pamphlet treated by you as a document to which the members of that Committee might properly refer as containing your deliberate statement of the afforested area?—Not at all; it was superseded by the manuscript which I read.]

53,557. Now, when cross-examined by Dr Clark there, did you not in reply to him say that 144,000 acres were added?—Yes, I suppose that is the additional quantity that I stated in my belief had been cleared up to that time.

53,558. So that, as a matter of fact, when you went to London with this pamphlet you knew perfectly well that the statement in the pamphlet was not true, and you went to London with the authoritative statement that 144,000 acres had been added?—I never put in the pamphlet as a statement of the acreage cleared at all; the statement which I read was the statement which I made up to date about the clearance of deer forest area.

53,559. The statement you made was that 144,500 acres were added?—Yes.

53,560. You are aware that that was not correct?—No, I was not aware.

53,561. Are you not aware now that it was half a million at the very least off the mark?—Yes, and I am also aware that that calculation of mine when it was made up was two years before the publication of the return of 1891, and I think it will be found that by far the larger part of the clearance took place in those very two years. By this the seeming discrepancy is explained.

53,562. Did you tell anybody that your calculation was two years old?—The calculation was not two years old; but it was two years old when the 1891 return was issued.

53,563. But did you re-issue your pamphlet in the year 1890?—No, I did not.

53,564. You have made remarks to the effect that the return of 1891 is not accurate?—I have made such remarks here.

Inverness.

George Malcolm.

53,565. Is it within your knowledge that deer forests were created that ought to have been in that return, but did not get a place in that return?—No, I am not aware of any.

53,566. I shall direct your memory to a few of them. Did you not know that Knockfin was made into a deer forest, and that it did not get a place in that return?—I am told that Knockfin was included in that return.

53,567. Under what head?—Under the group of deer forests belonging to Mrs Chisholm.

53,568. Are you aware that the Garbhat deer forest of 15,000 acres ought to have been in that return and was not in it at all?—No, I am not aware of that; I do not know where Garbhat is.

53,569. Or that Ben Hope of 52,000 acres was omitted?—No, I do not know.

53,570. Can you explain how it is that these matters which it is so easy for you to ascertain, being the Secretary of the Highland Property Association, and which other people can find out, are at variance with all these documents?—Nobody, I suppose, knew at the time that there were any more deer forests than those in the 1891 return.

53,571. In giving evidence and speaking about the population of Glengarry, you always put it down, I think, at about 700?—Yes.

53,572. Is that the population of the estate of Glengarry or of the parish of Kilmonivaig?—It is the population of the estates of Glengarry and Glenquoich alone.

53,573. You referred us to experiments that were conducted in Barra, and I think it is very important that some question should be put to you on that subject. You spoke of the experiments by Lady Gordon Cathcart in Barra as a proof that small holdings could not be created successfully?—Yes, I referred to these amongst others.

53,574. You alluded to Bentangaval, I think?—Yes.

53,575. You said that 35 tenants were placed there and that the experiment was a complete failure?—Yes.

53,576. But in what respect did it turn out to be a failure?—I detailed it when I read my statement.

53,577. Did the cottars fail in building houses; or, to put the matter shortly, do you know anything more about it than what you have told us in your statement?—I know nothing more than what I read, viz.:—'In 1883, Lady Gordon Cathcart declined an offer of '£131, 5s., from an eligible tenant, for the farm of 'Bentangaval, in the island of Barra, in order that she 'might divide it for crofters. It extends to 1750 acres, 'and it was apportioned among forty-five crofters. Of 'these only thirty-five took up their lots. The result has 'been a complete failure. The total rent was £133. 'Only £70, 13s. 8d. of this was paid even in the first 'year, but much worse remains. During the six years 'ended at Whitsunday, 1891, only £68, 1s. 9d. of rent 'was received, while the amount, exclusive of interest, 'which should have been received was £798—the 'arrears in this case amounted at the end of the seventh 'year to £792, 4s. 7d.'

53,578. Do you know the place personally?—No.

53,579. Were you ever in Barra?—No.

53,580. So that that statement may be correct or totally away from the fact for all you know?—The statement is a literal copy of what I received from Lady Gordon Cathcart's factor.

53,581. Do you consider that that is a correct way of stating evidence for the landlords?—Yes.

53,582. Gathering materials in that way and giving them to the Royal Commission as if they were your own, without a particle of personal knowledge as to their accuracy?—That is not the case. I explained to the Commission yesterday that I had my information from the various estate authorities. [*Mr Sutherland.*—Might I, at this point, interject a question? You will remember that in the case of Sutherlandshire, of which I have particular knowledge, I challenged the statement given by you yesterday on this subject, and you replied that it was given to you by the factor, Mr Maciver?—Yes.

Q. You are aware that Mr Maciver appeared before us at two places and had a full opportunity of making a statement, and was cross-examined, and he never made any statement of that kind. Of course, my reflection is not upon you, but upon a gentleman who would put in your mouth a statement which he himself did not make when he had the opportunity?—Probably he did not feel called upon to do it, but really I do not know.]

53,583. Are you aware that these Bentangaval crofters refused the old rent because they disputed the fairness of it, and applied to the Crofters Commission, and that the Crofters Commission went round and reduced that rent from £2, 18s. to £1, 10s.?—I have no information about the case beyond what I have read.

53,584. Would you be surprised to know that I asked the Commissioner for Lady Gordon Cathcart if the tenants did not regularly pay the rent since the Crofters Commission had fixed the fair rent, and that the Commissioner told me that he was perfectly satisfied with regard to that?—I should be very much surprised, because that is a reflection upon Mr Macdonald's accuracy.

53,585. Would you be surprised to know that Mr Ranald Macdonald made that statement to the Royal Commission in Barra the other day,—that the experiment had been a success since the Crofters Commission fixed the fair rent, that there was a good feeling between the tenants and her ladyship, that they have been very much benefited, and that the estate is satisfied that they did the right thing when they gave that land to the crofters?—All I know about it is that this is his statement to me in writing.

53,586. But you will admit that personally you have no knowledge whatever about the matter?—I admit that.

53,587. Do you consider it fair to damage a proposal in advance by experiments which you say failed, when you have no knowledge whether they failed or not?—Yes, if I am satisfied with the source of my information.

53,588. Are you satisfied now that that statement should not have been made yesterday before the Royal Commission?—No, I am not.

53,589. May I ask what would satisfy you as to that? You are told in the presence of the Royal Commission here that Lady Gordon Cathcart's Commissioner made that statement before them at Barra?—I have heard nothing about it except what you have stated yourself. [*The Chairman.*—The statement made to us by Mr Ranald Macdonald about Bentangaval was this:—'Bentangaval was let' etc., see p. 934. (Reads also Questions 39,245 to 39,256, p. 945–6). *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Perhaps I might be allowed to read one question that was put to him with regard to Bentangaval: *Q.* 'What has been the result at the last rent 'collection; at the last rent collection how much was 'struck off?—*A.* I make no complaint whatever about 'it, but it is certainly a very marked improvement upon 'the old state of things.']

53,590. Now, we can pass from that experiment to another one to which you allude. What is the name of the farm upon which the six tenants were settled?—A place called Allasdale. 'Another experiment of this 'kind in Barra by Lady Gordon Cathcart was Allasdale. 'It was divided among seven crofters at a total rent of '£110. The fittest persons in the island were selected 'for these large crofts. The land was excellent and 'everything was done by the estate to promote their 'success. They have been in possession for fully ten 'years, but this venture has also turned out a failure. 'Of the total rent accruing during these ten years 'not one-half has been paid; very large abatements have 'been made, yet still a very large amount is in arrear, 'and this, notwithstanding the fact, that at the end of 'the fifth year the rent was reduced to £80 or about 27 'per cent.'

53,591. Now you say that the rent was £110?—Yes. That is what is said here. [*Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I think it is rather inconvenient to enter into this matter. Mr Ranald Macdonald was examined at great length on these very particulars, and it would be rather inconvenient to have that same evidence gone over again. *Mr Macrae.*—Except for Mr Malcolm's benefit. *The Chairman.*—We have all the information which Mr Ranald Macdonald could possibly give us, and I have no doubt, Mr Malcolm, you will allow us to correct the statements you made by a reference to the evidence which Mr Ranald Macdonald gave us? *Witness.*—I know nothing about it, my lord, except what is set down here, which is a literal copy of the statements that reached me from the various factors *The Chairman.*—And you have no objections whatever to our reading your statement along with his evidence? *Mr Sutherland.*—Allow me to repeat what I have already said, as my own opinion regarding the whole of this transaction, that gentlemen who have come before this Commission and made statements different from what they now ask you to make to the Commission do not serve you well at all. *Witness.*—No, if that is the case; but I have no knowledge of any different statements being made. *Mr Sutherland.*—But we have the knowledge because we heard both statements made. *Witness.*—Well, you must balance the one against the other. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Mr Ranald Macdonald made most important admissions when we were in Barra, and acknowledged the success of Bentangaval and of Garrygal, and the only experiment that he felt himself entitled to express any doubt about was that at Allasdale. The other two that have been practical successes include a great number of crofters who have had much benefit; and that benefit was admitted and acknowledged by Mr Ranald Macdonald before us in Barra. *The Chairman.*—I do not think we need carry this discussion any further.]

53,592. I want to refer to something that happened at Loch-Carron. Do you know the estate of Loch-Carron?—Yes.

53,593. Do you approve of the fixing of a rent by a landlord?—Yes, I must say I do.

53,594. What do you mean in your general statement when you speak of the crofters who were agitating as being selfish?—I do not remember stating anything of the kind.

53,595. I heard it stated 'actuated by anything but 'unselfish motives?'—I object, my lord, to Mr Macrae examining me upon a statement which he knows nothing about; he was not present to hear it read.

53,596. I heard every syllable. I was present the whole day. Perhaps there may have been a few phrases which I did not catch. But I should like to ask you this about Loch-Carron—Did you go there at the request of the proprietor to value?—I did.

53,597. Was that before the passing of the Crofters Act or after?—It must have been after the passing of the Act, but it was before the Crofters Commission visited the estate.

53,598. Was it not, as a matter of fact, after the Crofters Act passed, and after applications had been lodged, but before the Commissioners visited the district?—Yes.

53,599. And is it a fact that you recommended a reduction of rent of more than 30 per cent.?—The reductions were various. I inspected all the individual crofts, and I was very glad to hear later on from one of the Commissioners himself, that the reductions of rent made by the Crofters Commission tallied very closely with those which I had recommended the year before.

53,600. I can bear witness to that myself; I know all the cases. But is it not a fact also that there was no recommendation that the arrears accumulated under the rack rent should be dealt with at all?—The arrears were not submitted to me; I had no knowledge of arrears.

53,601. Is it not a fact within your knowledge that the proprietor claimed full payment of all the arrears as a condition of the rent that you fixed being adhered to?—No; on the contrary, the factor told me that the arrears would be largely excused if they came to a private settlement.

53,602. But the crofters preferred going to the Crofters Commission, and they got there a much bigger

Inverness. George Malcolm.

reduction than ever you proposed; and they got also about three-fourths of their arrears cancelled?—They did not get larger reductions of their rents, and what they got in the shape of cancelment of arrears I have no knowledge of.

53,603. That being so, is it surprising in the least that the Highland people would prefer dealing with a Land Court to dealing with landlords?—I am not qualified to answer that question. I do not pretend to know the opinions of all the Highland people.

53,604. *Mr Alexander Mackenzie, editor of the 'Scottish Highlander.'*—Do you know anything about the history of the raising of the 79th Cameron Highlanders?—Yes.

53,605. You led me, at any rate, to believe that these enlistments in the past were largely compulsory, that the people did not enlist of their own free will. I ask you whether you know that this regiment was raised directly in the face of the landlord's influence? Do you know that it was raised by Colonel Campbell of Avoch, to whom the Lochiel of the day refused to give the slightest countenance, with the result that the Cameron tartan was not adopted by the regiment; the feeling was so intense between the landlord of the day and a man who had no influence whatever at his back, that he raised over 1000 men within three months and landed with them in Stirling; came back again and raised within six months more another 1000 men in spite of the whole influence of the Lochiel of the day?—That may all be quite true. I never said that enlistment was compulsory, and I never said that there was not on occasions voluntary enlistment without any pressure at all.

53,606. Would you try after that to maintain for a moment that the Highlanders enlisted under compulsion in the past?—I did not say compulsion; I said they enlisted very often under a certain pressure by their chief or by relations of the chief.

53,607. Was not the pressure in this case directed against the enlistment?—I do not dispute that there may be cases where there was no pressure.—I have no objection, my lord, to answer Mr Mackenzie, but before answering any further questions I should like to know whom Mr Mackenzie represents? [*The Chairman.*—We have allowed Mr Mackenzie to put a question by favour. Any other questions he will kindly put through me.]

53,608. *Mr Mackenzie.*—You stated before various Commissions that the exact number of arable acres in deer forests was 3184. I want to know on what grounds you have now extended that figure to 3828 as stated in the paper read yesterday?—Simply that there are now more deer forests. [*The Chairman.*—And you take the arable land of the additional forests, and raise your figures in that way from 3184 to 3828?—Yes, in the same ratio.]

53,609. *Mr Sutherland.*—You have appeared before us in many capacities, Mr Malcolm. I am now going to ask you a question in your capacity of educational philosopher. You say here:—'The loitering march of 'prosperity of the Celtic Highlanders, in so far as it is 'due to dissimilarity of race or duality of language, is 'a condition which is gradually and at an increasing pace 'wearing itself out.' This is one of the conditions to which you attach importance as regards the future?—Yes.

53,610. What is the meaning of this?—I should think the meaning is what the words set forth; but I may say that I have the greatest faith in the spread of education in the Highlands being a very important and ultimate factor in the solution of all these questions which we have been considering.

53,611. But is the particular meaning attached to this sentence that you expect improvement to go on as the Gaelic language disappears and the native population dies out or is removed?—No, it is the spread of education that I refer to.

53,612. But how can the spread of education do away with a race?—Surely I did not say it was to do away with a race?

53,613. 'In so far as it is due to dissimilarity of 'race'; a dissimilarity of two races living together, I presume?—But you may take away the dissimilarity without taking away the race itself.

53,614. How?—You do not extinguish the people although you extinguish their language.

53,615. Oh, you want to extinguish the language?—Yes, that is all.

53,616. Well, it is your educational philosophy that amuses me. Is it a good thing to extinguish languages?—My own private opinion is, that it would be a good thing if the Gaelic language disappeared from the Highlands.

53,617. Is that your opinion?—Yes.

53,618. I think it affords a key to a great deal of the evidence you have given us, if that is the spirit in which you approach consideration of questions like these?—Well, it is a matter of opinion, but I do not think I am singular in holding that opinion.

53,619. Possibly not. You do not know the Gaelic language?—No.

53,620. And yet you consider yourself a judge as to whether it should be exterminated or not?—I only give my opinion.

53,621. But what is your opinion founded on if not upon a knowledge of the language?—Upon what I hear from men of business and from families of Highlanders themselves. Many Gaelic-speaking parents have told me that they did not care to have their children educated in Gaelic at all.

53,622. Where do you find these?—In my own district and in others too.

53,623. Are you aware that the teaching of Gaelic has increased to a very great extent in our schools and is encouraged by the Education Department?—Yes, the latter fact.

53,624. Would you consider that Department a competent authority to deal with the matter?—I have been told that in those schools in which Gaelic is taught, the results are not so good as in schools where English only is taught.

53,625. Are you aware that a higher grant is obtained in schools where Gaelic is taught?—No, I am not aware of that, but it forms one more grant.

53,626. Will you take it from me that that is so? I can give you the names if necessary?—Yes, I will take it if you say so.

53,627. Is a man who can speak but one language a better educated man than a man who can speak two?—My opinion is, that in this case the one language rather interferes with the other.

53,628. Then our system of educational philosophy, so far as it is based upon the acquisition of different languages, is altogether wrong?—It is open to you to say that I am wrong, and I may be wrong; but that is my opinion, at all events.

53,629. How do you expect the people of the Highlands to listen to any advice that is given them by men who think that the best way to do them good is by extinguishing their characteristics and their language?—My opinion is that a great many of the Highland people share my belief.

53,630. Supposing I were to go to Fife, where you belong, and tell the people of Fife that the only hope for them would be to cease speaking English—how should I be received?—That would be absurd, because that is the language in which the business of the country is carried on.

53,631. But every Gaelic-speaking person carries on his business in the Gaelic language. If you are to take away the Gaelic language from people who can only speak Gaelic, what speech do you leave them?—In that case Gaelic must remain; but my opinion is that they should all be taught English.

53,632. But are they not taught English?—And when we get to that, they will be in a better condition as regards their prospects in life.

53,633. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—This question about the language is one that touches the feelings of Highlanders pretty keenly. Do you say, in your capacity as representing the landlords of the Highlands, that it is their desire that the language should be extinguished?—

Inverness.

George Malcolm.

No; I say that I here represent the landlords of that Association only on general matters. I have not consulted them upon such a point as whether they would have the Gaelic language maintained or not.

53,634. You do not commit them to that opinion? —No.

[ADJOURNED.]

Under reference to question 53,338, p. 1352, the Secretary wrote to Mr Malcolm for a list of the office-bearers and members of the Highland Property Association, and was supplied with the following :—

THE HIGHLAND PROPERTY ASSOCIATION.

President—The Duke of Atholl, K.T.
Vice-President—Cameron of Lochiel.

Members of Council—The Duke of Portland; The Earl of Ancaster; Duncan Darroch, Esq., of Torridon; Sir G. Macpherson Grant, Bart.; Sir John Fowler, Bart., K.C.M.G.; Charles Murray, Esq., of Lochcarron.

List of Members—The Countess Dowager of Seafield; Lady Scott, of North Harris; Lady Matheson, of the Lews; Lady Gordon Cathcart, of Cluny, &c.; Mrs Chisholm, of Chisholm; Mrs Ellice, of Glengarry and Glenquoich; Mrs Stuart, of Dalness; Mrs Wood, of Raasay; The Duke of Richmond and Gordon, K.G.; The Duke of Atholl, K.T.; The Duke of Portland; The Duke of Sutherland; The Duke of Westminster, K.G.; The Duke of Fife, K.T.; The Marquis of Huntly; The Earl of Morton; The Earl of Moray; The Earl of Airlie; The Earl of Zetland; The Earl of Ancaster; The Lord Lovat; The Lord Middleton; The Lord Macdonald; The Lord Abinger; The Lord Burton; Sir John R. G. Sinclair, Bart.; Sir C. W. A. F. Ross, Bart.; Sir John W. Ramsden, Bart.; Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Bart.; Sir H. B. Meux, Bart.; Sir G. Macpherson-Grant, Bart.; Sir Kenneth J. Matheson, Bart.; Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, Bart.; Sir John Fowler, Bart., K.C.M.G.; Sir Thomas D. Brodie, Bart.; T. W. Murray Allan, Esq., of Glenfeochan; J. E. B. Baillie, Esq., of Dochfour; Hamar Bass, Esq., of Needwood, M.P.; Arthur Bignold, Esq., of Loch Rosque; Robert Birkbeck, Esq., of Loch Hourn; E. S. Bowlby, Esq., of Knoydart; Lieut.-Gen. Burroughs, of Rousay; Cameron of Lochiel; A. J. H. Campbell, Esq., of Dunstaffnage; J. Campbell, Esq., of Jura; Richard Henry Combe, Esq., of Strathconon; J. C. Cunningham, Esq., of Foyers; William Ogilvy Dalgleish, Esq., of Coulin; Duncan Darroch, Esq., of Torridon; Captain Davidson, of Cantray; Henry Evans, Esq., Jura Forest; J. Douglas Fletcher, Esq., of Rosehaugh; Colonel Gardyne, of Glenforsa; I. Murray Grant, Esq., of Glenmoriston; Edward S. Greaves, Esq., of Glen Etive; John Hargreaves, Esq., Gaick Forest; James Head, Esq., of Inverailort; Highfield Trustees, per A. D. M. Black, W.S.; John M. Keiller, Esq., of Morven; Kintail Trustees, per Innes and Mackay, Inverness; A. P. Heywood Lonsdale, Esq., Invereshie; Lachlan Macdonald, Esq., of Skeabost; Captain Burton Mackenzie, of Kilcoy; Hugh Mackenzie, Esq., of Dundonnell; J. Hugh Mackenzie, Esq., Yr., of Calgary; Osgood H. Mackenzie, Esq., of Inverewe; W. D. Mackenzie, Esq., of Farr; Captain Mackenzie, of Ord; The Mackintosh; Æ. Mackintosh, Esq., of Balnespick; Maclaine, of Lochbuie; Macleod, of Macleod; Rev. D. Macpherson, of Glendale; J. Wingfield Malcolm, Esq., of Poltalloch; Charles Murray, Esq., of Lochcarron; Arthur W. Nicholson, Esq., of Arisaig; A. G. Pirie, Esq., of Leckmelm; Charles Robertson, Esq., of Kindeace; Walter Shoolbred, Esq., of Wyvis; W. S. Thomson-Sinclair, Esq., of Freswick; T. Valentine Smith, Esq., of Ardtornish; W. Sopper, Esq., of Dunmaglass; James Lorn Stewart, Esq., of Coll; John Stirling, Esq., of Fairburn; E. G. Fraser-Tytler, Esq., of Aldourie; Appin Trustees, per John Sutherland.

Secretary—Geo. Malcolm, Invergarry, N.B.

SIXTY-SECOND SITTING. Dingwall.

DINGWALL, September 4, 1894.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman*,
MICHAEL HUGH SHAW STEWART, Esq., M.P.
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
JOHN MACLEOD, Esq.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary*.

DUNCAN DARROCH of Torridon (58)—*examined*. Duncan Darroch.

53,635. *The Chairman.*—You have a written statement, I believe?—Yes.

53,635A. Kindly read it to us?

Notes for Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands, 1892).

If I were to have to confine myself strictly to the letter of your instructions I would hardly be justified in appearing before you, or of making any statement to you, as I do not think it would take more than a few words or a few minutes of inspection to convince you that none of my deer forest 'is capable of being 'cultivated to profit or otherwise advantageously 'occupied by crofters or small tenants.' But as I notice that statements of a more general nature have been accepted by you, and as I presented a pretty full account of the results of deer foresting at Torridon to Lord Napier's Commission, perhaps you will allow me to touch on the history of the place since 1883, as I think a good deal of what I have to say bears not very indirectly on the subject submitted to you by the Government.

I must begin by saying that the anticipations of that time have been largely disappointed by the unforeseen and lamentable depression in agricultural affairs, and mainly in the price of cattle.

For instance, when I handed in my report in 1883, the people were getting for their stirks £7, 10s. and for two-year olds £13, in 1886 a good stirk would only fetch £2, 10s., while in 1893 an extra good stirk fetched only from 25s. to 30s., an inferior beast which would have fetched £6 in 1883 was quite unsaleable, and I myself sold excellent two and three-year old beasts at Dingwall in 1892 for 55s. per head.

In the year 1886, after the passing of the Crofters Act, I had meetings with my people, and found they were ready to agree with me as to rent, without calling in the Crofters Commission, and we agreed on the rent of £2, 15s., instead of £4, which reduction in face of the 66 per cent. depreciation in the price of cattle seemed to be reasonable enough; and in drawing out the leases I instructed my agents to make the rent £2, 10s., instead of the sum agreed on, so as to make sure of meeting them fairly.

The reduction of rent thus made amounted to 35 per cent. over the whole estate, and it is instructive to compare this sum with the amount of reduction I voluntarily made on my Renfrewshire estate, to tenants under twenty-one years' leases, where adjusting the amount of reduction to the circumstances of each separate case, I found that 31 per cent. over all proved satisfactory to both parties, and as the south country tenants do not depend on the sale of stock the reduction seem to be about in the proportion one would expect; and I think we may judge from this of the justice of the accusation sometimes made, that the crofters must have been robbed before these reductions were made, as the southern tenants who entered into formal contracts of their own free will had to have their rents reduced almost in the same

proportion as the crofters whose rents were fixed by the proprietor, and if the crofter was robbed the other must have been robbed too and that with his eyes fully open.

These rents under the crofter leases were found to be 'fair rents' by the Crofters Commission.

As also the Wester and Inver-Alligin crofters were very desirous of keeping sheep, and as that part of the ground was always being trespassed on by sheep from the neighbouring estate, and had always been reserved for crofters' stock by me, I agreed to allow them to keep a limited amount of sheep, so many per croft, thus trying to avoid the evils I referred to in my evidence given to Lord Napier's Commission (p. 2986), of one man having a large flock, while his neighbour, paying the same rent, has only one or two. Now, owing to the action of the Crofters Commission, the crofters have no restriction of any kind on the amount of sheep stock kept, and I have many bitter complaints brought before me of the crops of those who have no sheep being depastured by the sheep belonging to those who have a large quantity, and who refuse to herd them, while all pay for equal shares in the pasture.

At the time of entering into my lease with the crofters in 1887, arrears had begun to mount up, and it became a serious question how to deal with such arrears, especially as it appeared from the action of the Crofters Commission that a certain percentage, generally a very heavy one, was sure to be wiped off; and, however this might be forced upon the Commission as the only way of dealing with very poor men who had actually spent the money, and who would be entirely ruined unless some such course were to be pursued, it appeared to me to be a great hardship on the crofters who had gone on paying their rents through all the agitation.

I was glad therefore to find a way out of the difficulty by giving a year's rent to all the crofters on the occasion first of Her Majesty's Jubilee, and secondly of certain occurrences in my family in which the crofters sympathised in a very kindly and cordial manner; and I then was able to put pressure on those in arrears and made them pay up, partly in cash and partly in works on the estate for their own benefit, a course in which I met with the full approbation of their neighbours who had not withheld their rents, and who got the full benefit of the reduction thus made by me.

At the termination of the five years' lease half of my crofters, all of them being Wester or Inver-Alligin people, applied to the Crofters Commission for fair rents, and as they employed an agent and would not discuss matters with me, I had to employ one also.

The Commission found that the agreements were valid under Section 5 of the Crofters Act, and that the arrears, all of which had been incurred since the leases came in force, were not competently before the Commission. These arrears, I may mention, have since been dealt with by me, and have all been settled.

The Commissioners also found that the rent was a 'fair rent,' and ordered a fence to be erected between the crofters and the forest, the proprietor to find the materials and the crofters to do all the carriages from the shore and all other work necessary for the construction of the fence; and a joint minute was signed by the respective agents agreeing to this on behalf of their clients.

At the next rent day my agent inquired of each crofter if he was willing to perform his part of what the Commission ordered, and I had to report to the Crofters Commission as follows:—'It came out clearly 'that, as to the labour of erection, some would do work 'at some time of the year, and others at other times, 'some not at all, so that if we relied on them the fence 'would probably never be completed at all, certainly 'not in the period prescribed by you. Most of them, 'however, were willing to carry materials, and looking 'at the whole circumstances I found myself compelled 'to contract with Messrs Main for the whole erection 'of the fence. They are to have most of the 'material on the ground next week so that the crofters 'can carry it at their leisure, in their slack time. I 'will then report to you those who refuse to perform 'their share of the carrying.'

It was then clearly seen how difficult it is to get illiterate people to understand the nature of an agreement, for though the Inver-Alligin people punctually and willingly performed their share of the work, the Wester-Alligin crofters utterly refused to touch it, and said that if Balallan promised anything of the sort in their name they had never authorised him, and he had better do it himself.

This will give your Commission some notion of the burdens likely to be laid on proprietors in connection with extension of holdings; as in this case, dealing with a friendly and honest set of people, I, by their sheer ignorance of business, was compelled to do nearly all the work they had promised to do.

At the next rent day I employed my agent to collect the rents from those who had applied to the Crofters Commission, while with the rest I pursued my old custom of collecting the rents alone, without any professional assistance; but there was no longer any reason to interpose anyone between us, and on the next rent day, 1893, I was glad to find that my return to the old personal relations was warmly welcomed by all, and that the only cloud which outside agitation had in all these years been able to raise between us had quite passed away.

It is worth while glancing for a moment at the impressions and inducements which had led them to waste my money and theirs in engaging agents to arrange what could easily have been arranged between us quietly as of old.

The reasons they had for going in for the Crofters Commission are really rather instructive: First, putting aside the idea of getting a reduction of rent, which I don't think many expected, the rent having been adjusted by themselves, there was an expectation among the ringleaders, whence derived I cannot tell, that they would be able to have the ground the same as the proprietors, letting the shootings and keeping the rents to themselves; the ringleaders here hoped to get Ben-Alligin and let it as a deer forest, and to obtain the right of catching salmon; the quieter souls who were contented with their lot were told that if they did not apply to the Crofters Commission they would be shut out from all benefits under the Crofters Act, and it was ludicrous to see the disappointment of the leaders, when they found that those who had declined to go with them had shares in the common holdings preserved for them in the findings of the Commission, while they also avoided the privilege of paying an agent to keep those shares for them.

The third reason was that pressure of a less reputable sort, not at all unconnected with threats of positive violence to limb and property, was brought to bear on the people, especially on old men and poor women, and of this I am well informed, having it from the lips of the threatened parties themselves.

Before quitting this part of my subject I may perhaps be permitted to say, that as far as I have been able to follow the action of the Crofters Commission the decisions appear to me to have been given with an earnest desire to carry out their very difficult task in an equitable manner. In my own case I expected my rents would be raised, while my crofters hoped they would be lowered—as we were both disappointed there is a certain amount of presumption that the decision was not altogether an unreasonable one; and before proceeding to deal with the circumstances of my own forest, I would like to say a word on the general question of what is called Migration.

Parliament, by the Crofters Act, has decided that to meet certain evils affecting part of the crofter population land rights should be taken from proprietors and given to crofters, without compensation; and I think that most people will allow that the landlords thus affected have, as a rule, accepted the situation, and endeavoured loyally to assist in carrying out the purposes of the Act, without any petty evasion.

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

But, as Lochiel remarks in his memorandum annexed to the report of Lord Napier's Commission, of which he was a member :—'To come now to another 'class of proprietors—those who have managed their 'estates on strictly economical principles, without any 'regard to the wishes of the inhabitants; in other 'words, those who, many years ago, cleared the lands 'and converted them into sheep walks. These are the 'men against whom the indignation of the crofters and 'the crofters' friends have been mainly directed, and 'they will get off scot free. Their people have already 'gone. There are no townships to enlarge—no popu-'lation by which to form new townships. The pro-'posal now under consideration will not affect them in 'any way.'

If it be necessary for the public weal that land rights should be taken from one class of proprietors in the Highlands, it is difficult to see what reason the neighbouring proprietors, such as Lochiel refers to, have for claiming or expecting exceptional treatment—and it seems to me injudicious, to say the least of it, if there are any suitable lands to be had on such estates, not to devise machinery for utilising them in a similar manner.

I have for a long time been of the opinion that crofters had the first equitable claim to arable land lying near congested districts, with some reservations, and it was on account of my not being able to help the crofters in the place where I was that I determined to purchase an estate where I could carry out my views—long before most of the crofters' so-called friends stirred even a tongue in their favour—and, as I detailed at length to Lord Napier's Commission, I swept out the sheep and restored the arable and pasture to the crofters on the Torridon Estate.

I believe myself that there is very little land in the deer forests that can be so utilised, and if that be the case, it is surely a pity to allow so much clamour to go on, when so small a concession might suffice to remove any tangible grievance on that head.

I come now to the precise object of your inquiry, and that, as affecting the Torridon Estate, is, I presume, whether any of the forest 'is capable of being cultivated 'to profit or otherwise advantageously occupied by 'crofters or small tenants.'

Certainly none of it can be cultivated, as there is no arable land at all in the forest; as I explained in 1883, my first act when I came to Torridon was to give the people every inch of arable land on the Torridon Estate, except the portion required for the Home Farm, and since that time portions of the Home Farm have been cut off for the Fasag crofters.

But can the forest be advantageously grazed by crofters or small tenants?

The total area of my deer forest is 11,630 acres, and it is mountainous ground, with very steep rocky hills; there is no ground in it that ever has been or can be tilled, and no part fit for sheep wintering except the southern slopes above Loch Torridon, so that it is considered by competent persons that not more than 800 sheep at the outside could be wintered on it. The present rent in the Valuation Roll is £500.

If let to crofters as a sheep ground, judging from the values put by the Crofters Commission on other grounds, I should expect that the Crofters Commission would not put more than 4d. an acre on it—say about £193—a loss to me of a very large annual sum of money; but if it can be shown that this ground would be advantageous to the crofters I suppose it will be thought fair that I should be despoiled of my means, while the cabinet ministers who direct these measures against us feeble folks in the north can enjoy their more fertile acres without fear of disturbance. But let us look closer at the question from an economic point of view, and first let us look at the question of rates.

At present, in the parish of Applecross, the deer forests are valued at £2440, while all the other subjects amount to £2028, so that the forests pay 54 per cent. of the rates; if my forest rent is reduced over 60 per cent. I presume the other forest rents in the parish will suffer in like proportion, and £1464 would come off the total valuation, leaving it £3004 instead of £4468, and to raise the £1000 a year necessary for the poor and school rates, a rate of 6s. 8d. would have to be imposed instead of the 4s. which they at present average.

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

The whole of the rates on the £2440 are paid by the proprietors, but in the rent of £976 to be substituted for it half would be payable by the crofters, and this means certainly less punctual and in many cases entire failure of payment.

And further, if the Government means to drive out the proprietors, and their shooting tenants, by abolishing the industry for the cultivation of which their houses have been built, and their estates equipped, it will soon be found that they have succeeded in driving out all the moneyed people, and that nearly all the rates will have to be paid by the crofters, which will mean that as comparatively little can be got from crofters, and nothing from landlords who have been made bankrupt, the indigent poor and the education of the people will have to be paid for out of the Consolidated Fund; a result for which future Chancellors of the Exchequer will hardly bless the present Government.

Next as to the sheep stock—here we are on no uncertain ground, as I obtained from the proprietor's shepherds, shortly after I bought Torridon in 1873, statistics as to the yield of this ground in mutton and wool, which you will find detailed in my evidence before Lord Napier's Commission (pp. 2899 and 2901).

The produce of the 6000 sheep here was £1156 value of mutton, and £855 value of wool, or say £2000 in round numbers; that is, each sheep on the Torridon ground produced 6s. 8d.; prices have fallen since that time, wool being only half the value, and the calculation was made from the large sheep of a well-appointed sheep farm, so that the sheep the crofter would keep would certainly produce much less, but we may accept the figures as assuredly not too low an estimate.

The purchase price of sheep to stock the ground cannot be taken at less than 26s. a head, it is to be presumed that 5 per cent. is the least rate of interest that they could hope to pay, and, as for the number required, Lord Napier's Commission lays it down (*Report*, p. 101) that not more than 3 acres of pasture apiece should be allowed for them, so that 3800 would be required for the 11,600 acres here. The average price of wintering in the low country is from 7s. to 10s., so we may take it at 8s.; this was always a serious drawback in these parts, and there was besides the great loss by sheep falling over the rocks, they say amounting to eight or ten at every gathering; altogether, though the former proprietor had all the low ground kept for sheep wintering, the very ground that my people now cultivate, it is said that he lost from £500 to £600 a year on the sheep farm, and I am told that all sheep farmers here became bankrupts.

At least four shepherds at £50 each would be required to work the ground.

Supposing the forest let to crofters for 3800 sheep the figures would be :—

Cost of wintering 3000 sheep at 8s.,	£1200	
Interest on price of stock, £4940, .	247	
Rent of 11,620 acres at 4d., . .	193	
Occupier's rates, parish, 3s. 4d., county, 6d.	37	
Wages of four shepherds, . .	200	
Receipts from sale of mutton and wool, ...	——	£1877 1266
Loss on farm, allowing nothing for smearing, dipping, or losses, .		£611

Supposing it were let for 2000 sheep, one to every 6 acres :—

Wintering 1200 sheep at 8s., .	£480	
Interest on £2600 price of stock, .	130	
Rent and rates as above, . .	230	
Wages of four shepherds, . .	200	
	——	£1,040
Receipts from wool and mutton, .		666
Loss, besides dipping, smearing, and losses, ...		£374

If the crofters just let the stock grow to 300 sheep or so, as they do now, and herded them themselves, the account would stand:—Rent and rates £230, less receipts from wool and mutton £100, resulting in a dead loss to the crofters of £130 per annum.

It may be, however, that the Government may mean to make lands available to crofters by finding the money to buy stock at the expense of the public; one can hardly believe this when one notices all they have done for the crofters, for by the Crofters Act, described by a minister as a 'Generous Act,' not one penny was given to the poor districts, all that was done was to redistribute the property already there; and when a piteous appeal was urged for supplying the clamant want of roads and paths, a miserable £3000 was given for all crofterdom, while a wealthy railway company got £45,000 to help it to make a line which it had to make in its own interests.

But even if this were done, and 3 per cent. charged for interest, and if the land were to be given rent free (for if our property is to be confiscated why stop short of that?), even then the loss, if the place were to be fully stocked, would be over £300 a year, and this sheer loss, cash out of pocket.

But further, if the landlord is to be ruined, and the industry for which he has equipped his estate is to be prescribed, with his impoverishment will disappear the large sum now spent in wages—some £400 a year in my case.

So that by fining the country at large to find stock for the crofters, and by absolutely confiscating the landlord's property bought in open market, the crofters would be landed in an annual deficiency of at least £700 a year.

In other forests it may be different, I can only suppose it is when we have men getting up in the House of Commons and saying as Mr Seymour Keay said about ten days ago, that:—'Nearly 300,000 acres 'of land that could be cultivated had been added to the 'deer forests of Scotland in the last ten or twelve years.' Where this land is I do not know at all, and we hope to receive some instruction by comparing Mr Keay's estimate with the facts as brought out in your report.

But some doubtless think that the getting rid of the hateful landlords is quite return enough, especially as these people who think so probably would not suffer the loss; but I rather think that there is some little doubt as to whether the crofters think so. From what they say here I think they will be inclined to turn on the agitators if they don't get Government money to stock their holdings, and all the land for nothing, and will say even more than they do now that they have been just humbugged for political purposes. On the other hand I find my people still coming to me, and trusting me, as of old; remarking that it would be a poor day for this country if there were not a proprietor to look after things; so far from taking the kind advice of the agitators to destroy game, I find them this year priding themselves on the amount of grouse to be found on their pasture; and I am sure that the welcome which never fails to greet us on our return home is not an insincere one.

It is not a very favourable time for extending cattle grazings in the north, as the industry is really very much at a discount just now—prices of cattle are miserable, and last winter's inclement cold and wet weather destroyed a number of both sheep and cattle. I am told that some 20 per cent., or more, of the crofters' sheep died last winter.

Two entire crofts on my estate, and several portions, are now vacant, with no one to take them up. Last year a smart young fellow, son of a most respected crofter on my estate, married, and I asked him if he would like to take up one of the vacant crofts. 'No 'thank you, sir,' said he, 'I know what that means— 'spending my whole life in running after a few sheep, 'and never bettering my family.' So he has gone out into the world.

I stated to Lord Napier's Commission that, owing to my system of ameliorations, nine improved houses, with proper chimneys and practicable windows, had been built by the crofters, and that more were in course of construction. There are now 32 on the Torridon Estate, of which three are slated, six roofed with corrugated iron, and eight with felt, and others are in process of erection.

In connection with this comes the very frequent complaint that the Crofters Act has done them no good here, for before that Act their landlord was able to lend them small sums of money to help them in building, which course as they are independent of him, he thinks it not prudent to adopt now. They also wish their proprietor to act as of old in settling disputes, and think the law must be very bad which prevents his doing so; it is in vain to point out to them that they can adopt the Novar Act, of which I have furnished them with copies: it remains here a dead letter.

Then there is the getting them out of the miserable old system of run-rig, and getting each family on its own compact lot; this I was gradually overtaking, when the Crofters Act came and crystallised the multitudinous Alligin patches in the condition in which they still remain, as though many are anxious to consolidate, and every now and then appeal to me to help them, some few object, and there is no power anywhere to deal with the matter.

The population is practically the same now as in 1883, as will be seen in the appended table, noting that the figures for former years differ from the ones given by me to Lord Napier (Minutes of Evidence, p. 2905), as I sold Ben-Damph, a portion of the old Torridon Estate, to the late Earl of Lovelace, in 1885.

The amount of cattle has slightly diminished, but now there are 290 sheep besides, and the people say that there would have been nearly 400 but for the deaths last winter. The rent is nearly down to what it was in 1873, the land held by the crofters being much more in extent, but the arrears are only £28 as against £255 in 1873, and most of these small arrears are in process of being settled.

One mistake in the report of my evidence in 1883 I should like to note. In Q. 42,837, 'thirty-five lbs.' is put by mistake for £35, which was what I said.

I think I have shown that my forest is hardly 'available' for the purposes you are dealing with, but perhaps you would ask those who sent you whether there is not 'available' ground on their own estates where sheep could winter, and crofters have a chance of making a really good thing of it. I can't help thinking, for instance, that the lands of Dalmeny would profit the landless crofter far more than the bare rocks of Torridon, and if they are to get other people's land given to them, why not good land? I suppose it is because it is easier to deal with the few than the many that interests which those who sent you dare not touch cause this land division scheme to be confined to the six so-called crofter counties, and that English people think they can afford to deprive us of our lands, hoping that by casting us to the wolves they may save their fertile estates from the land nationalisers.

It is curious how a man should become almost a criminal by the fact of his risking his money in buying land in the north with a view to benefiting the country and the people; had we put our money in the funds, spent it all on selfish pleasures, and gone into Parliament to attack other people, then it seems we would have been such as the powers that be delight to honour.

If I am banished from Torridon I can anyhow retain, as long as I live, the happy recollection of my relations with the honest, simple, and kindly Torridon people; of seeing those who had no place of worship, no means of grace, supplied by the united efforts of proprietor and people with a comely church, and regular preaching, so that the eminent Free Church ministers who come here tell me that there is no such united and intelligent congregation in the north; of seeing them fight ecclesiastical tyranny with me, shoulder to shoulder, till our cause was won; of seeing a down-trodden, impoverished, and hopeless people gradually rising to something like comfort and prosperity.

(Signed) DUNCAN DARROCH.

Torridon, 3rd Sept. 1894.

Dingwall.

Duncan Darroch.

Year.	Families.	Population.	Cattle.	Sheep.	Rent.	Arrears.	Improved Houses.
					£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1873	91	356	82	none	126 16 6	255 14 1	none
1883	97	419	167	none	207 6 0	none	9
1894	94	418	143	290	132 0 0	28 0 0	32

53,636. You say in your paper:—'I have for a long 'time been of the opinion that crofters had the 'first equitable claim to arable land lying near congested 'districts.' Now, would you say on what you hold that equitable claim to be based?—I think that as the old inhabitants of the country they had a certain amount of claim.

53,637. 'To arable land lying near congested dis-'tricts, with some reservations,' what are the reservations?—I think that if the granting of that claim would distinctly spoil any large industry it should be exercised with caution.

53,638. In whose hands would you place the determination of that question?—I am only making suggestions for your Commission; I only wish to give evidence of things as I know them. I have not gone much into the question as it affects the rest of Scotland, because I think it is better to speak about what one knows oneself.

53,639. Is there any other reservation in what you suggested?—I cannot remember any just now.

53,640. You say that the total area of the deer forest is 11,630 acres, and I see these figures agree with those given in the Parliamentary return, the official return made in the year 1891?—Yes.

53,641. We may take it from that, I suppose, that there has been no afforestment of land since you purchased the estate?—Oh, yes, I afforested the whole of it; it was all under sheep when I purchased it, all the low ground was taken up for the sheep wintering, and the people were therefore starved. That is why I bought the estate,—in order to sweep away the sheep. I got plenty of abuse for this; they thought I was a sort of maniac to favour crofters instead of sheep.

53,642. What year was that?—In 1873.

53,643. Then, when you purchased the estate, the whole of the land that is now forest was under sheep?—Yes, and nearly all the arable land that the people now cultivate was under sheep. The low ground was a necessity for wintering purposes, otherwise the farm would be a total ruin to any farmer.

53,644. How many farms were there,—one or more?—At the time I purchased the estate it was nearly all in one farm, but there was the remains of a farm on part of it. By the remains of a farm I mean that there was supposed to be a tenant, but he was bankrupt. But all the sheep on the estate were sold at the order of the late proprietor.

53,645. Do you happen to remember how many sheep were cleared off?—You will find that stated in my evidence before Lord Napier's Commission, where all details are fully given.

53,646. Kindly turn to Vol. IV., p. 2905; is that what you refer to?—Yes, that is what I refer to.

53,647. The evidence going down in our records connects the two statements with each other?—Yes. I thought it better not to refer to this in detail, as it is all in print.

53,648. Does that statement say how much land was given to crofters, either as arable land or grazing?—Yes, I have detailed the whole thing there. It does not exactly say how much was given to them for pasture, because at that time they had the right to pasture so many cattle; but there was no interference between them and the forest and they could do pretty much as they liked. They had a right to graze so many beasts, and if they did not go too far there was no complaint; but then, when they applied to the Crofters Commission it was seen that that state of things could not remain, and the Commissioners ordered a fence; so that the crofters do not now get the same benefit from the forest, but what they have they keep to themselves strictly.

53,649. Do you happen to remember the extent of this?—3338 acres were given to the Alligin crofters,—that is the only piece specially dedicated to them; they have 71 acres arable and 3338 acres of outrun between the two townships.

53,650. That was land previously under sheep, and forming part of a larger area which is now forest?—Yes.

53,651. And that part you allocated to the crofters?—Entirely to the crofters.

53,652. Partly as hill grazing I suppose, and partly as arable land or reclaimable land?—They have got all the arable land; they are all allowed to use it all.

53,653. They had that before?—Part of it. All these matters are detailed in my evidence before Lord Napier's Commission.

53,654. Did the operations you then carried out have the effect of extending both their arable and their hill pasture?—Enormously, as you will see in the printed evidence; but this fencing off of the land was a novelty. There is one other township on the estate where they did not apply to the Commission and where there has been no boundary made at all, their cows still feeding in the forest. That you will see if any of you go down to Torridon.

53,655. How many crofters are on your estate?—You will find I give the total at the end,—there are ninety-one families.

53,656. Are you able to say what is the average size arable of each holding?—It is about 1½ acres.

53,657. And possibly you happen to remember the average rent?—£2, 10s. is the rent that was fixed by the Crofters Commission.

53,658. That, of course, included both the arable and the hill grazing?—Yes, perhaps I ought to have read the tables, which are appended to my statement.

53,659. How many new houses have been erected since the passing of the Crofters Act?—I can hardly find that out; they have been building them by degrees. Most of these were commenced before the passing of the Act, and especially as I do not now lend them money they take a great deal longer to build them.

35,660. May I take it this way, that a great many new houses have been built from the foundation since the Act, and a considerable further number have been repaired and improved since that time?—Yes, that is quite true.

53,661. Would you say that that building and improving is due in part at least to the operation of the Act?—I don't think so at all; I think it has rather kept them back. They say it has kept them back, because they can no longer get money from me to help them as they did before. To any man who liked to build, I gave documents promising meliorations,—he was to have the house valued if he was turned out, and all the houses were built on that footing; so that in that respect the Crofters Act confers no special protection on them. At that time I had the whole authority in my hands and I could advance money, and now that that is so no longer, they cannot understand it. They say it is a bad law if Mr Darroch cannot advance money.

53,662. They are quite aware that they have a statutory claim for compensation on renunciation of tenancy or on removal?—Perfectly.

53,663. The arrears stand in 1894 at £28, I suppose you have every hope of recovering the most of that?—No, there are only three rents there due by those who applied to the Crofters Commission, £2, 10s. each, or £7, 10s. in all, which certainly will come in; but there are one or two very old people who are just quivering on the verge of giving up the land. They say they will sell off their cattle and give Mr Darroch his own; but they will probably renounce their holdings and take simply a patch of potato ground.

53,664. You referred to the matter of grouse on crofters' pasture. Is the grouse shooting on the crofters' pasture on your estate very good?—No; very bad.

53,665. Be the quality of the sport what it may, are you of opinion that the sport does not suffer at all from the crofters being there and having sheep upon that pasture?—Not the least; not a bit.

53,666. We would like if you would give us the average of the crofters' outrun?—One would have to calculate the figures; dividing out the 3338.

53,667. I suppose each crofter's holding has an outrun pertaining to itself and the crofter also has a share of the grazing?—They hold it all in common.

53,668. Have the holdings not each an outrun pertaining to themselves?—No; that is what I was trying to get before the Crofters Act came, but now one man may have forty pieces of arable and the pasture is all together. Under the runrig system, if there is a good piece of ground it is divided into as many shares as there are people in the township. At Alligin it is in a wretched state of muddle. The crofters at Inver-Alligin, however, have divided it themselves and are doing very well; and at Fasag, which is near the post office, they have divided it themselves.

53,669. I observed that in your statement you made a reference to Dalmeny; I confess I regret that you should have done so, and I would like very much if you could see your way to withdraw it?—Well, it does seem a little rough that we who are trying to do our best here should be attacked, while gentlemen who direct the Government and rule the storm against us go untouched; but certainly as you appeal to me I am very pleased to withdraw the allusion. May I say 'more southern lands' or 'lands elsewhere' instead of Dalmeny? I feel that I am conceding a great deal to you. [*Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You withdraw it simply because his lordship has appealed to you, and not because you see the unfitness of it?—Certainly.]

53,670. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Can you suggest any remedy to obviate the injustice of one crofter keeping more sheep than his neighbour on the common ground?—Well, they have a remedy at present, in the shape of the Novar Act. There are two ways of putting these things in order: the one is the personal government, which has been upset by the Crofters Act,—that is gone and past praying for, good or bad; and the only alternative now is, by degrees, that perhaps they will adopt the Novar Act. In the meantime there is nothing to be done. I have given them all copies of that Act, and talked to them on the subject. It is quite true that the landlord himself can take the initiative under the Novar Act, but that is a thing they might not like, as they might regard it as an interference. I believe it is the case that the landlord can himself apply to have the Act put in force.

53,671. Failing the appointment of a committee, the landlord can apply?—I feel that it would be rather putting a slur on the crofters to take that step, when they have a statutory right to appoint a committee themselves; I think it is hardly for the landlord to interfere. The question is somewhat a delicate one; it is not a nice thing to have to go to the Sheriff and apply for the appointment of a committee.

53,672. *The Chairman.*—It is not to the Sheriff, but to the Crofters Commission, and the Crofters Commission have several applications of that kind, where the crofters have failed to do so within the specified time, and the proprietor approached the Commission to get a committee appointed?—And you found no ill-feeling result?

53,673. Not as far as I know?—That would be an answer to your question; if the landlord thought it would not give rise to more trouble he would probably make the application.

53,674. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Have you any opinion to offer on the subject of club farms generally?—Well, we tried a club farm on my estate, and it came to utter grief.

53,675. From what cause?—The real cause, as far as I can make out from the people, was a general muddle; I could not make out anything else.

53,676. They had no confidence in it themselves?—No, they would not appoint a regular shepherd, and no one would go out to gather unless the rest did the same.

53,677. Of course it would be bound to fail if they did not agree to appoint a shepherd?—They would not agree to do it. There is a serious difficulty met with in dealing with these people, as you see from what I told you about carting the materials. Lots of them would have done it if their neighbours would agree, but they found that others would not, so they did not, and thus it dropped. That is the difficulty with these communities.

53,678. But I suppose you would consider that, in a district where the crofters did agree to appoint a committee to manage a club farm, that would be the best way of dealing with the common pasture?—Well, they really do now make a sort of club farm of it. For instance, at Inveralligin, where they have split up the arable land, the pastures are held in common, and they have a shepherd, so that it is something like a club farm, only each has got his separate arable.

53,679. And is the management of the sheep there fairly satisfactory?—Yes, I think it is fairly satisfactory.

53,680. *Mr Sutherland.*—Have you given us any indication of the distribution of the land among the people on the estate, Mr Darroch? I have been looking at the statement you submitted to Lord Napier's Commission, and I have not found the statistics as to acreage and population?—I thought I gave the acreage to Lord Napier's Commission.

53,681. Could you inform me if the following areas are correct:—Deer forest 11,630; crofters' pasture, 3338 acres?—There is a good deal more than that. There is pasture on my home farm and the other townships.

53,682. But the remainder is in your own occupation?—Yes. The total area of the estate is 16,800 acres: the forest occupies 11,630 acres and the remainder amounts to 5170 acres.

53,683. Of these 5170 acres how much have the crofters got?—There has been marked off, by the Crofters Commission, for the crofters, 3338 acres, leaving 1832 over.

53,684. Where is that?—That is mainly at the head of the loch.

53,685. In whose occupation?—Partly in the possession of the Fasag crofters and partly mine; we hold it in common, in a sense.

53,686. How many families are concerned in the 3338 acres?—I forget the population of Fasag: it is something like twenty families. The whole of the arable land on the estate, put together, comes to about 148 acres. There are about 91 acres in the occupation of the crofters, and 60 in the Home Farm, and all the rest is rocks and pasture.

53,687. Roughly speaking, then, out of an estate of 16,800 acres, 13,000 are in the occupation of one man and 3338 in the possession of the remainder?—The most of the portion you can make anything of is in the occupation of the crofters; the big acreage you talk of is land that I show to be utterly useless.

53,688. I am talking of the distribution of population on this area of land?—But you cannot put population on the top of these high hills.

53,689. You could occupy it for grazing. But I am talking merely of the distribution of the population. On an estate of 16,800 acres, the number of families is 91?—That was the figure in 1873; it is now 94.

53,690. And one individual has got 13,000 acres?—Yes.

53,691. I took it, from your statement, that your estate contains just the land in your own possession and the land under crofters; you have no holdings of an intermediate size?—None at all. I was trying to get them into larger holdings when the Crofters Act came and crystallised things as they were.

53,692. There are some points in your statement as to which I would like some explanation; these I will take in the order in which you put them. The rents were reduced, you say, from £4 to £2, 5s.?—Yes.

53,693. By voluntary re-arrangement with the tenants?—Yes.

53,694. What was the date of that?—It was in the end of 1886 or the beginning of 1887.

53,695. Subsequent to the passing of the Act?—Oh yes, it was after the passing of the Crofters Act.

53,696. And it coincided, very strangely, with the date of the passing of that Act?—Yes.

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

53,697. How long were you in possession of the estate before that?—Twelve years. It was the same time as I made the reduction of rents on my Renfrewshire estate,—35 per cent. in the one place and 31 per cent. in the other; the reduction of rents at Torridon synchronized with the reduction of rents in Renfrewshire. Immediately after Lord Napier's Commission came, down went the price of cattle, and we had to take notice of that, whether you passed an Act or not. Of course it did coincide with the Act, and you may make the most of that if you like.

53,698. What struck me was that, if the rents were too high in 1886, they were too high before?—Oh, no, because that was the year when the price of cattle was at its height.

53,699. But what cattle could they sell off a holding of an acre and a half?—A man always raised a stirk, for which he got £7, 10s., and to pay a rent of £4 out of that was pretty easy. They did not complain at all in 1885; but in 1886 there were violent complaints.

53,700. Did I gather, then, that to those of the people with whom you came to an arrangement in 1886, you gave leases?—Yes, five years' leases.

53,701. What was the object of giving them leases after they had got a permanent lease by Act of Parliament?—Because they said they would rather settle with me than have any outsiders, such as the Crofters Commission, coming between us. They said we had always arranged matters together, and they would prefer continuing to do so. They said, when I settled with them, that the only pity of it was that they did not have it in perpetuity.

53,702. But, under the Act, they have a perpetuity of tenure?—Oh, yes, but they quite understood that.

53,703. But you ought to have explained that?—I did all I could. Our lease was for five years, and when it was ended some of them went to the Commission.

53,704. Would they be precluded, by the existence of this lease, from applying to the Crofters Commission for extension of grazing?—I cannot tell you whether they would have been or not.

53,705. My own impression of the matter—but I am not a lawyer—is that they would?—I do not know at all; I am not a Scottish lawyer, and I cannot tell you.

53,706. But I think it is on the face of the Act, so far as I remember, that if you enter into a lease with the landlord it is supposed to be the same as a decision of the Crofters Commission, and you cannot get an extension of grazing?—Well, they did not seem to be dissatisfied with the leases: they took them before the Crofters Commission, and did not seem to think them in any way interfering with their rights.

53,707. You say:—'It was then clearly seen how 'difficult it is to get illiterate people to understand the 'nature of an agreement'?—Exactly.

53,708. Was that while this transaction of the leases was being carried through?—That was not a case of literate or illiterate; we arranged the subjects of the lease together by word of mouth, and the leases were not long documents, but just contained a few words saying what the holdings were, and each man had a copy of his own lease.

53,709. But you explained the arrangement to them verbally?—I explained verbally what was wanted.

53,710. Do you know whether, while they were signing the leases, they knew they were being excluded by the terms of the lease *de facto* from applying to the Crofters Commission for an extension of their grazings?—I do not know.

53,711. Then, with regard to the arrears that you dealt with. Were these the arrears that had accumulated during the twelve years?—I do not quite follow you.

53,712. You made an arrangement in 1886?—Yes.

53,712A. Was it then that you dealt with the arrears?—Oh, no, I did not deal with them at all.

53,713. Was it subsequent to 1886?—Subsequent to 1886. The arrears had been running on during the crofters' agitation, to a great extent, and were proving rather troublesome; and it was during the five years of the lease that I remitted two years' rent to the whole population, and then I made the people pay up the previous arrears.

53,714. Were they arrears that had accumulated under the lease?—There were some under the lease, but they have been dealt with since.

53,715. By yourself?—Yes.

53,716. In the same way, I presume, as the Crofters Commission deals with arrears?—No, I made them pay those under the lease, because they had had five years of the low rent, and of these, they had had two years' rent remitted altogether, so that they had only three years' rent to pay for the period of five years.

53,717. And did you start the leases clear of arrears?—No, some of them had arrears then; these were worked off.

53,718. So that, if left under the Crofters Act, they would have had the benefit of having the arrears dealt with?—Yes, and the man who would have paid up would have got no advantage, whereas in my arrangement he did: the man who paid his rent got the year's rent back.

53,719. You put a premium on the absence of arrears?—Yes, certainly.

53,720. You spoke of having applied pressure to get the arrears paid. May I ask the nature of the pressure?—Oh, yes, I told them that I should summon them if they did not pay up.

53,721. Did you find it necessary to take any legal measures?—I did not find it necessary to take any legal measures then. I never had any legal questions with my people till after they applied to the Crofters Commission.

53,722. Do you call it legal proceedings if they appeal to the Commission?—Yes, I do; they took an agent against me instead of applying to me personally.

53,723. You do not regard the Crofters Commission in the light of a judicial authority, pure and simple?—Well, it is something of the same sort: when they employ an agent, and won't speak to me themselves, but say 'We refer you to our agent,' then I refer them to my agent. I think that is taking legal proceedings; it may not be, but the question is one merely of definition.

53,724. You say you look upon it as tantamount to taking legal proceedings to appear before the Crofters Commission?—To put the matter in an agent's hands.

53,725. They can apply themselves?—They can, but they did not.

53,726. Would the mere fact of their employing an agent to apply to the Commission change the nature of the thing?—It did very much change the nature. [*The Chairman.*—I think what you mean is that going to the Crofters Commission was not a legal proceeding, but going through an agent was?—Yes.]

53,727. May I ask if you yourself employed an agent?—Yes, I did: seeing that they had employed an agent, I did also.

53,728. Do you carry on your transactions with them through an agent?—Never.

53,729. Have you a factor, may I ask?—No.

53,730. You do not think you suffer much on that account?—No.

53,731. You stated that you had hoped the crofters' rents would have been increased by the Commission?—I did.

53,732. May I ask you what were the grounds on which you hoped so; had prices risen in the meantime?—No, but I offered a large piece of land,—a very considerable increase, which they were to have entirely to themselves without interference, and I thought that, considering the acreage of the ground, I ought to have received some rent for it. I would have got it from outside, in the market, and that is what I call confiscation,—confiscation for the country's good. You have taken my land at a lower rent than I would have given it for.

53,733. But I suppose you are prepared to admit that that sort of confiscation has frequently taken place?—Oh, frequently, but I do not see why we in the north should be the only ones to suffer by it.

53,734. But people object when their property is confiscated?—Certainly I object, and I kick against it, and complain.

53,735. You do not believe in the principle of the Crofters Act?—I have not said that at all.

53,736. But I take it that the whole of your statement here to-day, or a great deal of it, at any rate, was directed to that purpose?—No, I beg your pardon. I am treating with a very special case. I am treating with my own case, which is the only one I know. What is done in other cases I really do not know; it is you who are to judge of that; but I will tell you what the effect is in my own case.

53,737. I think your statements on this matter are very general; I am not finding fault with it, but only calling your attention to it?—They are meant to be special,—not entirely special, but special to the class of people with whom I was dealing.

53,738. Now, coming to the point of your statement where you deal with the rates: I don't know that I followed you so clearly as I would have liked,—perhaps that was my own fault. What is the name of the parish?—Applecross.

53,739. You stated that, in that parish, deer forests paid 54 per cent. of the gross rates?—That is true.

53,740. Can you give us also the proportion of the total acreage which they cover?—I cannot give you that off-hand.

53,741. Don't you see how essential it is to making a proper comparison?—That is for you to look into. I am sorry I cannot give you the figures; I have not got them by me.

53,742. You state generally that 54 per cent. of the rates of the parish of Applecross are borne by deer forests?—That is quite true.

53,743. But you cannot tell me, in order to complete the comparison and make it of any value, what percentage of the total area is under deer forest?—No, I cannot; I could get it for you, but I cannot give it off-hand.

53,744. Have you any idea whatever? Is it more than 54 per cent. of the area of the parish?—Oh, yes, most of the parish is barren; everybody knows that.

53,745. So that land which occupies more than 54 per cent. of the area of the parish pays only 54 per cent. of the rate?—If you could make our hills fertile, and capable of bearing more, of course I would be very much obliged to you; we cannot do it.

53,746. But you might perhaps put them to better advantage?—I don't think so; I think I have shown you that.

53,747. I think we may take it for granted, if that is so, that you ought to be obliged to any person who could make them pay more?—Yes.

53,748. Have you noticed how much more valuable land becomes on which people are situated, and how it increases in the Valuation Roll?—No, not in our parts.

53,749. Have you compared, area by area, the land occupied by crofters and the land occupied by deer forests?—If you take the area of uncultivated waste ground, you could make a very good thing of it.

53,750. It is the tendency of the crofters always to make it arable land?—There is no land in my ground that could be made arable, not an inch that could be tilled which is not tilled.

53,751. When the people were put there first, how much was arable?—Those bits down by the sea, where the burn has brought down a little débris.

53,752. And is the whole of the parish of Applecross in the same condition?—Nearly all of it. I know the place very well, for I am Chairman of the Western District Committee, and I am Chairman of the Parochial Board: there is hardly a place where you could put a spade in.

53,753. This comparison you made applies only to the parish of Applecross?—Only to the parish of Applecross, and only strictly to my own estate,—that there is nothing you can cultivate there which is not already cultivated.

53,754. Then I think you said that, by the withdrawal of the deer forests, the rate would be increased from 4s. to 6s. 8d.?—Yes.

53,755. How do you arrive at that conclusion? Is the present rate 4s.?—About 4s. A penny in the £ raises about £20. We have got to raise so much by means of rates, and instead of getting £4000 odds to raise that out of, we should only have £3000.

53,756. And in making the calculation do you subtract the amount of the valuation of the deer forests from the gross valuation of the parish, and then proceed to divide it?—No, I take the difference between the rent one would get for the land under sheep and under deer.

53,757. The rent under sheep *plus* the game rent?—What game rent is there?

53,758. Over and above the sheep; did you put that in?—No, there is no game rent to put in.

53,759. Not now, but if there was a sheep rent you would also be able to let the land as a shooting?—Precious little shooting could be got.

53,760. When it was a sheep farm was it not a sporting subject also?—Hardly to any extent.

53,761. Are there no grouse on the land?—Very few indeed.

53,762. And no other game of any kind?—No other game.

53,763. Have you copies of the old valuation rolls?—Not here.

53,764. Are you aware that grazing subjects generally yield a higher rent from sport than from grazing?—In some cases they do; where there is plenty of heather the grouse shooting bears a good value.

53,765. Much higher than the grazing value of the land?—Where there is no heather you do not have grouse.

53,766. I would like to know whether, as a matter of fact, this place had a sporting value before it was put under deer?—It had some amount of sporting value.

53,767. Did you include that value in making the calculation?—No.

53,768. Do you admit that, to that extent, your calculation is misleading?—No, I don't; and I give this reason, that there is really no shooting to be had if you do away with the deer.

53,769. That applies to the estates of Torridon?—Yes.

53,770. But all over the Highlands, of course you are perfectly well aware that the shooting value is more in almost every case than the grazing value?—When you get out of the deer forest country no doubt the shooting value is great.

53,771. I am talking of land which before was sheep grazing and now is deer forest. All that you are entitled to claim, surely, as an increase to the rates, will be the difference between the grazing value *plus* the sporting rent and the rent now obtained as deer forest?—Yes: if you can get a game rent, of course that should enter into the calculation.

53,772. You have formed no idea in your own mind of the difference between these two?—Well, so far as my estate is concerned, there is really no shooting rent to be got out of it if you take the deer away.

53,773. Are you aware that Mr George Malcolm of Invergarry would not commit himself to the opinion that the difference between the two amounted to more than a farthing in the £?—I do not know anything about that.

53,774. He would not commit himself to an exact figure; and I think it is not too much to expect from a gentleman who makes a statement with regard to the effect upon the local rates, that he should be in a position to tell us exactly how much it would amount to in the £?—I don't suppose anybody could give it exactly; we only do the best we can. But I can tell you that, if you sweep away my deer forest, and I try to let my mansion-house with the shooting which remained, I could not let it at all; it would lie on my hands. The shooting rent is practically *nil*. Now, I am quite prepared to admit—because one always wishes to say everything that is true—that there may be in Applecross—I don't know, but there may be—better shooting than with me, but with me there is absolutely no shooting. It is only on the crofters' land that there is any

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

grouse at all. The mansion-house would remain on my hands unlet, because it was built as a shooting lodge, altogether for the accommodation of the forest.

53,775. Then this statement about the rates in the parish being increased by such a tremendous percentage comes down to a very small thing, I think?—No, I don't think it comes to a small thing at all; you may reduce it a little,—I am sorry I did not try to find out what the forests in Applecross would fetch without deer, but I am afraid you would find it to be very little except the grazing rent. In my own case it would be *nil*.

53,776. Then you said that the land that was fit for grazing was taken away from the deer forest and given to the crofters?—Yes, that near Alligin.

53,777. What land have you got for wintering your deer?—The high southern slopes of the hills.

53,778. And do you find that that is sufficient?—The deer come down nearly to the sea, if there is snow.

53,779. If the land is covered with snow the deer must come down?—Yes, they have to come down, but it is to ground that is reserved for my own cattle and for some of the Fasag cattle. The Fasag people have certain rights in it, and the deer come and trespass on it down to the seashore.

53,780. But it would be necessary for you to have that ground in order to have a deer forest, I presume?—Well, unless they have a chance to go somewhere else; but if no snow comes, they never want to come down.

53,781. In winter?—Oh, never; they are always up above.

53,782. So you need only have low-lying pasture attached to a deer forest where there are heavy falls of snow?—It is only when there are heavy falls of snow, I suppose twice a year, perhaps for a day or two, they may come down.

53,783. And it would be no injury to deer forests to take away the low land from them?—Not as far as we are concerned. It is not in my forest; it was returned as deer forest land to Lord Napier, but I don't consider it as deer forest.

53,784. Why?—Because it is used for cattle. It is not fenced off from the forest, however,—so the deer do come down in exceptional cases, perhaps twice a year.

53,785. So you think no very material damage would be done to deer forests if the low-lying pasture were detached from them?—Not the least, in my case.

53,786. Well, you can only speak from your own experience?—Yes.

53,787. That is very valuable for us to know?—If it was fenced off it would be a very different thing.

53,788. Then as to the education rate: I think we have seen that the danger of the education rate, among other rates, increasing largely, would not be so great as you stated?—Well, I think it would not be far off my figure; of course it is difficult to go into a fresh calculation in a moment.

53,789. You said it might be possible for the education rate to be paid out of the consolidated fund? I said poor and education, I believe,—the whole thing,—because, if you ruin me, who is to pay the rates?

53,790. Consolidated fund has a technical meaning; I suppose you mean from public funds?—Public funds if you like.

53,791. Are you aware of the large amount of both these rates that is already paid out of public funds?—I am very well aware of it.

53,792. Are you aware what percentage of the whole education expense is paid by the State already?—I know there is a proportion.

53,793. A very high proportion?—Yes.

53,794. And a very high proportion of the poor rate also, and the expenses of management of the parochial boards, paid by the State?—Not very much: medical aid is paid, and there ought to be a great deal more.

53,795. Have there not been very large additional grants in recent times?—Two years we got it; but none lately.

53,796. Have you made the calculation what percentage comes from the central Government and what from local authorities?—No, I cannot go into that.

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

53,797. But you are quite prepared to admit that it is a considerable proportion?—Oh, no doubt: the relief in the shape of medical aid and cost of lunatics comes to a considerable amount.

53,798. And you have no reason to suppose that it might be otherwise made up?—I think the Government is very stingy about anything coming to these parts.

53,799. After getting so high a proportion paid to the landlords already, I should have thought it showed a little ingratitude to say so?—I am very sorry, but I think I must be very ungrateful; I think they treated us in a most niggardly manner.

53,800. You stated that the crofters lost twenty per cent. on their sheep. That is a very serious loss?—Very serious indeed; it is the worst winter anybody has known on the west; deer, sheep, and cattle all perished.

53,801. I don't know whether you expect a recurrence of this?—No, indeed, it has been most ruinous.

53,802. Was there a reduction of rent given on account of the great loss sustained?—The rent day has not come round yet.

53,803. His lordship asked you a question as to the houses that were built previous to the passing of the Crofters Act, and those that were built after it; I observe from the evidence you gave to Lord Napier's Commission that you gave some assistance to the crofters to erect their houses?—Yes.

53,804. Is the assistance continued under the leases?—No, it is not continued now; the leases have expired. They endured for five years, and at the expiry of that term the people went to the Crofters Commission. The leases are an old story now.

53,805. Although they no longer get this assistance, they still go on building?—To some extent they do, but it takes them a very long time to build.

53,806. When the houses were being built formerly, what proportion of the expense did you incur?—I did not incur any proportion. If a poor man came to me and asked for a loan of £10 to help him to build his house, I tried to give it. One does not do so now, as they are in a sense separate proprietors themselves.

53,807. Had those advances you made to be repaid? Yes.

53,808. I think you stated in answer to Lord Napier that the house would not cost much more than £10 altogether?

'Q. 42,754. The crofter lays out about £10?—'Something like that.

'Q. 42,755. And you contribute what you have 'stated; what do you value that at?—I have 'never tried to estimate what it is—a very few 'shillings.'

—Well, in the old times on nearly all these estates, as I daresay you know, the usual thing was for the landlord to give the crofter all the wood, and he built the house; but over and above that, if they wanted to build better houses, I would generally lend them something. It was just of the nature of a private loan, as you would give a loan to any poor man you knew.

53,809. You stated in your paper, if I remember rightly, that the Crofters Act took away the chance of melioration paid at the end of the tenancy?—It did not take away the chance at all.

53,810. You said they lost that right, did you not?—Not that right at all: it is only that as they are now separate proprietors and hold everything of their own, I have nothing to advance on the security of. I had some security before; I have none now; they are separate gentlemen now.

53,811. You do not regret that, I hope?—Not in the least, but they regret it in this way, that they say they cannot get the money to help them in building their houses.

53,812. But they are building their houses all the same?—Yes, but they say it is a very slow process.

53,813. If they borrowed money they would have to pay it back?—Yes, but they would not have minded that.

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

53,814. It was not a big proportion, was it?—No, a mere trumpery thing; but a very small thing will help a poor man on.

53,815. Are you aware that under the Crofters Act a tenant, on leaving his holding, is entitled to compensation for the full value of his improvements?—Of course, I am, and my tenants know it too; we all know it.

53,816. Is not that one of the great inducements to build new houses?—But they had the same inducement before the Crofters Act was passed; they had that promise from me in writing.

53,817. That they would have meliorations to the full value?—Yes, to the full value.

53,818. Without any limit at all?—Less of a limit than there is now. It is limited now to what is suitable for the holding according to the Crofters Act, but with me it was to the full value of the improvements as valued.

53,819. Were you ever called upon to implement that part of the bargain?—Never, because it was only begun such a very short time; I suppose they had been three or four years at it, and there were only nine houses put up. Yes, I once had to give a man £20 for a house, and, I fancy, that was at least twice its value. Valuations are not a very nice thing for the landlord; they generally go against him, and I was allowing them the full value of what arbiters might decide. That they considered to be a great advantage, and I have no doubt it was, as it is far better for them than their rights under the Act.

53,820. You think so?—I am quite sure of it, because in the Crofters Act the compensation is restricted to buildings suitable for the holding, is it not?

53,821. Yes, but have you seen cases where the Crofters Commission has given compensation for improvements?—No, I have not, I am only telling you what the people think about it, and it appears to me that their view is not far out.

53,822. I think I have seen orders issued by the Crofters Commission in which compensation of more than £100 was given. Did you ever hear of a landlord giving compensation to that extent?—I am sure I don't know; I have not heard one way or another. My men would not build £100-houses, though perhaps these slated houses may not come far off that amount. But, now they are under the Crofters Act, they have got nothing to do with me.

53,823. Then, you said in reply to a question by Mr Shaw Stewart that you tried a club farm, and that it failed?—Yes.

53,824. They got into a state of muddle, you said?—A regular muddle; so they said themselves.

53,825. Was that club farm managed under the Grazings Act?—No, there was no Grazings Act at that time, no Act of any sort to regulate these things. It was in the year 1874.

53,826. It was under the estate management?—No, it was left entirely to themselves.

53,827. But it was at a time when there was no intervention of any kind by Act of Parliament?—None.

53,828. So that failure cannot be attributed to legislation?—Not in the least; I let them try it themselves, and they muddled it up.

53,829. But would they not look for guidance? Could not you help them?—It is not very easy to advise people in matters of that sort, as you would find if you had to deal with them.

53,830. I rather thought the drift of your evidence was that under the old patriarchal system everything went smoothly, but since legislation came in everything went wrong?—What I said was that sheep farming for crofters was not a very paying thing, and I instanced this case before Lord Napier. They could not agree together last year to carry my fence as they had promised.

53,831. Of course, you have no large farms, and you have no experience in equipping large farms?—No.

53,832. But you know the custom that all the fences are erected by the landlord, and kept in repair?—Oh, yes, in Renfrewshire I do all that.

53,833. Here the crofters had to do that themselves?—It was an order by the Crofters Commission. They agreed through their agent that they would do certain things, but when it came to the scratch each one said I will agree if so-and-so agrees; but they did not.

53,834. So they allowed the club farm to get into a muddled state under the old state of things?—Yes, and I had to spend this money in putting up this fence.

53,835. I gather then, that so far as your experience goes, you are not in favour of a club farm?—The only experience we had was not satisfactory.

53,836. But you are aware that you are sitting now in the neighbourhood of a place where club farms have been tried and found to be successful?—Do you mean near Dingwall?

53,837. Yes?—I don't know anything about that.

53,838. Where they have been highly successful?—I cannot say; I don't know anything about them.

53,839. Then, the general drift of your evidence, as I take it, was that you have no land suitable for the purposes for which we are sent to inquire?—Not a single inch.

53,840. Then, you went further afield, and you raised some objections that would militate against our finding such land anywhere?—What I say is that I don't think there is much in the forests, so far as I know: but it is for you to find that out.

53,841. But on grazing farms?—I don't know anything about them: I am talking of the deer forests.

53,842. And even in the deer forests?—I don't think there is much: of course, without examining them I could not say, but it is for you to examine.

53,843. I think you stated in effect, if not in words, that we would not find any?—That is my opinion,—that in going about I do not see much that could be added.

53,844. You said that those who sent us to look for such land might find some nearer home; but that is a matter that has been referred to already?—Yes, I do not see why they should not go to the south of Scotland or England.

53,845. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I think you stated that you found your crofters, generally speaking, very reasonable and willing to come to terms with the proprietor?—I never had the slightest question with them at all about anything till that scare about the Crofters Commission came; and there is none now.

53,846. And the cloud has gone completely away?—Entirely rolled away. If you ask them whether they are oppressed, they will laugh at you.

53,847. And they are in a very reasonable frame of mind now?—Yes, as far as I am aware; certainly.

53,848. Now, that being so, how do you account for the large number of them that had to apply to the Crofters Commission?—I have tried to account for it in my paper. There were two or three who wanted to apply because they thought they would get the forest for nothing, let it, and pocket the rent. That is what the two or three thought, and that they could coerce or cajole the others into applying.

53,849. Do you think those who applied thought so?—They did think so; I know they did. One man is called 'Ben-Alligin' all over the place because he thought he was going to get the forest of Ben-Alligin.

53,850. Would you really think that the idea underlay any considerable number of cases that went before the Crofters Commission?—That I cannot say: I am only speaking of what I know. I do not, in the least, wish to insinuate that that happened anywhere else. It is only where a thing has happened to oneself that one is able to pass an honest opinion upon it.

53,851. Did you notice that under the Crofters Act it was quite competent for the proprietors to come to an agreement with their tenants, and such an agreement would come in place of an order from the Commission?—And that, sir, is the reason why I gave them the leases, which under Section 5 of the Crofters Act were held to be reasonable.

53,852. What I point to is that few proprietors seem to have availed themselves of that?—Well, I suppose a good many of them were rather afraid of being taunted in the way in which Mr Sutherland

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

taunted me,—'how very odd it is that after the Crofters 'Act was passed you should have come to terms so very 'soon with your tenants;' but, when they evinced a wish to come to terms with me, I met them at once. I have no doubt at all, however, that many landlords hesitated because it would be thought that they were threatened or intimidated into it.

53,853. Were the landlords willing to give such concessions as have been granted by the Crofters Act?—It is very difficult for me to say what other people thought.

53,854. I would point out to you, for instance, that Lochiel stated that he expected his rents to be raised when they were dealt with by the Crofters Commission; but they were not raised, but diminished by twenty per cent. You also thought your rents would have been raised, did you not?—I certainly did.

53,855. Does not that show that the people were quite right in going before the Commission, and that the landlords were not ready to concede them such terms as they have got from the Crofters Commission?—Do you mean the general question, or my special one?

53,856. I mean with regard to crofters generally?—I think crofters generally were quite right to go to the Crofters Commission.

53,857. And they got better terms than they would have got if they had gone to the proprietor?—Much better terms. I think the Crofters Commission has been a sort of bankruptcy court, if you ask my opinion.

53,858. What is meant by that?—That the rents are reduced far more than they would have been in the open market, and that these people being poor got the benefit of being poor, especially in the matter of arrears.

53,859. Do you think now that the rents that have been fixed are too low?—Yes, I really think that the rents that have been fixed in my case are too low. They are lower than I would get from other people outside, I think.

53,860. But it is quite possible to get, in the open market, rents that would be too high, and which the tenants could not continue to pay?—Oh, yes.

53,861. Do you make that distinction?—Oh, yes, but I mean that from a solvent tenant one might get more. I don't grudge it them; it is the rent I agreed to put upon them, and it is found a fair rent, and I do not grudge it. But still it is lower than I could get in the open market, I am sure.

53,862. Can you tell us the effect of these leases of yours upon the status of the crofters? Do you think that by accepting these leases they have lost their status as crofters?—The leases are concluded; they were only for five years.

53,863. Are the tenants now crofters?—Directly the leases were over, part of them applied to the Crofters Commission.

53,864. *The Chairman.*—Perhaps I should explain, at this stage, that what you have described as leases were not dealt with as leases at all in the application before the Crofters Commission, nor were they treated as leases by your own agent. They were dealt with as agreements under Section 5 of the Act, and accordingly they are so treated in the Order of 20th September 1892, which finds that 'the said agreements are valid 'and binding between parties under Section 5 of the 'Act,' not leases taking or which might be held to have taken parties outside the scope of the Act, but agreements entered into under a section of the Act. Then, I think you objected, as appears from the Note of Objections produced with the rest of the proceedings to the Commissioner (Mr Macintyre) who had these cases before him, dealing with arrears, in respect these arrears had arisen under the special Agreement, and his finding on that point is:—'Finds that any arrears 'of rent arising, due to the respondent under the said 'agreements, are not competently before the Com- 'missioner; therefore sustains the objection taken by 'the respondent, and dismisses the application in so 'far as it craves the Commissioner to deal with the 'matter of arrears'; and thus the matter was finally disposed of. Fair rents were fixed, that question being competently before the Commissioner; but arrears the Commissioner refused to deal with on objection taken, in respect it was held that they were not competently before the Commission.—I am very much obliged to you, my lord, for clearing up the points.

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

53,865. But you have, if I may say so, used the word 'lease,' which in this case is rather a misleading expression?—Yes, a misleading word.

53,866. Because they were not leases in the legal sense of the word, but agreements under the Act of Parliament?—Quite true; I am very much obliged to you.

53,867. Just to make the point quite clear, I may add that the words used by your agent are:—'Objected 'to the Commissioner dealing with the arrears due 'by these applicants in respect that the same fell due 'during the currency of agreements under Section 5 'of the Crofters Holdings Act, 1886.'—Thanks, I am very much obliged to you. That clears up what Mr Sutherland said about the leases. Of course, the mistake comes of writing in a popular way, without considering the effect of legal terms.

53,868. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the question of rates, I think you gave the deer forest valuation as £2440, and other subjects as £2028, in the parish of Applecross?—The parish of Applecross alone.

53,869. I suppose the valuation of the deer forests includes the lodges?—It does.

53,870. Now, has there been any considerable outlay on these lodges?—Very considerable indeed; thousands of pounds have been spent in the country, which has all tended to ameliorate the condition of the people; and if you discourage proprietors from building good houses you do both a very bad turn.

53,870A. How many shooting lodges are included in this valuation?—There are only three.

53,871. Could you give us any idea of the cost of these three lodges?—It is very difficult to give any idea of the cost, because Applecross House is a very ramshackle old house, which has been added to from time to time, and no man in the world could say what it cost to build. As to Lord Lovelace's house, I don't know what it cost; mine, I daresay, cost about £12,000.

53,872. If you were to put down in the valuation roll a sum equal to five per cent. upon the cost of the buildings, I suppose there would be very little remaining as the rent of the deer forest?—Very little indeed.

53,873. It would perhaps come to more than the valuation of £2440?—That I could not say without looking into the figures.

53,874. But you would not be surprised to find, as the result of the calculation, that 5 per cent. upon the outlay would exceed the sum of £2440, leaving no valuation at all for the land?—That might be so.

53,875. You have been saying that the Government has been rather stingy in their treatment of the Highlands?—Very.

53,876. Still, they have been giving some special grants for the Highlands?—Oh, yes, no doubt they have.

53,877. Who pays the greatest amount of rates in the parish?—Lord Middleton.

53,878. And who comes next?—I would have to look at the valuation roll to answer that; I am not quite certain whether it would be Mr Murray of Lochcarron, Lord Lovelace, or myself. There are practically four proprietors.

53,879. Who has got the most benefit from the grants which have been given by Government,—these proprietors, no doubt?—No doubt.

53,880. And the Grants-in-Aid for the parish of Applecross have gone mostly to the pockets of these proprietors?—They have gone in relief of the burdens they have had to pay.

53,881. The proprietors have got them?—They have been relieved of burdens to that extent, burdens put on them by recent legislation. You may put it as you like, but that is it.

53,882. They have received these grants?—No:

they have got a certain alleviation of burdens put on the land by Parliament.

53,883. Put it this way: you have got the greatest benefit from these grants?—Yes, no doubt, the greatest sum.

53,884. And who make the loudest complaints of their inadequacy?—The crofters.

53,885. Indeed?—Yes, they do.

53,886. Louder than you have been to-day?—Yes, much louder, they are always growling about it.

53,887. How could they be louder than you have been to-day?—I don't know, but they do make a good noise sometimes.

53,888. Certainly none has come before us who has been so very distinct and clear and emphatic in complaints against Government for not giving more to the Highlands, than you; certainly, no crofters even made complaint that the Grants-in-Aid were not large enough?—Well, they have to me.

53,889. Do you think it is very becoming of those who get the greatest benefits, to complain so emphatically?—I do it as representing the people. I am the Councillor for the district, and they are always at me to try and get some more.

53,890. But it happens all the same that you get a very large benefit, and yet you complain so loudly of the inadequacy. Now, do you think that is the way to encourage the Government to increase these grants?—Yes.

53,890A. To give no thanks?—Yes, certainly, that is the way the Irish got it.

53,891. The Government give to those who are ungrateful?—Certainly; it is always the unreasonable people who get it, no doubt about that.

53,892. Certainly, you seem to think the Government are composed of very peculiar people?—Certainly I do.

53,893. Who will reward those who are most ungrateful to them?—Yes, certainly; look at the Irish.

53,894. Now, with regard to the Crofters Act, I think you expressed the opinion that this had done little for the Highlands, because it only redistributed the property already there?—I did not say it had done little for the Highlands, but it did not give any money. I mean that it is not generous; it gave no money to the Highlands, but it merely redistributed what is there already.

53,895. Redistributed what is there already; quite so. But don't you think that that is a very important benefit, to redistribute the property that is there already?—To take things that I bought in the open market, and hand them to some one else? It may be a great benefit; it may be just; but it is not generous.

53,896. But is it not very important that every one should have his own?—Certainly; I quite admit that.

53,897. And that the crofters should have their own?—Certainly.

53,898. So that the benefit may be quite as great as if it were even generous?—Yes, but the question was, 'Is it their own by law'? It certainly was not, or else it would not have been taken from us and given to them. If you had wanted our land, you might have bought it from us: but you said 'we will take your land and give it to some one else.'

53,899. Don't you think it will have a great effect upon the prosperity of the Highlands that landlords are not able to put rent on tenants' improvements?—Oh, I think it is a very good thing.

53,900. I think you founded an argument on the fact that the Crofters Act gave no money, but gave to every one his own?—I did not say to every one his own.

53,901. Re-distributed,—I suppose it was meant to give every one his own?—It might have been meant that.

53,902. You founded on that an argument that it was not likely that the Government was to advance money for paying for stock now?—Well, as their idea of generosity was giving our property to somebody else, I did not think that was like their giving money out of the public funds.

53,903. Do you think that is a fair way of putting it,—giving your money to somebody else?—Yes, I do.

53,904. Is it your money, the rent that you put upon crofters' improvements? Is it your own?—No, it is not.

53,905. Well, that is what the Crofters Act has done?—But it has done other things besides that.

53,906. It has, no doubt, given them a tenure?—Exactly; it has taken what I bought in the open market and given it to somebody else. That may be just, but it is not generous.

53,907. Would it not be perhaps more likely that, seeing the Crofters Act has worked so well without any money and by simply securing them the fruits of their own industry, they might try to extend it by advancing money to help the crofters to stock their lands and build suitable steadings? Would not that be a quite reasonable conclusion?—Every man has his own opinion, that is all we can say; we differ on that point.

53,908. You think it is not at all likely that the Government will do anything more to help the crofters?—I think it is very unlikely; but you may know more of what they think than I do; I have some experience of the Government, having gone on deputation after deputation from the poor crofters here to try and get a little money for roads to enable them to send their children to school, and for roads for communication, and we have never got anything but that miserable £3000.

53,909. Why do you say that you were going on behalf of the crofters, seeing you yourself, as proprietor, get the greatest benefit from Government grants?—As far as the roads are concerned for which we asked, I could not get any benefit of any sort. The people who send me have asked me to try and get roads which they urgently want for the convenience of living, and roads for the convenience of their children going to school. I have gone year after year to Government, and have not got a rap for them. I am not speaking for myself; I am speaking for the people.

53,910. But you have already acknowledged that the Grants-in-Aid go to the proprietors, most of them. Now, with regard to these other paths, do you think that it is not also a thing that might reasonably be done by the rates?—Foot-paths?

53,911. Yes,—roads perhaps,—not even foot-paths, but better roads than these. Is it not the duty of the district committee to have suitable roads, by getting such a grant as that which was given by Sir George Trevelyan?—A trumpery £3000; £3000 for the whole of Crofterdom! [*Mr Macleod.*—I beg your pardon, Mr Darroch, but I think you will find you are mistaken as to the amount of the grant; was it not £10,000?—For the county,—yes, I beg your pardon, it is £10,000. *Mr Macleod.*—I hope a similar looseness does not characterise your other evidence?—I hope not: one may make mistakes; I was thinking of our own county.]

53,912. That grant of £10,000 has gone, of course, to provide roads?—Yes.

53,913. Which is one of the things that require to be done by the District Committee?—Yes.

53,914. And which, if they did, they would have to tax the ratepayers, and to tax you much more heavily than the crofters?—In our district, this year, we have raised £2000 for the purpose of making new roads, and that is pretty good for a poor district. At present, we are in process of making these roads; but we cannot do everything.

53,915. *Mr Macleod.*—I think that you said that you appear here for yourself and yourself only?—Yes, certainly.

53,916. You do not appear in the interest of anybody but yourself?—That is so.

53,917. Then, when you said, a few minutes ago, that you were speaking for the crofters in your district, you were not speaking for the crofters?—Mr Maccallum suggested that in going to the Government for money, I was going for money for myself; but I said that when I was going for money I was going as a County Councillor, a very different thing. I have kept that out of my paper.

53,918. But I think you will admit that Mr Maccallum was correct in saying that, in the event of

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

special grants being given for roads,—I won't say footpaths, because they could not be constructed under the present law, but roads,—it would, to a very considerable extent, relieve the District Committee, and, therefore, the proprietors in the parish, from the necessity of making those roads themselves,—that is a perfectly fair deduction, is it not?—We could not extend the roads anyhow; it is a thing we cannot do.

53,919. Why?—If you took the whole money in the parish, all the capital available, you could not make all the roads you wanted. There is a tremendous amount wanted.

53,920. But there is no limit to the amount that the District Committee can raise by taxes?—No, there is no limit.

53,921. Well, if you get a road by means of a special grant, to that extent it relieves the District Committee of the necessity of assessing for it?—It puts us in the same position as people on the east coast who have got roads.

53,922. But I want you to say yes or no?—Well, I say no; there is no obligation to make a new road.

53,923. But if a road is made, it relieves the District Committee from the necessity of making it?—No, there is no obligation or necessity to make it. The District Committee cannot assess for footpaths.

53,924. I know that; I don't require Mr Gunn to tell me that. Then when you say that there is no obligation or necessity for the making of new roads, was there no foundation whatsoever for your importunities to the Government?—Oh, the people want the roads very much, but I do not see that there is any necessity for the Committee making them; they may be advisable and yet no necessity. Are they bound to make roads?

53,925. I am not going into that, but I would like to get from you this; supposing there is a necessity for a road and you get a special grant for the making of it, to that extent the District Committee is relieved of the necessity for assessing, and, therefore, the proprietors in the district are to that extent relieved; is not that so?—It is not quite in that way, because we want grants to make roads which we could not possibly undertake and which there is no necessity for our undertaking.

53,926. But I say suppose a case where there is a necessity?—Oh, certainly, where there is a necessity, and where we are relieved of course it is a matter of words.

53,927. But, being a matter of words, you would not even admit it?—All right.

53,928. It runs through the whole of your statement that something has been taken away by recent legislation in the Highlands?—Yes.

53,929. What exactly, in your opinion, has been taken away?—Certain land rights have been taken from me that I have bought, and given to the crofters.

53,930. There are certain rights which you bought, which have been taken from you?—And given to the crofters.

53,931. What rights do you refer to?—Certain rights in dealing with land; they have the full power now instead of me. It may be right or it may be wrong, but there it is.

53,932. Define those rights; if you consider it a grievance to have been deprived of them, they must have been of very considerable value?—My ground is taken from me and let at a rent lower than I think should be given. I said I thought after the boundaries were a little enlarged and they were going to the Crofters Commission, seeing it was fenced off for them I thought the Crofters Commission should have increased the rent a little, and I think they should have done so. The difference there has been taken from me by the State.

53,933. It comes to this, that what you object to is the fact of the legislature having taken from you your right to rent your subjects at whatever you please?—To rent them at the market rate.

53,934. And, in your opinion, the Crofters Commission is, at the present time, fixing a rent lower than the market value?—I think so.

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

53,935. Do you think that the difference between the rent that the Crofters Commission is fixing and what we call the market value is not fully represented by the tenants' improvements which the landlord would have rented?—Oh, certainly not, certainly not with us, I am sure of that.

53,936. You are sure of it?—Quite certain.

53,937. May I ask you whether that is an opinion generally held?—That I cannot tell you.

53,938. You can only speak for yourself?—Yes.

53,939. Then, shortly it is this fact that you are not allowed to let the subjects at whatever rent you please?—Just so.

53,940. Of course, you know that the same thing has taken place in other places?—Oh, yes, of course. I know of lands taken for railways; of course it is for the public good, and people must have them.

53,941. Then, seeing you have such very strong views with regard to the legislation we have had in the past in the Highlands, might I direct your attention for a moment to this question of the number of houses that have been built on your estate?—Yes.

53,942. I think you informed the Napier Commission that between 1873 and 1883 there were nine houses built?—Yes.

53,943. And you tell us now that between 1883 and 1894 there have been a total of 32, including, of course, the nine?—Yes.

53,944. That makes roughly two equal periods, the ten and eleven years, during one of which nine houses were built——?—Yes, and a number of others commenced. As I reported to Lord Napier, a number of others were in process of construction; nearly all that are finished now were in process of construction then, or at least a great number of them. It is very difficult for them to get a beginning made; when I went there first, the people had not one rap to clink against another, they were most miserably poor, and it was some time before they got enough to be able to build houses. But most of these houses were certainly in process of construction at the time the Crofters Act was passed. There have been very few built entirely since that time.

53,945. Does that arise from the fact that they are not prepared to build new houses, or from the fact that the houses have been so improved that there is no necessity for further building?—Each man as he tries to get a little better on in the world tries to improve his house.

53,946. Naturally; but is the fact that the process of building has not gone on due to your ceasing your temporary loans, or is it because there is no further necessity for building?—They say they would build quicker if I lent the money as I used to do; they say the want of it is a certain obstacle to them. They all want to build houses, and very fit they should. I do allow them a little, but I cannot allow them what I did before.

53,947. Getting a higher rent of course you could afford it better then?—It was not a very high rent; one does not live by what one gets as rent there, when all is said and done.

53,948. I notice that you have been good enough to tabulate for us the position of the crofters when you came into the estate, when you read your paper before the Napier Commission, and the position of affairs at the present day?—Yes.

53,949. The population, as you say, is practically the same, or slightly increased?—It has slightly increased.

53,950. The number of families is about the same but there is an actual increase in the population?—A slight increase, but you cannot put much more of a population there.

53,951. Then, I notice that since 1883 — I think you stated in the body of your statement since 1886—the crofters have come into the possession of a considerable number of sheep, numbering 290?—Yes.

53,952. And they have also come into a larger number of improved houses?—Yes.

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

53,953. I further observe that you are actually getting more rent from the crofters to-day in 1894, notwithstanding the grievances you have against the Crofters Commission, than you were getting in 1873; the figures for 1873 being £126, 16s. 6d., and the figures to-day £132?—Yes, but I explained that they have now about double the extent of land they had in 1873. They are allowed to keep many more cows.

53,954. I understood you to say that they had all the land you could possibly give them; how do you say now it is doubled?—They had all the arable land; but their pasture is very much increased.

53,955. But you said that they had the whole deer forest before, and now they have only a restricted area?—I did not mean to say that they had the whole deer forest, but there was no fence, and if their cattle strayed into the forest, there was not much said.

53,956. Then they are not so well off?—They are better off, and they are worse off: rather worse, if anything.

53,957. Kindly explain that?—They are better off because they have got the land to themselves, and they can keep on it what they like; there is no restriction. But they are worse off, because their sheep cannot go stravaguing through the forest.

53,958. Then it comes to this, that being worse off and better off, it fairly equalises itself?—They are very much better than they were in 1873. You say the rent I gave you for 1873 was that which I found on the estate.

53,959. But you reduced it?—I beg your pardon; I find it is the rent I put on them.

53,960. That then is your own rent, as compared with a rent of £132 to-day; but you say the crofters are very much better; can you define how much better they are?—They have got much more grazing now than they had then.

53,961. What does it amount to?—It is very difficult to estimate because you see they were allowed to keep so many beasts, and there was no restriction of boundaries then at all.

53,962. And now?—Now, there is a fence keeping them back. They had not the forest before, although they strayed into it. In reality, there is not perhaps very much difference between what they had then and what they have now; then they had one cow, I think, and a follower; after that they had two cows when the Crofters Commission came; now they have some sheep in addition, and the ground is marked off for them. They had no sheep at the time of that rental.

53,963. Don't you think matters are, as regards the area of land held, fairly equalised?—There is not a great deal of difference one way or the other.

53,964. You would be quite willing to admit that having the place fenced to that extent, they are worse off; but they are better to this extent that having the place fenced, their cattle lie more on the ground, and are not so much disturbed as when they were going into the forest and were liable to be sent back again?—Yes, but the land fenced off will graze more stock than they were allowed in 1873 for the rent they paid then. They are better off, though not perhaps very much.

53,965. They are really rather better off?—They are really rather better off; but it is not a very great amount.

53,966. Notwithstanding the Crofters Act, they are rather better off?—I would not say notwithstanding the Crofters Act they are better off, but they are rather better off.

53,967. Their stock of cattle has increased you say?—Enormously. They were not allowed to keep cows, and the children were pale and emaciated, through not getting any milk; that is why I swept all the sheep away.

53,968. You say they have now a larger number of cows, and they have these 290 sheep?—Yes.

53,969. And you are not worse off. I see you put down your arrears in 1873 as £255, 14s. 1d., and to-day you are able to tell us that they amount to only £28, £7, 10s. only of which is due by crofters?—By people who applied to the Crofters Commission. But the £255 are not my arrears; they are the arrears which were due when I bought the estate.

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

53,970. You paid for them?—I redeemed them. I allowed the people to try and redeem them, and advanced the people money to pay them off. When I bought the estate they were owing £255.

53,971. And you paid for that?—I did not pay those arrears, but I advanced the people enough to pay them off, and they worked them off.

53,972. So that they actually paid it?—They paid it with certain deductions. They paid it honestly; they have always been honest people so far as I know.

53,973. And in every way they are better off now than they were then?—Oh, no doubt. I hope you will be coming down to see them.

53,974. I propose to put one or two questions to you on a matter that has been already dealt with by other Commissioners,—the agreements with your tenants. You say there:—'How difficult it is to get illiterate 'people to understand the nature of an agreement.'?—Yes.

53,975. But you are of opinion that they understood the agreement they came to with you?—Oh, there is no doubt; every one had a copy of it.

53,976. So that although they do not understand agreements in general, they understood the agreement they came to with you?—There were only two or three words in the agreement. My Lord can tell you about that: and they had regulations for peat-cutting which they put in for their own protection. One has to be very careful in dealing with those people about anything in a written document.

53,977. You say here:—'The reasons they had' (the crofters I presume) 'for going in for the Crofters Com-'mission are really rather instructive; first, putting 'aside the idea of getting a reduction of rent, which I 'don't think many expected, the rent having been adjusted 'by themselves, there was an expectation among the 'ringleaders, whence derived I cannot tell, that they 'would be able to have the ground the same as the 'proprietors, letting the shootings and keeping the 'rents to themselves; the ringleaders here hoped to 'get Ben-Alligin, and let it as a deer forest, and to 'obtain the right of catching salmon; the quieter souls 'who were contented with their lot were told that if 'they did not apply to the Crofter Commission they 'would be shut out from all benefits under the Crofters 'Act, and it was ludicrous to see the disappointment 'of the leaders when they found that those who had 'declined to go with them had shares in the common 'holdings preserved for them in the findings of the 'Commission, while they also avoided the privilege 'of paying an agent to keep those shares for them.' Now, is that a statement that you would wish to remain, Mr Darroch?—Yes, it is; it is absolutely true.

53,978. Do you mean to tell us seriously that you could prove that statement if you were called upon to do so?—No, certainly not.

53,979. Then, why make it?—Because it is perfectly true, and told to me privately by people whose names I am not going to give. Lots of things I know about this place have come to me privately, which I cannot give the details of.

53,980. Do you think that is information which you should put before a public Commission?—Yes, I do, because that is the way it has been done.

53,981. Although you admit that you cannot prove it?—Yes, I do not mean to give the names of the people who told me these things.

53,982. You said you were only speaking for the estate of Torridon, but I notice that you make some general statements as well. You say:—'I have, for a 'long time, been of the opinion that crofters had the 'first equitable claim to arable land lying near con-'gested districts, with some reservations.' That is, of course, a general statement?—That is rather general; that was my motive for going to Torridon.

53,983. You also say:—'But if it can be shown that 'this ground would be advantageous to the crofters, I 'suppose it will be thought fair that I should be

Dingwall.

Duncan Darroch.

'despoiled of my means, while the Cabinet Ministers 'who direct these measures against us feeble folk in 'the north can enjoy their more fertile acres without 'fear of disturbance?'—Yes.

53,984. I suppose you will admit that that is a general statement?—I think it is rather a special one, is it not? There are not many in the Cabinet.

53,985. You also make a general statement with regard to land available for crofters in the deer forests of Scotland?—Yes.

53,986. 'Where this land is, I do not know at 'all?'—No.

53,987. That does not arise from your knowledge of deer forests, I presume?—I have seen a great many deer forests in going about; but where you will find 3000 acres of arable land to put them on, I have not observed.

53,988. Then, with regard to your own tenants on the Torridon estate, although you compliment them very highly in other places, you say:—'From what 'they say here, I think they will be inclined to turn 'on the agitators if they don't get Government money 'to stock their holdings, and all the land for nothing, 'and will say even more than they do now that they 'have just been humbugged for political purposes'?—Yes.

53,989. Do you wish that statement to remain?—Certainly.

53,990. And would you be able to prove that statement if called upon?—No.

53,991. Then, you say a little further on:—'So far 'from taking the kind advice of the agitators to destroy 'game,' &c. Do you wish that to remain?—Certainly, I know they were advised to destroy game.

53,992. Can you prove that?—No.

53,993. *Mr Munro.*—There is one subject you have touched upon to-day, on which I may possibly have misapprehended your meaning. You said, I think, that crofters in congested districts ought to have a first equitable claim to arable land in the neighbourhood?—Some sort of claim.

53,994. But I think you also stated that there was no land of that description on your own estate of Torridon that they might experiment upon?—I did give them the whole that I could, excepting what is reserved for my own stock; I gave them every inch there is. [*The Chairman.*—The words are:—'It was 'on account of my not being able to help the crofters 'in the place where I was that I determined to pur-'chase an estate where I could carry out my views]'.—You see I found that unless I was proprietor on a place, I could not do anything for the crofters at all, unless I had a free hand.

53,995. But the conclusion you come to is this, that where there is arable land in the vicinity of congested townships, that land should be divided amongst the crofters who wish it?—If possible, it should.

53,996. Then coming to the vicinity of Dingwall here, which you know very well——?—No, I don't know it very well; I know nothing about it, except from passing it in the railway.

53,997. I suppose you know, at any rate, that the crofters about here have complained of the inadequacy of their holdings?—You cannot say that I know of it; one does not follow all these matters.

53,998. Assuming that they did so complain, would you recommend that the large arable farms in this district should be split up?—I don't see any crofters in this district at all. You are talking of a different race of people, it seems to me. I don't know the circumstances here, and I cannot give an opinion about it. I know the crofters on the west coast very well, and where there is arable land on the west coast near congested townships it is a great mistake if they cannot get advantage of it: but as to the east coast I know nothing; it is a different state of things altogether here.

53,999. Did I also understand you to suggest that one remedy for crofter discontent would be to migrate them to the more fertile lands away from where they are at present residing?—If you take them from the Lews, which I believe is one idea of migration, why put them to the unfertile land of the north? Why not go to the south, or even to England? If they are to have a chance, why not give them a good chance; why confine them to the six so-called crofting counties?

Dingwall.

Duncan Darroch.

54,000. Have you ever suggested that crofters in the west of Lews should be taken and planted in the very fertile lands of Easter Ross?—I have heard about migration generally: where it is to go I do not know, whether to Easter Ross, or to Midlothian, or to England; I think it would be better certainly to remove them.

54,001. There is something in the suggestion, and I am disposed to concur with you. Now, about this grant which was made to the Highland Railway Company, your remarks seem to imply if they do not actually express condemnation of the Government policy, in giving so much money to a wealthy Corporation, when they give only a comparatively small sum for crofter purposes?—Certainly.

54,002. But, in granting the £45,000 to the Highland Railway Company, I do not know if you are aware that a condition was attached that they should build a harbour at Kyleakin?—Yes.

54,003. Which harbour will positively cost nearly the whole of the £45,000?—Then, you mean to say that the £45,000 is rather wasted?

54,004. I do not mean that at all; quite the reverse?—If that £45,000 had been given us for roads, it would have done something; whereas the Railway Company would have been obliged to make the line and the harbour as well, without the £45,000.

54,005. But I am sure that you will be disposed to allow that the money given to Highland Railway Company for the building of a harbour at Kyleakin will go a long way to help the crofters on the west coast in prosecuting the fishing industry?—Oh, no, it will do very little, in my view. I think if the money had been given for the Aultbea railway it would have been far better, but that is a matter of opinion.

54,006. You seem to convey the suggestion to us that if deer forests were abolished, poor rates would considerably increase, and fall entirely on the crofters?—Exactly.

54,007. Have you ever heard it stated that the increase in the poor rates was entirely owing to the depopulation in the Highlands?—I never heard that, certainly; was not most of the depopulation before the Poor Law Act was passed?

54,008. I am aware of that?—It is somewhat difficult then, is it not, to compare the one with the other.

54,009. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—I would like to ask you a question or two on the subject of the Grant-in-Aid for rates, of which we have heard a good deal lately. Upon the question of road money, and the responsibility of District Committees in the matter, I understood you to draw a distinction between the desirability and the necessity for new roads?—Quite true; that is what I wished to point out.

54,010. And further that, generally speaking, it is impossible for proprietors to raise the required amount for new roads that may be desirable though not necessary, in addition to the heavy rates they have already to pay?—That is quite true. There is an instance just now; we are wanting to make a road from Diabeg, there are 200 inhabitants, and altogether some 300 would have benefited, but the district would not stand that; the other parts of the district would object to a special rate being raised, but by raising £2000 for the whole district we get £500 towards that road. Nobody could get the representatives of other parts to agree to constructing that road from the rates; unless we get something from Government, it must stop. There is no necessity there, but as you justly put it, a desirability.

54,011. So that where Government grants are given, the money is spent upon roads which could not be made at all without such aid?—Which, certainly, could not be made without it.

54,012. And it is, therefore, a mistake to say that these grants are given to the relief of proprietors?—I consider it an entire mistake.

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

54,013. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—But the Grants-in-Aid to the Highlands have been spent in relieving rates, have they not?—Which grants do you mean?

54,014. All the grants that are given to the Highlands are in relief of rates?—In regard to that £10,000 grant?

54,015. With the exception of the £10,000 grant?—I think they all have been; but the grants we are asking for are not in relief of rates.

54,016. That is a point into which we have gone in great detail already and I do not propose to traverse the same ground again; but it is a fact that the proprietors are the people who have benefited by the Grants-in-Aid?—Oh, no doubt; they pay the lion's share of the rates, and it is quite right that they should get the lion's share of the relief.

54,017. You have already told us that under the Crofters Act no money advance has been made to the crofters, but a great deal has been given to relieve landlords, and still it is your opinion that the Government will never agree to advance money for stocking crofters' holdings, or for assisting them to build steadings?—Well, as they won't assist them for making roads and paths, I don't believe they will assist them for the buildings; that is only my private opinion.

54,018. *The Chairman.*—I am sorry I cannot find one of the agreements you made with your tenants referred to in the proceedings before the Crofters Commission; but, with a view to completing your evidence, perhaps you would be kind enough to send us a copy.

54,019. *Mr Macleod.*—In connection with this matter of roads, it seemed to me to be implied in one of your answers to Mr Shaw Stewart that the District Committee could not assess?—Oh, they can assess.

54,020. *Mr Sutherland.*—Then, as to the money received; is it not a fact that it would be spent on the private property of the landlords?—As I pointed out to the Government several times in going to them, most of the roads wanted would not benefit any proprietor at all. Take, for instance, this road to Diabeg; it goes through my property, but I don't want it; it is of no use to me.

54,021. Is not any money spent upon road-making adding to the capital value of an estate?—No.

54,022. Then it is mis-spent?—No, because I look not only to the value to the proprietor, but the comfort of the people.

54,023. If an estate is sold, do not all the amenities fetch a monetary value?—If an estate is sold, a road might probably be regarded as a disadvantage and not an advantage. Some proprietors object to have roads.

54,024. From the proprietors' point of view, it would be desirable to have no roads?—Sometimes. In some cases road-making may improve the value of the estate, and in others deteriorate it.

54,025. But if it does not add to its value, the money is mis-spent?—In this case I myself do not want the road; it will do me no benefit that I can see; but it is a public benefit.

54,026. Then, you deny that any of these public amenities on an estate add to its value?—You cannot call a road a public amenity on an estate when it is merely a passage from some other estate. In my own case I don't think it matters one way or another whether there is a road there or not. It may benefit the tenants, no doubt, but their rents are already fixed.

54,027. Would it not be an element to be taken into account by a public tribunal in fixing rent?—It might be supposed they would take that into account.

54,028. Who is to give you these grants you speak of, is it not the cabinet ministers upon whom you make reflections?—Yes.

54,029. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Are we really to understand that you have been asking for Grants-in-Aid of roads which would not add materially to the value of the property?—Not to the value of the estate; to the comfort of the people very much, but I don't think the estates will get any additional value out of them.

54,030. What is that comfort worth? If it is to add to the comfort of the people, then surely their holdings are made more valuable?—I don't think you could put any more rent on them on account of having these communications. In this particular case, the people would be able to get their fish to the market; they have got no access whatever except by sea at present; but I don't think Sir Kenneth Mackenzie would put more rent on them because they have got a road.

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

54,031. Surely access to market is a valuable thing; if it is not valuable why should it be done?—For the comfort of the people.

54,032. But the comfort of the people has some value?—Yes, to them,—none to the proprietor.

54,033. In fixing the rents, have not the Crofters Commission to take into consideration all the circumstances of the holding, and would not the circumstances of the holding include a road to it?—I don't believe they will raise the Diabeg people's rents if they get a road.

54,034. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Are you aware that the Government, in 1885, introduced a Bill containing a clause which provided for the advance of Government money for the purpose of stocking holdings in the Highlands?—I do not remember it.

54,035. And that on the introduction of that Bill, Lochiel, who was a Member of Parliament at the time, spoke warmly in favour of the provision? Are you aware that Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch, when a candidate in 1885 for Inverness-shire, also approved of such an advance?—No, I am not aware.

54,036. Are you aware also that Mr Reginald Macleod, when candidate, in a speech delivered in the Music Hall, Inverness, and published thereafter in pamphlet form, strongly approved of the advance of Government money for stocking holdings in the Highlands, and pledged his support to such a scheme if returned?—I am not aware of it.

54,037. Are you aware that at the General Assembly of the Free Church held at Inverness the other year, Dr Aird, as Moderator, petitioned Parliament in favour of the advance of Government money for the stocking of holdings in the Highlands, among other things?—It may be so; I do not know.

54,038. You are a Free Church elder?—I am not.

54,039. Well, you may accept, as a fact, all that is implied in my question?—I beg your pardon; what do you mean?

54,039A. All that has been stated about the Government proposal?—I thought you meant your question about the Free Church elder.

54,040. That Lochiel supported the proposal in Parliament, and spoke in favour of it a few days ago before this Royal Commission. Now, do you really believe that there is any prospect whatever of the Highland crofters turning on these agitators to whom I referred, who go strongly in favour of the advance of Government money?—No, I don't think so.

54,041. If you don't think there is any such prospect, why did you state it in your paper?—Because I did not refer to *those* agitators.

54,042. Now, crystallizing the history of your estate, I think we can arrive at a very short summary. It was bought by you in the year 1873?—It was.

54,043. How many families were there on it then?—Ninety-one.

54,044. Were they crofters?—Yes, according to the definition in the Crofters Act they were all crofters.

54,045. What stock had they?—Thirty-two cattle altogether, all told.

54,046. So there would be 59 families who had no cattle at all?—A lot of them.

54,047. And 32 with one cow each?—Yes, I think one man had two cows; but, roughly, you are correct.

54,048. Then, only 31 of the 91 had cattle?—That is about it.

54,049. The next fact then will be that a Royal Commission came and—No, not a bit of it; the next fact is that I swept away the sheep and gave all the tenants cows; that was long before your Royal Commission. I arranged that every one on the estate should have a cow.

54,050. That was the position when the Royal Commission came?—That was practically the position

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

when the Commission came: they had got all the arable land that could be given them.

54,051. In 1883?—In 1883.

54,052. Immediately after the visit of the Royal Commission they got two cows each?—Oh, no, it was before that; well, I am not quite certain; probably you are right, if you have been looking into the matter.

54,053. I think you said it was your intention to increase the stock?—Yes, it was somewhere about that time; you may take it as at that time, for I do not remember exactly.

54,054. The next fact was the passing of the Crofters Act, and another Commission?—Yes.

54,055. And immediately following that, a very extensive enlargement of the stock?—No, I don't think there was much enlargement then. They had no more stock after the passing of the Act, except that sheep were allowed to them.

54,056. Exactly so, and sheep are stock?—Yes, but I thought you meant cattle stock.

54,057. Even with regard to the stock of cattle, is it not a fact that they have a much larger stock of cattle to-day under the Crofters Act than they had before, in 1885?—I am not sure about that.

54,058. Were they not restricted in 1885 to two head of cattle?—I could not be quite certain.

54,059. But, after the passing of the Crofters Act, they can keep three or four head of cattle?—It is two cows and followers, as far as I remember.

54,060. You stated in evidence here a little ago that they could keep as many cows as they pleased?—Now they can; they keep anything they choose, but the ground is railed off.

54,061. Under the Crofters Act?—Under the Commission.

54,062. And also a sheep stock?—Yes.

54,063. As a matter of fact, their stock to-day, under the Crofters Act, is considerably more than it was before the passing of the Act?—Yes, it is.

54,064. Now, you reflected on agitators. Do you believe that agitation had anything whatever to do with the visit of the Napier Commission, the passing of the Crofters Act, and the enlargement of the stock of crofters?—Oh, it had a good deal to do with it.

54,065. And is the result to the people that their condition has been very considerably improved?—Oh, yes.

54,066. So that agitators are not an unmixed evil?—A necessary evil; we do not like them when they come near ourselves, that is all.

54,067. Now, coming to the visit of the Crofters Commission, I think you admitted already that this agreement into which you entered immediately after the passing of the Crofters Act, deprived the crofters of the benefit of having their arrears dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—I don't think I admitted anything of the sort. [*The Chairman.*—What occurred was that your agent objected to arrears being dealt with, in respect of the agreement]. The arrears under the agreement. [*The Chairman.*—And the Commissioner sustained that objection].—But that is the arrears under the agreement; arrears before the agreement was entered into.

54,068. All the arrears?—There were no arrears at all at the time the Crofters Commission came except those which had arisen under the agreements; that is the point.

54,069. As a matter of fact, the crofters had no access to the Crofters Commission for five years?—No.

54,070. That is from the passing of the Act till 1891?—Yes.

54,071. And during that time, you brought pressure to bear to get the old arrears paid up?—Yes, I did.

54,072. With the result that when the Crofters Commission visited the district, the arrears that had accumulated during the five years the Commission could not deal with, while the other arrears you collected under pressure?—Certainly.

54,073. Now, is it a fact that you followed this up by legal proceedings in the Sheriff Court against your crofters, suing them for arrears?—Not as to these old arrears at all, but as to the ones under the lease I did, to those who applied to the Crofters Commission. [*The Chairman.*—Would you kindly use the word 'Agreement' instead of 'Lease'?—Agreement; I beg pardon.]

Dingwall. — Duncan Darroch.

54,074. Now, what was the amount of arrears against say one of the crofters? Give us the name of one of the crofters whom you sued in the Sheriff Court for arrears?—I have not got the details here; I cannot give you a name, but some of them had the whole five years and did not pay a rap.

54,075. You know your neighbour, Mr C. J. Murray, proprietor of Lochcarron?—Very well.

54,076. Are you aware that immediately before the Commission went to your district they dealt with the Lochcarron estate?—Yes.

54,076A. And the Commission reduced the arrears of John Mackenzie, Stromemore, from £33 to £1, 10s., and of his neighbour, John Matheson, from £40 to £4?—I have no doubt of it.

54,077. Will you not admit that, in the light of these facts, it is no wonder although your tenants should be anxious to get clear of your leases and be in a position to apply to the Crofters Commission?—There could not be any arrears of that sort, because there were only five years of the lease, whereof two years' rents were not charged; there could not have been more than £7, 10s. due by any man.

54,078. As a matter of fact, immediately on discovering that the Commission was dealing so fairly with tenants in other places, and immediately on the expiry of this agreement of yours, did they not all apply to the Crofters Commission?—They all applied,—that is to say 50 per cent. or half the people they could only get to go; it was only two or three who wanted to go, and they gradually got the rest to go also.

54,079. The whole lot went?—That whole lot went when they did go, being one-half of my crofters.

54,080. And they applied not only for a reduction of rent but for more land?—Did they? I did not know they applied for more land.

54,081. They got an extension of boundaries?—I gave them it; but I don't think they applied for it.

54,082. There was an application for more land?—I thought there was none, but it is difficult to remember. At any rate, I met you with a proposal to cut off certain lands for them. [*The Chairman.*—I have not the report at hand, but, according to the recollection of the Secretary and my own recollection, they made no application for enlargement of holdings; but there was an extension of land granted under the fair rent application,—about that there is no dispute].—Just so; I voluntarily offered them certain boundaries which they thought they would like to get; but they did not make formal application, in my recollection.

54,083. My recollection is that they applied for more land. At any rate, the boundaries were extended?—They were not extended, because there were no boundaries before; but I offered a certain amount of land, and that was agreed to be accepted by you as their agent.

54,084. You state that there were no boundaries before; but they were restricted I suppose in the amount of stock?—They were restricted in the amount of stock.

54,085. That was the boundary?—The only boundary.

54,086. And they were supposed not to allow that stock very far into the forest?—Quite true.

54,087. In a loose way?—In a loose sort of way.

54,088. But boundaries were laid down that day, and you stated, and I agreed with you, that those boundaries were far more liberal towards the people than being restricted to the stock they had before?—Yes.

54,089. They are now able to keep more stock, and therefore you enlarged their holdings?—You may take it that I did enlarge their holdings.

54,090. But it was in the Land Court that the thing was done?—It was in the Land Court, but it could have been done quite well between them and me without going to the Land Court.

54,091. Through agents?—Yes.

54,092. You were represented by an advocate from Edinburgh?—I was.

54,093. And the poor crofters were represented by me?—And a very good representative too.

54,094. Thank you. There is one other point I wish to ask you about.—I observe that in the joint minute (which I produce) signed by you and by my agent, there is nothing about an application for extension of holdings, but simply for fixing of fair rents.

54,095. One point more. You said that before the passing of the Crofters Act you had the intention of creating a new class of holdings, *i.e.*, middle-sized farms?—If I said so I conveyed my meaning rather badly. I was rather trying to get holdings consolidated so as to enable each man to get a little better return.

54,096. You had the intention, to put the matter plainly, of getting rid of the native population?—Not at all.

54,097. Not of the whole, but of a portion?—No, it was only to get the holdings together, so that they would have had larger holdings.

54,098. *The Chairman.*—Is this the position of the matter—that you are of opinion some holdings are rather narrow, and you would like to see them extended by a consolidation of one holding with another, as holdings fall in?—As holdings fall in. For instance, there are two holdings vacant, and I would much rather that one man takes the two than two men take one each.

54,099. That brings me to this question: supposing a consolidation takes place on your estate, you would be willing, I suppose, to give a new holding on your estate?—That is what I am doing.

54,100. You have no objection to an increase in the number of holdings by an invasion of the land,—part of the land on your estate not presently in the hands of crofters,—by taking up land from time to time as it may be required for the formation of new holdings?—But there is none now that we can give; the home farm is already too small after the pieces I have taken off.

54,101. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—So that really your intention was by consolidation to have fewer tenants and a reduced population?—Oh, no.

54,102. What was to be done?—To try and consolidate the crofts as we could. There are two crofts now vacant, and I would rather one man took them because it is not a fit place for two people; but giving them to one man does not reduce the population. [*The Chairman.*—When a holding has become vacant it is because some one has gone away?—Gone away, or failed. Any one who has failed utterly cannot, as a rule, go on: and I say to these old people 'Would you like' to have a house and a patch of potato ground,' and I try to give the holding to some one else and make a little farm there.

54,103. *Mr Sutherland.*—I thought you said you were desirous of adding it to the neighbouring holding?—Yes.

54,104. Would the net result of that not be in process of time to reduce the population?—I don't think so. The old person would still have the house and half-acre for potatoes, his neighbour say, gets the vacant holding added to his own, thus making a larger holding.

54,105. So that while you decrease the number of the crofter class, you would increase the number of the cottar class?—You would keep the families going.

54,106. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—As a matter of fact, have you not, according to your paper, three more crofter families on your estate now than you had twenty years ago?—I think that is about it, you can see I have not been diminishing the number.

54,107. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—And when you made them crofters and gave them the land, had they to remove to other houses?—Yes, two or three had.

54,108. I have no doubt you assisted them liberally?—I don't know about liberally; I did what I thought was fair.

54,109. They were very very poor;—you had no idea people could be so poor?—Miserably poor; no, I had no idea people could be so poor.

54,110. And yet they were able, with a little assistance from you, great or small, to put up the houses?—Yes. You see there was a very large capital expenditure on the estate at once, in the building of the mansion-house. You see upon every building that is put up, something like ten per cent. of the cost goes to workmen, so that there was about £6000 or £7000 spent upon work. Of course, that assisted the people very greatly.

54,111. The work you speak of being done by the crofter labour, and the wages going into their pockets?—Yes, the ten per cent., so Provost Ross tells me.

54,112. But, generally speaking, you do not see any difficulty in the way of small tenants like your own putting up houses?—No, so long as there is work to be got. It is a serious question in the Lews, of course, where there is no work to be had.

54,112A. You said that the people told you it was a very bad law which prevents Mr Darroch from making advances to assist them towards permanent improvements?—Yes.

54,113. But is the law very bad?—I am only telling you what they have said, that is their opinion. I don't think the law is bad at all.

54,114. Are you aware that Mr Murray of Lochcarron still gives yearly a considerable amount of money assistance to his tenants for building houses?—I know he is very generous.

54,115. Do you know that these houses are of a very superior kind, stone and lime built and slated, with an upstairs?—I think he is very generous indeed; he is spending a lot of money on it.

54,116. The houses cost £200, and he is advancing other money besides; and the money is paid very regularly?—That I do not know.

54,117. Then there is also Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch who is likewise assisting his tenants?—I will take it from you.

54,118. So that really there is nothing in the Crofters Act to prevent a generous landlord from assisting?—But I am not a generous landlord.

54,119. But there is nothing in the Crofters Act to prevent a generous landlord (there are several of them) from giving money for improvements?—Oh, yes, but it is not so easy as it was before; there is not the same security. The houses are their own now.

54,120. Does that feeling of insecurity arise from a want of faith in the impartiality of the Crofters Commission?—Oh, no.

54,121. Then, is there any defect in the Act?—I don't think so.

54,122. Is not that, in your opinion, sufficient security,—the fact that the Crofters Commission are bound by the Act to provide a fair return for money spent by the landlord on permanent improvements?—If I lend a man £10, I am not going to get a Crofters Commission there to ask him to repay it.

54,123. But are the Crofters Commission bound to provide a fair return for the landlords,—to consider the whole circumstances, and they always do that fairly?—Oh, these are little transactions which do not require the Commission.

54,124. But really in the Crofters Act there is nothing to prevent or discourage the improvements?—They think so.

54,125. But you know there is not?—Well, I think there is; one has lost a certain security one had over their house, and one does not care to advance small sums of money in the same way.

54,126. In fact, the landlord has lost the power of applying pressure on the tenants?—Just so.

54,127. Merely that and nothing more?—That, and nothing more; that is the whole concern.

54,128. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You said with regard to the reasons which induced the people to apply to the Commission, that these were very instructive. You have already said that you could not prove them; but do you think they are really credible?—Certainly

Dingwall. Duncan Darroch.

I don't know if they are credible to you, but I know that that is the case.

54,129. Let us, first of all, consider the reasons. They did not go for a reduction of rent; they did not expect a reduction of rent, you say?—A lot of them did not.

54,130. And still the application was wholly and solely to fix a fair rent?—A fair rent, yes.

54,131. These people made an application for one thing and accepted quite a different thing?—Yes.

54,132. They expected a thing they never asked the Commission to do,—they expected that they would let the shootings, and keep the rents to themselves, and the ringleaders hoped to get Ben-Alligin and let it as a deer forest, and obtain the right of catching salmon?—Yes, certainly; that is what they were told they would get.

54,133. And they have applied for a fair rent, in order that they might get a deer forest?—Yes.

54,134. Then, you say, they were also disappointed when they found that those who declined to go with them had shares in the common holdings preserved for them in the findings of the Commission. They also expected that they would get the whole of the common grazing; that seems to be the meaning of it. Would you say now, that these people were intelligent people?—No, I would not at all.

54,135. Let me turn then to the end of your statement, where you say that eminent Free Church ministers come here and tell you that there is no such united and intelligent congregation in the north?—Well, you must remember that fifty per cent. of my people did not go to the Commission at all, and among those you will find the people who are most looked up to.

54,136. Is it because the 'eminent Free Church 'ministers' are not good judges, that they have said that? Because, of course, that could not be said of people who have been acting as your people have been acting?—But only half the people went to the Crofters Commission.

54,137. But if half the people were so dull as all that, could it be said with truth that they are the most intelligent congregation in the north?—That is what they tell me.

54,138. And these very people are ringleaders?—Some people are very dull in worldly matters, so I am told, and very much the other way in matters of religion.

54,139. Is that your explanation?—Yes.

54,140. Is it not a very fair conclusion from all this that the reasons you bring forward are incredible, and that you yourself have shown that they cannot be believed?—You may take it that way if you like: you may take up any position you like.

J. J. R. Meiklejohn.

J. J. R. Meiklejohn, Factor for Novar, Evanton —*examined.*

54,141. *The Chairman.*—I understand you are desirous of giving in certain documents?—Yes. Mr Munro-Ferguson thought that some evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the subject of forestry, might be of some use to the Commission. He intended to submit the documents to you in person, but he has been unavoidably prevented from doing so, and he desired me to express his regret for his absence, and to lay the papers before you on his behalf.

54,142. Just specify the documents you intend to put in.—I produce a list of them, as follows:—

Report of 1885 by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on forestry, at pp. 20, 22, 23, 26, 28, 32, 42, 45 and 47.

Report of 1886 by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on forestry, at pp. 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, 38, 39.

Report of 1887, vol. iii., pp. 9, 37, 43, 44, 45, 50, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 64, 66, 67, 68, 82, 83, 100, 101, 102, 115, 118, 119, 127, 128.

54,143. Do you wish to add anything?—Nothing further than to say that Mr Munro-Ferguson gave some evidence before the Emigration Committee during the late Government's term of office, and if the Commissioners desire it he will procure a copy and send it to them if they think it would be of any service. Dingwall. J. J. R. Meiklejohn.

54,144. We are obliged to Mr Munro Ferguson for his offer, but we have already copies of that evidence.

Donald Maclennan.

Donald Maclennan, Bog of Cullicudden (78). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

54,145. *The Chairman.*—We shall be glad to hear what you have to say?—I was born at Clascarnoch, on the road to Lochbroom, midway between Garve and Ullapool.

54,146. Do you know the districts of Strathdirrie and Strathvaich?—Yes, every inch of them.

54,147. Is there land in these districts that you would like us to inspect and consider?—There is, but the land is now under deer.

54,148. I see you have a written statement, which reads as follows:—'I was born at Clascarnoch, parish 'of Contin, on the Garve and Ullapool route, where my 'father and uncle had the grazing of the lands there, on 'which they kept both cattle and sheep. I know that 'cattle were sent there for grazing purposes from other 'quarters,—Strathpeffer, &c., for part of the year, for 'which a payment was made. The same land is 'now part of the deer forest of Kinlochluichart.

'Strathvaich, in the same parish, borders Strathdirrie 'or Clascarnoch already referred to. It is now a deer 'forest. It was, in my early days, in the occupation of 'several tenants as grazings.

'Strathrannoch adjoins Strathvaich on the east. I 'believe it was some years ago part of the summer sheil-'ings of certain of the small tenants of the Heights of 'Strathpeffer. It is now part of the Inchbae deer 'forest, on, I think, Mr Mackenzie of Farr's estate.

'Garbat, on the south-east part of the Cromartie 'estate, was the summer grazing of another section of the 'Strathpeffer tenants. These grazings were at one time 'let for £7, 10s. yearly. Till lately Garbat was under 'sheep, the late Mr Robertson, Achilty, being the last 'grazing tenant. It is now part of Mr Shoolbred's 'deer forest. These gentlemen have also the 'north and east of Ben-Wyvis and the lands of 'Kildermorie (all of which were formerly occupied 'by small tenants) as deer forests. They also 'occupy the southern slopes of Ben-Wyvis, on the 'Cromartie estate, as sheep graziers, presumably 'to protect their deer to the north, west, and east. 'I remember the southern slopes being in the 'occupancy of the small tenants of the Heights of 'Strathpeffer.

'The Tulloch hill ground borders with the Cromartie 'estate on the east. There is a considerable tract of 'ground there which, in my early days, was regarded as 'a commonty. I remember the day when the people 'were dispossessed of this commonty by the late 'Tulloch.

'Strathskia, to the east, also to the east of Tulloch, 'had, I was told, fifteen tenants at one time.

'Clair, part of the estate of Major Jackson, is to the 'east of Tulloch.

'Clair had, for several years, six well-to-do tenants. 'They had each a pair, and some more, of horses, 'a dozen and more cattle, and several hundreds of 'sheep, perhaps fifty or more sheep each. They kept a 'shepherd among them. They were dispossessed by 'the late Mr Munro, Major Jackson's predecessor, 'who shortly thereafter sold it to Major Jackson. 'The crops grown were corn, potatoes, and tur-'nips. The crops ripened as early, and the quality 'was as good, as elsewhere in the county. There 'were also small tenants at Rhidarroch and Knock-'nimartin. Also several smaller tenants at Bogreach, 'all on the Swordale estate. All these lands are 'now in the hands of the proprietor, Major Jackson,

'and under sheep. The former proprietor, Mr Munro, 'occupied the farm of Swordale, and had farm servants 'there just as Major Jackson has. Probably, Major 'Jackson has more personal and domestic servants than 'Mr Munro. It would be immensely preferable, in my 'opinion, to have those various lands occupied by small 'tenants as before.

'It is utterly untrue to say that the crops did not 'come to maturity there. It is also absurd to say that 'the number of workmen employed by Major Jackson 'compensate for the various tenants referred to.

(Signed) 'DONALD MACLENNAN.'

54,149. That statement which I have read expresses your views, does it not?—Yes. I know that all you have said is right, but I am hardly able to follow it in English. I know the deer forests right on to Lochaber.

54,150. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Are you aware that tenants were evicted from Strathconan?—I know the tenantry removed from Strathconan; they were removed from better places than Strathconan. They were removed from Lochbroom; that was the hardest case. There were twenty-one tenants removed from Lochbroom; I saw them myself.

54,151. Did some of those tenants who were evicted from Strathconan settle on the Heights of Knockfarrel?—Yes, and they are there still.

54,152. Was it to old arable lands they were put there, or was it to wild waste land?—Wild land; but it was turned over for them.

54,153. Who built the houses?—They built their own houses.

54,154. Did they get any assistance?—I am not aware that they did.

54,155. Did they make great improvements on these crofts?—They have made all the improvements on them that they could, in order to earn their living, and they have kept the places still.

54,156. Do they live comfortably?—It is a hard living; they have only 10 acres each, and some only 5 acres. I could tell you a great deal more.

54,157. *Mr Sutherland.*—Can you tell us of any other places besides those mentioned in the paper where we could see the land?—I can name any place in the county of Ross: I will not go to Sutherland, but on this side I can name any place in the county of Ross. I dealt there for twenty years. That was before I was transported; I was transported into the Black Isle, and I thrived there in spite of them.

DONALD MUNRO, Farmer, Knockancaoirin, by Evanton (65)—*examined.*

54,158. *The Chairman.*—What lands are you able to speak of?—Lands just in the neighbourhood, on the estate of Fowlis; it is there I was born and bred.

54,159. In the neighbourhood of Evanton?—Yes.

54,160. What are the names of the lands?—I know all the lands about there.

54,161. Is there any land there suitable for occupation by crofters?—There are lands there that I have seen occupied by crofters.

54,162. How are these lands now occupied?—As sheep farms.

54,163. What are the names of the farms?—The principal and largest is the farm of Clair; and again there is a place on the Fowlis property called Bog-na-Flaun where I have seen a crofter. That is a place that was not suitable for any farmer to live in, because the crops were always destroyed by frost in September.

54,164. Upon whose estate is Clair situated?—Major Jackson's. First of all, it belonged to the Fowlis family, who sold it to John Munro, or, as he was generally called, John Munro 'Dearg.' He was the father of William Munro; and it was sold by William Munro's son, John Munro, to Major Jackson.

54,165. What was the date of that transaction?—I cannot exactly say, but it was some years ago.

54,166. Do you remember crofters living at Clair?—Yes, I do. Dingwall. Donald Munro.

54,167. Do you remember how many years ago that is?—I cannot state the year, but it was two or three years before Major Jackson bought the property. [*Mr H. V. Maccallum.*—Major Jackson bought the property on 26th February 1885].

54,168. How many crofters were there?—There were six crofters in Clair, and three or four more in a place called Bogriach, to the east of that.

54,169. That land is now under grazing?—Under sheep.

54,170. And, I think you say, it is suitable for reoccupation?—Well, the people who were there were making a comfortable living, though in some years they would be very much distressed with bad weather. A storm might come on suddenly, and I have seen several years when every stook they had was under snow.

54,171. Have you seen that several years running?—Not several years running.

54,172. At what time of year did that happen?—In October, and sometimes in November.

54,173. Is it a very late place?—It is a late climate, certainly; the soil is good, but the climate is late.

54,174. The climate presents a difficulty in getting the crops secured?—Yes.

54,175. You said that these people, owing to the weather, had a good deal of trouble with their grain?—Yes, to get it secured; and again in spring, the frost may continue long in the season before they could get their land tilled to sow their crops.

54,176. What was their usual time for sowing?—It would be well on in April before they could get the land ploughed.

54,177. Did they ever get their crops in in September?—Not in September, in my recollection, except it might be a special year of an early harvest.

54,178. They could not get them in before October or November?—No, they could not.

54,179. In view of that state of matters, would you be in favour of people going back there?—Well, I cannot say as to that.

54,180. Does it stand pretty high?—It stands pretty high.

54,181. Is the altitude somewhere about 700 feet?—Hardly 700 feet.

54,182. Between 600 and 700 feet?—It will be that, at least the top of it. But the people who were there depended more upon cattle and sheep than on crops.

54,183. Did they, as a rule, crop sufficient to winter their cattle and sheep on their own holdings?—They had the grazing of the hill at the back of the place. They kept their cattle there in summer, and sold most of them in the beginning of winter, keeping the cows and calves.

54,184. And they were able to winter these?—Yes. They always took up their turnips early in the season, as early as they could, and the sheep had then liberty to come down on the arable land.

54,185. They depended for their rent and means of livelihood more upon stock than anything else?—They did.

54,186. And was the stock a good stock?—Yes, they kept nice Highland cattle.

54,187. And had they sheep also?—Yes, they had sheep; they depended a good deal upon the sheep.

54,188. Besides Clair and Bogriach, is there any other place you wish to mention?—All the other places on the Fowlis property are occupied by tenants; in some of them I never saw tenants before the present tenants, who had to make it themselves.

54,189. Do you mean crofting tenants?—Crofting tenants.

54,190. These lands you now refer to are all occupied by tenants of the crofter class?—They are. As far as I know, there is not a bit of Fowlis that I ever saw a crofter in formerly except Bog-na-Flaun; and it is not a place suitable for crofters.

54,191. Why not?—Because it is back-lying, and very cold; the frosts used always to come up from the

Dingwall.

Donald Munro.

river and spoil it. I have seen the crop so white with frost that there was not a particle of substance in it.

54,192. You refer to the chilly vapour creeping up the river?—Yes.

54,193. *Mr Macleod.*—Are there any large holdings on the Fowlis estate?—Yes, there are.

54,194. Are there a number of small tenancies?—Yes, there are a few small tenancies; there is a strip farther up than where I live, where five tenants almost entirely made their land; of course, they were helped by the proprietor.

54,195. When did they go there?—About the year 1844, or thereabout.

54,196. Do you remember that?—Yes, I remember it well.

54,197. And they were helped by the proprietor?—The proprietor helped them to build the houses, and they trenched and ploughed and made up the land themselves the best way they could.

54,198. What size of holdings had they?—One of them between grazing and arable has about 40 acres, and he keeps a pair of horses. That is the man nearest me. Farther west, one of them has one horse, and another has two horses, and they help each other mutually.

54,199. Is there much grazing attached to these places?—No, not much.

54,200. And is the little grazing they have occupied individually, or in common?—Individually; every one has his own croft.

54,201. Would you direct our attention to them as examples of fairly comfortable small tenants?—Well, with the assistance of outside labour obtained here and there and in the lowlands, they just make a living,—not a very extravagant living.

54,202. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—I wish to ask you one or two questions about the six crofters you said were formerly on Clair. What price would they be getting for their stock in former days?—I am unable to give you the figures, but prices were then, I believe, fully better than they are now.

54,203. And you have said that these people depended more upon the prices they got for their cattle and sheep than upon crops?—Yes.

54,204. Therefore, if they were replaced there now, under similar circumstances, they would find it harder to earn a livelihood, owing to the fall in prices for stock?—Oh, yes; prices are lower, and labour is very expensive now.

54,205. *Mr Sutherland.*—And are rents not lower than they were?—There are no rents at all now: Clair is all in Major Jackson's own hands.

54,206. I mean everywhere?—Yes, generally they are.

54,207. So that the matter could be put right by making the rent lower?—Yes, it might; certainly, the rents might be lower. I got 25 per cent. of a reduction myself.

54,208. What use is the land in Clair put to?—Sheep-raising.

54,209. Is there any at all in cultivation?—None except what the shepherd has.

54,210. Where is his croft?—At the east of Clair, at Bogriach, on Fannyfield.

54,211. Do you ever see his crops?—Oh, yes.

54,212. Has he good crops?—Very late.

54,213. But he crops his land always?—I believe Major Jackson ploughs it and tills it for him.

54,214. As long as these former tenants were there, did they continue to crop the land?—They cropped it regularly.

54,215. But when they left?—It was put under sheep.

54,216. And allowed to run out?—Allowed to run out.

54,217. Have you known snow to be on the corn there when there was no snow on corn elsewhere?—Yes, I have seen snow there, when there was not a particle of snow at my place.

54,218. What is your place?—Cnocan-Caoirinn.

54,219. How far is Clair from the sea, in a straight line?—In a straight line, as the crow flies, it will be about 4 or 5 miles.

54,220. And what is the height?—Between 600 and 700 feet, I would say.

54,221. And the crop, you say, was destroyed several years?—Yes, several years. It was very seldom they could get their crop to come to maturity, except that they would make meal and sell it.

54,222. What else could they make of it?—They could sell it if it were saleable.

54,223. What better could you do with oats or barley than make it into meal?—When it comes to maturity, it could be sold in the grain, without being ground, but it was very seldom they could sell it except as meal.

54,224. Is there any other sale for it in the district, except as meal?—Yes, for other purposes, such as feeding horses.

54,225. But if it is good enough for people to make meal of, is it not good enough for horses' food?—Yes, certainly.

54,226. Are these the only two places that you know?—There is one other place at the back of Swordale, called Rhidorroch.

54,227. What have you to say about that?—That is under sheep.

54,228. Is it a late place?—It is a very late place; it does not lie so high as Clair, but it is very late.

54,229. Is there any other place you would like to speak of?—There is a place called Bog-an-Turaidh, which was very late also,—as late as Clair; I have seen three tenants there.

54,230. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Which is the higher,—Clair, or Strath-Rusdail on Sir Kenneth Matheson's property?—I would fancy Clair was higher, but Strath Ruasdail has a better climate. I don't think it is as high as Clair; you go down to Strath-Rusdail from Ardross.

54,231. Which is the higher,—Clair, or Boith on the Novar Estate?—I would fancy they would be about the same height, but Boith, again, has a very cold climate too.

54,232. But the tenants of Novar at Boith are fairly comfortable, are they not?—They are trying to make a living, but they have not much to spare.

54,233. Still, they make a living, and they are paying their rents?—Paying their rents regularly as far as I know.

54,234. They are very much exposed to the north?—Yes, and the land has a cold undersoil.

54,235. Is there any reason why tenants should not thrive in Clair as well as they actually do in Boith?—Perhaps they might.

54,236. And the tenants in Clair you say were able to make a comfortable living?—Well, they were making a living, certainly.

54,237. Were they able, some of them, to lay money by?—I am afraid they would not be able to lay by much.

54,238. Were there not some that saved a good deal there?—There were some that were there for a long time, and they went away with a little money.

54,239. If they had stayed longer and then gone away, they would have had more money?—I don't know that they would.

54,240. *The Chairman.*—What rent do you pay?—£180.

54,241. Do you hold on a nineteen years' lease?—Yes.

54,242. Who is your landlord?—Sir Hector Munro of Fowlis.

54,243. You are not desirous of increasing your holding?—No, I have plenty.

54,244. You have a special knowledge of anatomy, I believe?—I have some knowledge.

54,245. *Mr H. V. Maccallum, Solicitor, Inverness, agent for Major Jackson of Swordale.*—Do you know well the district of which you have spoken?—I should know the district very well.

54,246. Looking to the general prosperity of the district as it is at present, do you think it would be better to have six small crofters on Clair, or to have a resident proprietor, as now, living there, and spending

Dingwall. Donald Munro.

his money there? Which do you think would be better for the district as a whole?—Well, it would add to the population.

54,247. What would add to the population?—That six families should be in Clair.

54,248. But you told us that they were 600 or 700 feet above sea level, and that they were very uncomfortable?—No, I don't say they were very uncomfortable.

54,249. *Mr Sutherland.*—You were not asked any questions such as were sufficient to identify you. Do you represent anybody but yourself?—No person whatever.

54,250. So that you commit no person to what you have stated but yourself alone?—No person else.

John Macdonald.

JOHN MACDONALD, senior, Evanton (70)—*examined.*

54,251. *The Chairman.*—What is your occupation?—I am a tailor to trade.

54,252. Are you appearing here as an individual, or as a delegate?—I got a letter asking me to attend here.

54,253. Your name was sent in to the Secretary, and he sent you a notice of the day and hour of meeting, I suppose?—Yes.

54,254. What is it you wish to say regarding land?—I will answer any question I may be asked.

54,255. Are there any lands in this vicinity of which you have a special acquaintance?—I am acquainted with most of the land that Mr Munro mentioned to you.

54,256. Do you know a place called Clair?—Yes.

54,257. And do you also know Rhidorroch and Bogriach?—Yes.

54,258. Did you know these places when they were occupied by small tenants?—I have often worked in their houses.

54,259. But are you a judge of land?—Somewhat.

54,260. Have you a farm at present?—I have an allotment.

54,261. What is the extent of it?—Nearly an acre.

54,262. What have you to say about these places that I mentioned,—are they suitable for re-occupation?—The people that were there were well-to-do.

54,263. They had some stock I suppose of cattle and sheep?—Yes.

54,264. And they depended for their rent mainly upon their stock?—I could not say.

54,265. Have you sufficient experience of land to enable you to say whether these places could be re-occupied by crofters, profitably or advantageously?—Oh, they had good times, in my time.

54,266. You are referring us to the times when persons did live there, but what is your own judgment on the matter?—The land is good.

54,267. Do you mean that it is land suited for growing corn and potatoes and turnips and barley?—Well, I have seen very good corn in it; at the time when the farmers were evicted, I have bought very good corn in it.

54,268. But is the land there of such a quality and extent that a number of crofters could be settled there who could live by means of their holdings?—I cannot say.

54,269. Are there any other lands of which you have knowledge except those you have mentioned?—There are some lands in Montgerald,—a place called Fliuchairdh.

54,270. Was it at one time occupied by crofters?—A part of it was occupied by my father.

54,271. And were there any other tenants?—Yes.

54,272. How many?—Five in Fliuchairchd, and three in Tighaneirich.

54,273. Is there any other place?—No, I don't know except Fowlis estate.

54,274. The land you have mentioned is now, I suppose, under grazing?—It is.

54,275. Is it suitable for re-occupation, do you think?—More suitable than Clair.

54,276. Have you a strong opinion about Clair, or are you doubtful about it?—I know Clair for a long time. Dingwall. John Macdonald.

54,277. But you are comparing Clair unfavourably with those two other places; do you think Clair is really a suitable place for re-occupation?—It is a while since I have seen Clair.

54,278. Are there any other lands you can mention besides these?—None but those that have been already mentioned,—those of Wyvis and the others.

54,279. You know all those that were mentioned by Maclennan?—Yes.

54,280. Do you think these are lands that we ought to consider?—Yes.

54,281. But, as I understand, you are offering your view mainly upon this, that, in your recollection, all or some of these lands were formerly occupied by crofters or small tenants?—Yes.

54,282. And that, according to the best of your recollection, they were in pretty good circumstances?—Yes.

54,283. On that account you recommend them for our consideration?—Yes.

54,284. But you do not offer any independent judgment as to whether they should be re-occupied or not?—I do not.

54,285. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—By whom was your name sent in to the Secretary to give evidence?—I cannot say.

54,286. Your name must have been sent in by some one?—I cannot say, unless Mr John Macrae here can tell. [*Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—I have authority for stating that Mr John Macrae, at that time General Secretary of the Highland Land League, sent in the name of this witness as a suitable person to give evidence.]

54,287. I am told that Mr John Macrae sent you here. Who is Mr John Macrae?—This gentleman here. [Pointing to him]. [*Mr John Macrae.*—I am here; it was not I who sent him here, I simply gave his name to the Secretary of the Commission as a suitable witness in my opinion.]

54,288. Who is Mr John Macrae?—I don't know who he is; he is present there.

54,289. Is he Secretary of the Land League?—I cannot tell.

54,290. You do not know whether he is Secretary of the Land League or not?—I think the Secretary now is Mr William Mackenzie; he sent the letter I got.

54,291. You don't know very well, then, why you are here?—Just because I got this letter to attend.

54,292. Are you a member of the Land League?—Of course, I am fond of it.

54,293. Did you subscribe to its funds?—They did not ask me.

54,294. *The Chairman.*—Mr Macrae was formerly Secretary of the Land League? [*Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—No, but he was of the County Association.]

54,295. Mr Macrae thought we would like to have some evidence before us, and he sent in your name, I suppose, as that of a suitable witness; and our Secretary, Mr Mackenzie, having got your name, sent you an intimation of the day, place, and hour of sitting; is that the way of it?—Yes.

54,296. But you are not here, as I understand, as a delegate representing any public meeting of crofters, but as an individual whose name we got in the manner I have described?—Yes.

54,297. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Did you know James Mackay, who was evicted from Clair?—Yes, and I also knew his father, William Mackay.

54,298. Where did he go when he was evicted from Clair?—He went to Stratherrick.

54,299. And did they take a large farm there?—Yes.

54,300. Immediately after they were sent away from Clair?—Yes.

54,301. Do you know Kildermorie [Cille-Mhoire]?—Yes.

54,302. What tenant is there now?—Mr Shoolbred.

54,303. It is the headquarters of the deer forest?—Yes.

54,304. Do you remember a number of small tenants being there at one time?—Only one I knew of.

Dingwall. — John Macdonald.

54,305. Do you know that the son of one of them was Donald Ross, who was Inspector-General of Schools for South Africa?—I knew his father, I believe.

54,306. And you know that the son attained to that position?—I do not know the son.

54,307. But you knew that he held that honourable position?—I heard of it.

54,308. Did the crofters leave Kildermorie of their own accord, or were they evicted?—I don't believe they were evicted.

54,309. Did they leave of their own will?—I think so. I think this man, Ross, came to Alness,—I cannot say whether he was evicted or not.

54,310. But were they living comfortably there?—Very.

54,311. The crofters who were there?—There was only one crofter there.

54,312. Were there not other tenants besides him at Kildermorie?—Not one besides him.

54,313. How many tenants were there altogether?—There was only one; the place is now under game, and this croft is now the croft of Mr Shoolbred's shepherd.

54,314. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Do you pay your own expenses coming here?—Yes, will you pay them for me?

54,315. *Mr W. J. Duncan, solicitor, Dingwall, agent for Mr Shoolbred.*—Did Campbell, the late crofter at Kildermorie of whom you have spoken, leave of his own accord?—He got so much money for leaving the place.

54,316. He was not evicted?—No, he was not evicted.

54,317. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—He was bribed by £700, or bought out?—Well, he left it.

54,318. And he got the farm of Fowlis?—He did.

54,319. *The Chairman.*—He is better off now than he was at Kildermorie, I suppose?—I cannot say as to that.

John Matheson.

JOHN MATHESON, Grieve, Swordale (48)—*examined.*

54,320. *The Chairman.*—How are you engaged at present?—As grieve to Major Jackson of Swordale.

54,321. Have you a holding on the estate?—No.

54,322. How long have you been grieve to Major Jackson?—For nine years, and seven to Mr Munro, making sixteen years altogether in Swordale.

54,323. You have been with Major Jackson since he got the property?—Yes.

54,324. Then, do you know about Clair?—A little.

54,325. What can you tell us about it?—During Mr Munro's time I worked a croft for the shepherd there for five years. The shepherd had from four to five acres for the keep of his cow.

54,326. And did you help him to till the land?—The master tilled the land for him; that was part of his agreement with the shepherd.

54,327. And what had you to do with it?—I had the actual working of it, under the master.

54,328. What kind of ground was it?—Well, it was very cold clay.

54,329. Did it not produce crops that would compare favourably with others in the district?—No, I never saw a good crop come out of it in my time.

54,330. Are the crops there generally late?—Yes, they were always late,—from three to four weeks later than we were at Swordale.

54,331. How far is Swordale from Clair?—About 2½ or 3 miles.

54,332. And is Swordale on a lower level than Clair?—A good deal lower.

54,333. More than a hundred feet?—Yes.

54,334. Does the snow come earlier at Clair?—Yes, a long way before we have it at Swordale.

54,335. Have you seen it on the stooks?—Yes, I have.

54,336. More than once?—I could not say how often. I only worked it for five years, after which the shepherd voluntarily gave it up for his own good. He would rather get a bit of potato land and straw for his cows, than the labouring of the croft in Clair.

54,337. *Mr Macleod.*—I think you said you are a grieve?—Yes. Dingwall. —

54,338. Who asked you to come here?—Mr H. V. Maccallum. John Matheson.

54,339. You said you had seen snow on the crops at Clair?—Yes.

54,340. More than once?—Yes.

54,341. You have heard, I suppose, of snow being on the crops in other places?—Yes.

54,342. You have probably seen it elsewhere?—Yes, I have.

54,343. Are the crofters, at the present time, working any land, do you think, that is equal to the land in Clair?—There are no crofters in the district, except on the Fowlis side.

54,344. Are there any crofters in the district at all who are working land that is just as poor as Clair is?—Possibly it may be as poor land as Clair, but Clair has a colder climate.

54,345. *Mr Sutherland.*—What did you say was the distance between Clair and Swordale?—About 2½ or 3 miles.

54,346. And do they cultivate land on Swordale?—Yes.

54,347. And get good crops?—Yes, good crops.

54,348. Is it the same kind of soil as at Clair?—Well, it is clayey at Swordale, but it is a different clay, not so cold.

54,349. What do you mean by cold?—I mean a damper soil at Clair than at Swordale.

54,350. But all soil is damp until it is drained?—There are some damper than others.

54,351. Do you know the distinction between clay and loam?—Yes.

54,352. Is the one here clay, and the other loam?—No.

54,353. Are they both clay?—You would say that Clair is perhaps partly moss and clay, some parts of it, and some of it very cold, hard clay.

54,354. But there is a distinction between the two places?—Certainly there is.

54,355. Where does it begin?—As you rise up, it begins.

54,356. But I notice from the map that both places are about the same level?—I always felt it a good drive to go up to Clair.

54,357. But did you not say yourself that it amounted to more than a hundred feet?—I cannot say exactly.

54,358. Do you, as a practical man, mean to say seriously that a distance of 2 miles on the same level makes a change in the climate?—A big difference; I felt that when I used to go up in winter.

54,359. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Is it not the case that some clay soils absorb moisture sooner than others?—I believe it is the case.

54,360. Your cold clay soils have no veins, as it were, to let the moisture through?—No.

54,361. That is what makes them cold, whereas a better clay soil may consist of clay which has some veins through which the moisture runs?—Yes.

54,362. And that would explain the difference in many cases of two soils which are not many miles apart?—Yes. I have even seen a difference in fields which lay beside each other.

54,363. *Mr Sutherland.*—There may be temporary changes in different fields?—Yes.

54,364. Are both the soils you speak of clay?—Yes.

54,365. But different kinds of clay?—Yes, there is a good mixture of moss on some parts of Clair.

54,366. Parts of it are moss, and parts clay?—Just mossy,—maybe not exactly moss.

54,367. Is the moss above, and the clay below?—I think you could get maybe ten feet of moss on some parts of Clair.

54,368. You have worked it for sixteen years?—Yes.

54,369. You worked it for the shepherd after the people were away?—Yes.

54,370. Were you there when the people went away?—No, they were away before I went.

Dingwall. John Matheson.

54,371. And you did not see them cultivate it?—No.

54,372. You never saw any cultivation except on what the shepherd had?—Yes, the four or five acres.

54,373. And you say he ceased to cultivate it because it was easier for him to get the corn and straw?—Yes, he always complained that it was not paying, and he wanted to get potato land and straw for his cows; so he got that for a number of years instead.

54,374. You gave him the potatoes and the straw instead of giving him the land?—Yes.

54,375. And you saved him the labour and the trouble?—Yes, but he has a croft still lower down now.

54,376. And do you still give him the hay and straw and potatoes?—No, he works that croft.

54,377. Where is the new croft?—At Fannyfield, or what they call Bogriach.

54,378. How much farther down is that?—About a mile.

54,379. Is the soil there different?—Yes, it is different.

54,380. And at the same altitude. Where does he stay himself?—He stays at Fannyfield.

54,381. He has a croft at Fannyfield because he has to stay at Fannyfield?—Yes, but he gave up the croft before he left Clair.

54,382. He would not have to do the labour at all, but it would be far easier for him to get the straw and potatoes from you, than to get the land and grow it for himself?—Well, we made all the labour for him.

54,383. Do you reap it for him?—He reaps and thrashes; that is all he has to do.

54,384. At any rate, he has now a croft at Fannyfield, and is raising a good crop there?—Better than at Clair.

54,385. Is he satisfied with it?—I cannot say.

54,386. Have you had any experience in working a croft yourself?—I was brought up on a croft. My father had a croft, but not much.

54,387. Then, you did not see the crofters in Clair cultivating the land?—No, they were away years before I came.

54,388. You cannot say what kind of crops they had?—No.

54,389. *Mr H. V. Maccallum, Solicitor, Inverness, agent for Major Jackson of Swordale.*—When Morrison was living at Clair, did you give the land the same justice as you are giving at present to the Swordale land?—Exactly the same.

54,390. With the result that the Clair crops were very inferior to the Swordale crops?—Yes. He worked the croft in Clair on the five-shift system; we ploughed the land for him, and put down his manure exactly in the same way, but, of course, with his own cows' dung.

Charles Macdonald.

CHARLES MACDONALD, Amat-na-tuath, Ardgay (over 60).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

54,391. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes, about that: my rent is under £20.

54,392. Was your rent dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—No, we did not apply.

54,393. Who is your landlord?—Sir Kenneth Matheson, and he is a very good landlord.

54,394. Mr Donald Macrae tells me you have come here to speak about the Heights of Strathpeffer, not about the place where you live. Are you here as a delegate, or as an individual?—I got notice from one, John Campbell of Duran, to come here.

54,395. But were you appointed at a public meeting, or did you just come because you got a letter from somebody?—I got a letter intimating the date of the meeting.

54,396. Were you appointed at a meeting of the Strathpeffer tenants?—I was asked to come here to attend this meeting; I heard nothing about a meeting.

54,397. I understand you are able to speak about the Heights of Strathpeffer?—Yes. I was born in Strathpeffer, but it is forty years since I left the district.

Dingwall. Charles Macdonald.

54,398. How are the lands of which you wish to speak occupied at present?—I do not know how they are occupied at present; the lands are common lands,—they used to have these lands in common.

54,399. Are the lands now under sheep?—Yes, Mr Shoolbred is the tenant.

54,400. Are they under sheep, or under deer?—Under sheep.

54,401. What is it you want to say with regard to these lands?—The tenants had that grazing to the top of Ben Wyvis, about fifty-five or fifty-six years ago.

54,402. The lands you are speaking of were held as common grazing?—That was the common grazing; the upper lands were grazed in summer, and they paid a separate rent for these upper lands. The lands they held in common were adjacent to their arable land.

54,403. But the lands you are asking our attention to are not old arable, but hill grazing?—It is all pasture, and some of it is not much worth.

54,404. And the whole of the land to which you are asking our attention is land on Mr Shoolbred's estate?—Not on his estate, but he has it as a tenant. It is on the Cromartie estate.

54,405. Are there any crofters near that pasture now?—Yes, the crofters are there, as they have always been.

54,406. Are there townships there?—The Heights of Strathpeffer.

54,407. How many crofters are there?—A great many.

54,408. Have they got hill grazing at present?—No, nothing of the kind, and they have not any since they were deprived of this commonty.

54,409. Do they keep any stock at all, then?—Oh, yes, they all have some.

54,410. They keep their stock upon their own holdings?—Yes, but they have no pasture.

54,411. Is there a desire among these tenants for hill grazing?—I understand so, and they have need of it, but they are as well off to-day as ever I saw them, for they have a good factor; they never had the like of him on the estate. My father was one of these tenants, and I was brought up there.

54,412. *Mr Macleod.*—Can you define the boundaries of this old grazing?—They had the upper ground as pasture, and they took in some cattle to graze there in summer; that was separate from the lands they held in common. The march is by Cnoc-a-vurich until it reaches Skiachmhor and the Tulloch lands. That is where we herded our milk cows; it is the march between the common and the hill ground, for which a separate rent was paid.

54,413. Can you give us the other boundaries?—They went up to the top of the hill.

54,414. Did it include all the lands with the exception of Garbat?—Yes, we march with Garbat, and Fowlis estate is on the other side, and Davidson of Tulloch lower down.

54,415. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—I would like to have some idea of the character of the holdings they have there at present?—I have never seen the croft so good or the crofters so well-off as they are to-day.

54,416. But I mean as to the division of arable land and grazing; I suppose they have some grazing on each individual holding?—They have no pasture.

54,417. Do they keep cattle?—Yes, every one of them has cattle and horses. [*The Secretary.*—There were nine before the Crofters Commission, but none of them had any common pasture].

54,418. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Do you know Glen-Skiach?—Yes, I do.

54,419. Were there tenants there at one time?—There were; I don't know how many, but there were tenants.

54,420. Would there be half a dozen?—I don't think there would be.

54,421. Had they hill grazing?—There were two or

Dingwall.

Charles Macdonald.

three or four tenants; they had plenty of pasture, but they would not have much arable ground.

54,422. They depended more upon stock than upon crops, did they not?—I believe stock would pay them better.

54,423. Did they leave of their own accord?—I cannot say anything as to that.

54,424. What use is made of the land now?—It is under sheep now.

54,425. Who is the tenant?—I think it is Mr Shoolbred.

54,426. A sheep farmer?—Yes.

David Mackay.

DAVID MACKAY, Heights of Fodderty (57)—*examined.*

54,427. *The Chairman.*—Are you a farmer or a crofter?—A crofter.

54,428. What rent do you pay?—Over £16.

54,429. Was your rent dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—It was. [*The Secretary.*—The extent of the croft is 19 acres 3 roods 8 poles arable; 3 acres 2 roods 21 poles outrun; no common pasture; old rent £18, 4s. 6d.; fair rent £14; arrears £27, 15s. 11d.; whereof cancelled £7, 15s. 11d., and ordered to be paid £20].

54,430. Have you a statement to submit?—I have.

54,431. Kindly read it.—'At a meeting of my 'neighbours held in the house of Donald Macdonald, 'Heights of Inchvannie, on the 23rd August last,—I 'was appointed to give evidence before the Royal 'Commission here, with regard to the common grazing 'formerly occupied by the tenants on the Heights of 'Strathpeffer. Since time immemorial until about fifty-'six or fifty-seven years ago, we were deprived of it 'and it was added to the sheep farm of Glen-Skiach 'then occupied by the late Mr James Scott of Hawick. 'A number of the people are anxious to have this 'common restored to them and if any objections are 'raised as to the breaking up of the farm we would 'take it all as it stands.

'I wish further to say that there were five or six 'tenants who held the Wyvis grazings outside the 'common for which they paid rent, but that did not 'exclude them from their rights to the common. I 'desire to add that there were eleven crofters on this 'farm at one time. This is now held by an English 'sportsman from London, and that gentleman is now in 'possession of three deer forests:—Garbat formerly the 'summer shielings of part of the crofters; the northern 'eastern part of Ben Wyvis, formerly under small sheep 'farmers; and also Kildermorie, also under small 'tenants. We were told the County Council had asked 'Mr Gunn to go over the ground to mark the boundaries 'of this common with the applicants. I now give in 'two letters showing this, Mr Gunn did not give 'applicants a chance to go over the ground, but went 'over it with Mr Roderick Mackenzie. I should like 'the chairman to examine Roderick Mackenzie whose 'signed statement I now hand to you:—

'On the 1st day of June, 1893, the following men 'resident on the Heights of Strathpeffer:—Donald 'Macdonald, Heights of Inchvannie; John Campbell, 'Duran; John Mackenzie, Inchvannie; Donald Mac-'kenzie, Auchterneed; Roderick Macdonald, Bottacks; 'John Gillanders, Duran; Malcolm Matheson, Bot-'tacks; John Rose, Heights of Keppoch,—who were 'anxious to be made acquainted with the marches of the 'common formerly held rent free by their forefathers, 'having selected two men who were herding on said 'common when occupied by the people as their guides, 'viz.—Roderick Mackenzie, Bottacks, aged 65 years; 'John Mackenzie, Milnain, formerly of Slagcharich, aged '79 years. The march begins at the west end of the 'house of David Bryden, Bottacks, crossing the Gar 'valt at the Broadford or Beul-ath-Leathainn along the 'old peat-road until coming to Torran-biorach, a line 'breaking off from the road about 30 yards west of 'Torran-biorach; in a westward line along the north slope 'of Torran-Dubh, a line continuing westward at the north 'end of Allt-na-Clé until coming to the top of Druim-'an-eich-ghuirm, turning then northward crossing Bea- Dingwall.
'lach Road at the west of Creagan-nan-caorach about 30 David Mackay.
'yards west of a boulder, continuing northward at about '100 yards west of Creagan-nan-coileach along west end 'of two hare hills northern march, the burn or green 'bog at the back of big hare hill, eastward where the 'two burns meet east, still to Clach-na-Banamhorair, 'and as the water sheds the top of Cnoc-a'-bhuirich.

(Signed) 'DAVID MACKAY,
Strathpeffer.'

County Clerks Office, Dingwall,
6th October 1893.

ALLOTMENTS ACT.

'DEAR SIR,—Referring to the application lodged by 'you under the Allotments Act on behalf of the 'Achterneed crofters which has been under considera-'tion of the Committee of the County Council, I am 'instructed by the Council to request that the 'boundaries of the land applied for be marked on the 'Ordnance Sheets you have lodged with the application. 'Please call for me and have this done.

'On the boundaries being so marked, I am directed 'to say that Mr Gunn will be prepared to go over the 'ground with the applicants, with the view of seeing 'the ground they want and considering whether any 'arrangement can be made to meet the application.

'With reference to the paragraph in the application 'to the effect that if a rent is to be imposed it should 'be a merely nominal one, and that in any case the 'applicants reserve their freedom of closing with any 'terms that may be come to, I am directed to point 'out that the Committee can only deal with the matter 'and correspond with the owner of the land on the 'footing that a reasonable rent will be paid for the 'land, and that if the applicants adhere to the condi-'tion that the rent must be a nominal one the Com-'mittee can make no further inquiries on the subject. 'Please, therefore, let me hear from you as to whether 'this condition is to be considered as withdrawn.—'Yours faithfully,

'W. J. DUNCAN.

'MR JAMES CAMERON,
Bottacks, Achterneed Station.'

Cromartie Estate Office, Strathpeffer,
11th October, 1893.

'DEAR SIR,—Thanks for your note of the 9th. As 'I am unable to trace on the Ordnance Survey the 'boundaries described in the application I wish to go 'over the ground with some one who knows them well. 'I have already asked Mr Roderick Mackenzie to show 'them to me, and he has kindly agreed to do so. If 'afterwards I wish to see a deputation I will let you 'know.—Yours truly,

'WILLIAM GUNN.

'MR JAMES CAMERON,
Bottacks.'

54,432. Has Garbat forest any other name?—Not that I know of.

54,433. There is a forest of Ben-Wyvis in the hands of Mr Shoolbred, and there is a forest of Kildermorie in his hands, but I do not see the forest of Garbat in the Parliamentary Return?—The forest of Garbat is on the Cromartie estate.

54,434. This is the official return made in 1891 of all the different forests in Scotland, and I do not see Garbat mentioned, but sometimes they go under different names?—I never heard of any other name but Garbat.

54,435. Is it an old forest?—It is not an old forest.

54,436. When was it formed?—I could not say how long it is since it became forest, but Mr Robertson, Achilty, had the grazing of it last.

54,437. When did Mr Robertson give it up?—I am not sure.

54,438. But it must be older than 1891?—Oh, yes.

54,439. How long have you known it as a forest?—I could not say how many years it is since it was made into a forest.

54,440. Have you known it for ten years as a forest?—No, it is not ten years.

54,441. Well, give us an idea how long it is; it is a curious thing it is not mentioned in this Return. [*Mr Gunn, factor for Cromartie estate.*—It was cleared in 1886. Mr Shoolbred may have made the Return and omitted it; it was occupied by him at that time].

54,442. It is entered in the valuation roll for 1893–94, as 'shootings and grazings, Garbat; Walter Shoolbred, London;' but if it was formed into a forest in 1886 it surely could not fail to appear in the official return of 1891? [*Mr Gunn.*]—It was cleared in 1886.

54,443. How does it come to be entered in the valuation roll as 'shootings and grazings' and not as a deer forest? [*Mr Gunn.*]—That I am unable to explain; it was always entered in our books as a deer forest.

54,444. Ben Wyvis and Kildermorie have been forests always since you remember? [*Witness.*]—Not Wyvis; I think Kildermorie has, as far as I can remember; but I am not perfectly certain.

54,445. But you do remember when Ben Wyvis was not a forest?—I do.

54,446. What was it then?—It was a sheep grazing.

54,447. Occupied by a tenant?—By tenants.

54,448. How many?—Four.

54,449. What are their names?—William Gray, George Maclean, Rhidorroch, and two Urquharts, father and son.

54,450. Had they four separate farms?—No; they had separate arable land, but they grazed in common as a club.

54,451. Do you know what sort of rents they paid?—I cannot say.

54,452. Was that land, in your recollection, ever in the occupation of crofters?—Yes, of these men that I mentioned.

54,453. Were they crofters?—Well, the arable land they held was not much above a croft.

54,454. Did they pay more than £300 of rent?—I could not say for the arable land.

54,455. What did they pay for the hill?—I cannot say; I was quite young at the time.

54,456. Where did they live?—One of them lived at a place called Eileanach, another at Allt-Dearg, one at Wyvis, and one at Rhidorroch.

54,457. Can you give me any idea of their rents?—No.

54,458. Then, all you desire to tell us is contained in your paper, I suppose?—Yes, I think so.

54,459. What were the lands referred to in that paper to which you asked our attention?—This was common ground.

54,460. Do you mean Ben-Wyvis?—Yes, part of Ben Wyvis: we had a piece there in common, not marked out. I have given the boundaries of what was held by the people as common.

54,461. And also Kildermorie?—No, we had nothing to do with Kildermorie. [*Mr Gunn.*—It is a different estate.]

54,462. What estate is Kildermorie on?—On the Novar estate; or it was, before Mr Shoolbred got it.

54,463. *Mr Sutherland.*—With regard to this common grazing, I understand it lies very convenient to the tenants of the Heights of Inchvannie and the Heights of Fodderty?—Yes.

54,464. Right behind their holdings?—Yes, just above their holdings.

54,465. And, according to what was read by the Secretary, you have no hill grazing at all at present?—No; there is a small patch between the crofts at the west side and a fence that was taken along when the last farmer got it before Mr Shoolbred. There was a fence erected then above the crofters, to keep them back.

54,466. There is a fence drawn quite close to them behind?—Not quite close; there is a small piece between the fence and the highest crofts.

54,467. You remember the official return that was read to us by the Secretary a short time ago, which told that you had 12 acres or so of arable land? [*Mr Gunn.*—19 acres 3 roods 8 poles].

54,468. The average would be 12 acres: how much outrun?—There is no outrun.

54,469. The average arable is much bigger than the ordinary run of croft brought under our notice. You say you have got no pasture?—Not worth speaking about; it is not worth 3d. an acre.

54,470. Are you able to fully utilise the arable land you have got without grazing?—We would be much the better of grazing; of course the one would help the other.

54,471. Would you be able, if you had got an outrun behind, to winter some sheep stock yourselves if you had them?—Oh, yes, we sometimes do winter stock for payment.

54,472. Was it the tenants in Inchvannie and Heights of Fodderty who had this grazing that you refer to as a commonty?—Yes, it was.

54,473. Can you tell us at what date the grazing was taken away from them?—I cannot be sure about that.

54,474. It is much longer ago than the formation of the deer forest?—Oh, yes; I think it was taken away before I was born.

54,475. And was it made into a sheep farm at that time, or added to one?—It was added to a sheep farm.

54,476. And that sheep farm is now a deer forest?—No, it is still grazing; it is still under sheep. Mr Shoolbred has it as a grazing.

54,477. Then it extends westwards until it joins the new forest of Garbat?—Yes, in the one place, at the upper end.

54,478. Now, supposing that part that you referred to, of which you gave us the boundaries, were added to your holdings as a grazing, how much stock do you think it would enable you to keep?—I cannot say.

54,479. Have you formed any estimate of the number?—I did not do that. It would benefit us a good deal if we could keep a few more horses. Some have only one horse, and they have to get the assistance of neighbours to work the croft.

54,480. Have the crofters there any sheep at all?—None, but what they can keep on the crofts, or a few pet lambs about the doors.

54,481. Do you think they are in a very favourable position to make the most of a sheep stock if they had it?—I think they would go a long way to meet it.

54,482. And the people are anxious that they should have that grazing added to their lands?—Yes, they are.

54,483. And it is adjacent to their present holdings?—Yes.

54,484. Would they be able to stock it, do you think, if they got it?—I think they would do a good deal themselves, but perhaps they would require a little help from the Government at reasonable interest.

54,485. Would not crofters with 12 or 19 acres of arable land be in a position to stock a grazing like that with sheep if they got it?—Hardly.

54,486. To begin with?—Hardly, some of them.

54,487. Even if they were not able to put full stock on all at once when they get it; supposing they were to get it on reasonable terms, would their stock not increase?—Oh, yes, their stock would increase, and they themselves would increase,—I mean in the way of money.

54,488. They would become men of substance?—Yes, that is putting my idea into better English; I have not very good English.

54,489. And it was to bring this matter before us that you were sent here to-day?—Yes, I was appointed at the meeting as told in the paper.

54,490. *The Chairman.*—You handed in two letters which have been read regarding the application under the Allotments Act for more land. Did anything more come of the matter after Mr Gunn's letter of 11th October, 1893?—Nothing whatever, except that, I think, Mr Gunn went along with Roderick Mackenzie to see the boundaries.

Dingwall.

David Mackay.

54,491. And did anything more come of the matter? Was there any allotment granted?—Oh, no.

54,492. Why?—I cannot say.

54,493. These letters are addressed to Mr James Cameron?—Yes.

54,494. How did they get into your possession?—They were handed to me to-day.

54,495. Who handed them to you?—They were in James Cameron's father's house till last night; John Campbell went for them and handed them to me in Mr Macrae's office.

54,496. Why were they handed to you; why do you produce them?—To show what was the correspondence between the tenants and the authorities.

54,497. But it was not a thing that you had anything to do with?—I had not anything whatever to do with it.

54,498. Were you one of those desirous of getting an allotment?—I was.

54,499. Then, were you a party to the matter in that sense?—In some degree, yes. [*Mr Gunn.*—His name appeared in the application for allotments which went before the County Council].

54,500. And the letters were given to you, I suppose, as a convenient medium for bringing them under our notice?—Yes.

54,501. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You said, in answer to Mr Sutherland just now, that you did not think those who desired this extension of grazing would be able to stock the land at first; is that what you said?—Yes.

54,502. Then, it would not be reasonable to expect them to pay a full rent for land on which they could not put a full stock?—I don't know about that; I would expect that the land would be rented according to its value.

54,503. But it would be a bad speculation for them to pay a full rent for land which they could not fully stock, would it not?—Oh, yes.

54,504. Therefore, they would not be able to pay the same rent for the land as a sheep farmer who could put a full stock upon it?—Well, I did not ask their views about that.

54,505. But I am asking your own views as to what you think would be fair and reasonable?—I don't know.

54,506. You must have some idea?—If the land could be got cheaper, of course, it would be more in their favour.

54,507. But we are sometimes told that the proprietor would incur no loss, because the crofters would pay the same rent as the large farmer?—Yes, if we could not get it anything cheaper than that we would have to take it at the rent the farmers pay.

54,508. Although you could not put a full stock upon it?—I suppose the stock would be taken at valuation.

54,509. But you have given us to understand they would not be able to put a full stock upon it at first?—No, I think they would try to keep the stock that is on. Not the stock that is on just now, but the stock that was on when Mr Scott had it.

54,510. But did you not tell us you thought they would not be able to fully stock it?—I may have done so.

54,511. Did you not say that?—Yes, I think I did.

54,512. *Mr Gunn, factor for the Cromartie Estate.*—You mentioned that you appear as a delegate elected at a meeting of the crofters of the Heights of Strathpeffer?—Yes.

54,513. Will you tell us how many of these crofters at the Heights of Strathpeffer were present at the meeting, and how many you represent?—I could not say how many were present that night; there were a good few of them.

54,514. It is very important that we should know how many tenants on the Heights you profess to represent.

54,515. *The Chairman.*—When was the meeting held?—On 23rd August.

54,516. Where was it held?—In one of the crofter's houses.

54,517. Was the house full?—Oh, no, it was not full.

54,518. Was the room full?—Oh, no, the meeting took place in the barn.

54,519. Well, was the barn full?—No.

54,520. Would there be a dozen there altogether?—I think all the applicants were there except one or two.

54,521. How many would there be altogether?—I cannot say.

54,522. Half a dozen?—Yes.

54,523. Not more?—There were, at least, half a dozen; there may have been more. [*Mr Gunn.*—Give us their names?—I cannot give their names].

54,524. Who was in the chair? Or did you just sit round in a circle?—We just sat round; Donald Macdonald was the chairman.

54,525. Was he there that night?—Yes.

54,526. And was he directing the proceedings?—Yes.

54,527. At any rate, be the meeting big or small, you represent all those who were at that meeting?—I do.

54,528. And you were delegated and appointed to come here and state their views as a witness?—I was.

54,529. Have you any reason to believe that those who attended that meeting represented a wider opinion than their own individual opinions?—Oh, they just represented themselves; perhaps there were one or two who could not be present but who had signed for the grazing.

54,530. How many were in that category?—I cannot say.

54,531. *Mr Gunn.*—Then, I take it that not more than half a dozen would be present?—Six or seven.

54,532. It is well to bring that out seeing that there are fifty-seven crofters on that side of the valley, eighty-one on the Heights of Strathpeffer as a whole, and fifty-seven on the north side of the valley. Now, with regard to taking the sheep stock over at valuation,—I think you distinctly stated that you would not be able to do so?—Yes, we would have to.

54,533. You understand that you would have to take them at valuation?—Yes.

54,534. Then comes the question, are you able to pay for them? Have you any idea of the number you would have to take over, and their value? Have you made up any estimate of what you would have to pay?—We have not done that yet; we do not know what number is on it.

54,535. Say that the proportion effeiring to that particular bit of ground were 300 sheep out of the 800 on the farm, do you think you would be able to find the money to pay for these 300?—Oh, yes.

54,536. You think you would?—Yes, I think we would.

54,537. Have you any idea what the amount would be?—I have no idea just now.

54,538. How do you think you would be able to find the money when you do not know what you would have to find?—The sheep would have to be valued first. [*The Chairman.*—You would have to pay according to the valuation?—Yes].

54,539. *Mr Donald Macrae, Plockton.*—Had you much conversation with the people about this common pasture before the meeting was held?—Yes, we often had conversations about it.

54,540. And was there a strong desire among the people to have it back again?—Yes; and as I said in my statement, if there was any objection to giving them a part, they would try and take the whole grazing as it stands.

54,541. Was that feeling among a large number of the tenants of the Heights?—A great many, especially those that signed for it: there are some old people who have no interest in it, and some widows.

54,542. And although the meeting was not a large one, do you believe that the resolution you arrived at was the mind of the bulk of the people?—Yes.

54,543. And you drafted a petition with the view of of sending it to Mr Gunn?—We did.

54,544. Did you get many names to it besides the

Dingwall. David Mackay.

men who were present at the meeting?—Oh, yes. I forget at this moment how many names the petition has.

54,545. Did you send a copy of it to the Secretary of this Royal Commission?—Yes, we did.

54,546. In fact, there were nineteen names to it?—Yes, I believe there were.

54,547. Were there many among these nineteen who were perfectly able to pay their own share of the common stock?—Yes, there are.

54,548. Is the number who could not do so very small?—Yes, I believe so.

54,549. If Mr Gunn made it easy for you to get the land, would it be an easy matter for you to buy up the stock;—that is to say, supposing one or two, or three of you were short, to raise the money from friends?—Yes.

54,550. Quite an easy matter?—Quite an easy matter.

54,551. Did Mr Gunn promise you that when he would go up to see the boundaries he would give you word, so that you might be there?—That is mentioned in the letter.

54,552. Did he promise to send up word so that you might send a proper man to travel the boundaries along with him?—I think he wrote to James Cameron.

54,553. But did he say anything to you?—Not to me personally.

54,554. Are you satisfied that he sent a letter to James Cameron?—I am not quite certain, but, as far as my memory goes, I think he did.

54,555. Did you appoint suitable men to go over the boundaries along with Mr Gunn?—We did not appoint any man.

54,556. Were you all to go?—I do not know if they were all to go, but some of them were to go.

54,557. Did Mr Gunn send word up when he was to go?—Not that I am aware of.

54,558. You used to herd the sheep and cattle when you had the common grazing?—They had the common grazing before I was born. I never used to be herding there.

54,559. Do you know of any crofter who had as many as fifty sheep when you had the common pasture?—I don't know about the common pasture, but there is one old man living who told me that he was serving beside my father,—one John Stewart, who remembered my grandfather having fifty sheep.

54,560. Have you to hire a park for grazing, near Castle Leod?—Some crofters have, for their milk cows.

54,561. You do not do it yourself?—No.

54,562. Are you troubled with the deer?—Those that are higher up, but Mr Shoolbred keeps a man there to keep the deer back in the winter time.

54,563. But still they find their way into your crofts?—Sometimes.

54,563a. Have you used every possible means for getting this land?—Yes.

54,564. You have taken all the steps you could think of?—Yes.

54,565. *The Chairman.*—You say, in your petition: '—The grazings referred to once held by the crofters of 'Strathpeffer now form part of the farm of Glen-'skiach, tenanted by Mr Shoolbred, in this county, and 'a full description of the boundaries with Survey 'Sheets Nos. 75, 76[4], 76[3], and 76[48], showing the same, 'is produced. The same is confirmed by two of the 'oldest inhabitants of the district, who, in their youth, 'herded on said pasture. Again, submitting our case 'we are yours, &c.'

54,566. What answer did they send you?—The answer was sent to James Cameron, I think.

54,567. In the form of the letter which has been read?—Yes.

54,568. Was that the only answer?—I believe so; I heard of no other.

54,569. And the matter never went beyond that?—Not to my knowledge.

54,570. *Mr Donald Macrae.*—Did you write down the boundaries very fully on paper?—Yes, that has been handed in.

54,571. And did you prepare a map with the boundary traced?—Yes. Dingwall. David Mackay.

54,572. Did you produce the map?—Yes, to the County Council.

54,573. Have you got it now?—It is in the Sheriff Clerk's office. [*Mr W. J. Duncan, County Clerk.*—It might simplify matters if I explained that the petition has not yet been disposed of by the County Council; it has still to come up after Mr Gunn and the crofters have had an opportunity of conferring together.]

54,574. *Mr Gunn.*—Do you work off your croft at all?—I did at one time.

54,575. How long is it since you have been at work off the croft?—Since Mr Stewart left Castle Leod.

54,576. He left only three years ago; before that time did you use to work off your croft?—Yes.

54,577. Where?—At Castle Leod and elsewhere.

54,578. You were, in fact, employed by Mr Shoolbred?—Yes, by Mr Frederick Shoolbred; but not by Mr Walter Shoolbred.

WILLIAM GUNN, factor on the Cromartie Estates, Strathpeffer (54)—*examined.* William Gunn.

54,579. *The Chairman.*—We shall be glad to hear the statement you have to submit?—'The Cromartie 'Estate, which comprises the three detatched properties 'of Strathpeffer, Tarbat, and Coigach, together with 'the smaller detached portions, Dunie and Tolmuick, 'extends in all to 138,000 acres or thereby, with a gross 'rental for 1893 of £12,600.

'There are in all 360 crofter holdings, occupying '1770 acres arable, and 32,200 acres pasture outrun, 'at a yearly rent of £1690.

'There are fifteen small farms, ranging from £30 'to £100 of rent; eight farms paying above £100 and 'under £200; and only five above £200, three of 'which are pastoral, and two arable. The whole 'twenty-eight farms pay a total rental of £3837, or an 'average of £137 each.

'It will, I think, be admitted that this gradation of 'holdings gives all classes a chance, especially the 'industrious crofter. The fact, that the crofters on 'the Cromartie Estate are in possession of very nearly 'forty per cent. of the entire arable area, and as nearly 'as possible one-fourth of the entire pastoral area, 'I hope, justifies me in expressing the belief, that the 'past policy of this estate has shown a considerate 'regard for the just claims of all classes of its tenantry.

'The Strathpeffer property, which is wholly in the 'parish of Fodderty, extends to 20,000 acres or thereby, 'of which about 16,000 is hill pasture, of this about '7000 is deer forest; about 2150 arable; and about '1850 under wood, green pasture, &c.

'The gross rental of Strathpeffer for last year was '£5732, made up as follows:—

'Farm Rents,	£1465
'Croft and Cottar Rents,	627
'Shootings,	2250
'House and Park Rents and Sundries,	818
'Feu-duties,	572

'There are in all eighty-one crofter holdings, 'occupying 770 acres arable, and about 250 of outrun, 'paying a revised rent of £593, or an average of '£7, 10s. per croft.

'I believe I am correct in saying that the crofters of 'Strathpeffer occupy now every acre of land that they 'ever possessed direct from the landlord, so far as 'we have any record, certainly for over the last sixty 'years.

'There is an aspect of this inquiry to which it is 'my duty to refer in the interest of my constituents.

'The gross rental of the Cromartie Estate for last 'year I have stated at £12,600. Out of this we paid 'for proprietor's share of rates and taxes, stipends, &c. '16 per cent. For the ordinary up-keep of the estate, 'exclusive of all outlays on improvements, 30 per cent. 'To this falls to be added for irrecoverable arrears, 5 'per cent. (I fear the percentage of irrecoverable

Dingwall. — William Gunn.

'arrears has been much heavier than this for some 'years back). This makes a total of 51 per cent., 'leaving 49 per cent. for the proprietor, out of which 'all improvements of a more or less permanent character 'had to be paid. But out of this gross rental of '£12,600 as much as £5500 or 44 per cent. was 'derived last year from shootings and fishings.

'If this source of revenue is cut away or very 'materially reduced the manifest result would be that 'public burdens added to the ordinary maintenances 'of the estate, would swallow up the entire rental, 'leaving nothing for the proprietor to live on, far less 'any spare money to expend upon his estate, or to find 'employment for his people. This is a state of things 'which would become inevitable not only on this but on 'most Highland properties, the chief mainstay of which 'is their sporting rental. During my own connection 'with the management of the Cromartie Estates, which 'commenced twenty-seven years ago, our improvement 'expenditure has been little short of £60,000, aver-'aging over £2000 a year—an expenditure which 'would have been impossible, so far as estate income 'was concerned, but for our sporting rental.

'On the Strathpeffer property our labour bill for 'more than twenty years has exceeded £1000 per 'annum. On our labour staff we employ crofters, 'cottars, and crofters' sons, and the same at Tarbat, 'where the expenditure is also very considerable.

'With regard to the application for a portion of the 'sheep farm of Glenskaich by certain of the crofters 'on the north side of the valley of Strathpeffer, I think 'I cannot do better than submit to you a copy of an 'application under the Allotments Act, presented by 'these tenants to the County Council in June of last 'year. (That application has been already before you). 'I must explain that on the north side of the valley, 'from whence the applicants come, there are fifty-'seven crofter holdings comprising about 500 acres 'arable and over 200 acres of outrun.

'Of this number only nineteen have signed the 'application, leaving thirty-eight or double the number 'who have not applied.

'Of the nineteen whose names are to the application, 'two are not tenants, although they reside on the hold-'ing. Four out of the remaining seventeen are in 'arrear of rent, one of them to the amount of £21, '10s., or three years' rent of his present holding. This 'is one of the very few tenants in Strathpeffer who 'had fair rents fixed in 1888.

'In my reply to the County Clerk I pointed out 'that from 1862 to 1872 Glenskaich farm was in the 'occupation of the late Duchess of Sutherland—a 'period when sheep farming was greatly more profitable 'than now, yet no application was made. In 1872, 'Glenskaich was let in conjunction with the arable 'farm of Fodderty for a term of fifteen years at a rent 'of £275, on the expiry of which it was leased to 'Mr Walter Shoolbred at a rent of £225, some 'portions having been planted.

'Mr Shoolbred at that time and until 1891, was 'lessee of Castle Leod, with the grouse shooting over 'Glenskaich.

'It has been stated that the applicants' forefathers 'were deprived of this grazing. My information is that 'those of their number, not more than five, who held it, 'could not agree among themselves about its manage-'ment and that to enable them to pay the very small 'rent then exacted—only £25—they were in the habit 'of taking in horses and cattle from other estates to 'summer on this pasture, and it is an undoubted fact 'that they were in arrear when they relinquished the 'grazing in 1834 and that the amount of the arrears 'owing for it, viz.—£41, 10s., had subsequently, 1840, 'to be written off as irrecoverable.

'This farm which formerly carried a Cheviot stock 'now carries a superior blackfaced stock of about 1800 'sheep, which are found better suited to the higher 'ground which runs up to the summit of Wyvis, an 'altitude of about 3400 feet.

'The portion applied for ranges from an elevation of 'about 700 to about 1000 feet above sea-level, the 'greater part being about 800 feet. To take this away 'would cut off a valuable part of the wintering ground 'and would not only ruin the farm as such, but it would 'compel us to clear all the rest of the farm to which we 'are very averse.

Dingwall. — William Gunn.

'Several miles of a march fence would be required at 'a cost of several hundred pounds, the expense of which 'would have to be borne by the applicants, who would 'also have to fulfil the obligations of the lease, and 'take over, at valuation, a proportion of the stock 'effeiring to the ground taken, which would also 'represent an outlay of several hundred pounds. Then 'they would require to employ a shepherd, and go to 'the expense of wintering their hoggs away, a very 'costly item in sheep farming and to make this outrun 'of any use for their cattle they would need to exchange 'the good class of cross cattle they now have for high-'land cattle, which would not pay them nearly so well.

'It would be very much more pleasant for all con-'cerned if this application could be complied with, but, 'I confess, I am unable to see any practical way out of 'the difficulty.

'I should here add that the rent now paid for this 'farm is £225, which is a full rent as things go. But 'the grouse rent over the same area for the last number 'of years has averaged at least £1000 a year, exclusive 'of the low ground shooting and of Castle Leod for a 'residence.

'As a grouse moor it is A1, and if we may take the 'general experience of shootings over small tenants' 'grazings throughout the north it will be found that 'the value of the shootings is very small indeed.

'On our west coast property we have practical 'experience of this. There the crofter tenants occupy 'some 30,000 acres of hill ground, the shooting rent of 'which is only a trifle over £100—not a tithe of what 'it ought to be.

'Garbat, which extends to 5536 acres, is 14 miles 'from Strathpeffer by the nearest road, and over 10 'miles across the hill, was tenanted as a sheep farm 'until 1886, at a rent of £183. During the same 'period the shooting rent was £215, together £395.

'The grazing lease having expired in 1886 we were 'offered a reduced rent of only £135, which was con-'sidered so inadequate that we were induced to enter-'tain an offer to clear the ground, on a nineteen years' 'lease, at a rent of £600 a year. Garbat, which lies on 'the north-west slope of Ben Wyvis, is much exposed 'to the prevailing storms, snow lying deep all over it in 'a severe winter.

'A feature of this ground is that all the best grazing 'is in the higher parts, the low-lying part abutting on 'the Garve and Ullapool Road being very narrow, and 'the grazing very inferior.

'The only bit of green land capable of cultivation 'was improved for a shepherd's croft in 1880 at a cost 'of nearly £30 per acre. I think it would be very 'difficult to find another improvable acre on the whole 'of Garbat.

'Tolmuick, an isolated portion of the Cromartie 'Estate, comprises about 1600 acres. It lies in between 'Strathvaich and Strathrannoch Forests, and, I believe, 'is practically the sanctuary of the former forest, the 'property of Captain Mackenzie of Ord.

'Prior to 1867 the rent ranged as low as £50 a year 'for both shooting and grazing. In that year it was 'let to Lord Dacre at a rent of £100. It is now held 'on lease in connection with Strathvaich Forest at a 'rent of £250. It is distant from Strathpeffer about '18 miles.'

(Signed) 'W. Gunn.'

54,580–81. We have already had a great deal of evidence of a kind similar to what you have now submitted, and I do not propose to examine you with regard to your statement in general, but there is one point I wish to refer to in connection with the forest of Garbat. The grazing land was cleared in 1886 because you could not get what you considered a proper rent; you were offered a rent of £135 and the former rent was £183 so it was turned into a deer forest. The

forest has an area exceeding 5500 acres?—Yes, the forest of Garbat.

54,582. I suppose it became a forest in the year 1886?—It did.

54,583. Why is it not included in the Parliamentary Return of 1891?—I am really unable to answer that; I have no recollection of having been asked to make a return.

54,584. It seems a somewhat curious omission. Had you not other forests at the time? You were factor, I suppose, for the Coulmore and Drumrinnie Forests?—Yes.

54,585. And you made returns with regard to these; why did you not make a return in the case of Garbat?—I am really quite unable to answer that; it must have been a slip to omit it, if we made a return at all.

54,586. You must have made a return in the cases of Coulmore and Drumruinie; as far as Cromartie was concerned the Crown Agent in making up his return must have got his information from you?—I may have done so, but I have no recollection of it.

54,587. Where else could he get reliable and proper information if not from the owner's representative?—It is quite possible the application may have been made, but all I can say is that I have no recollection of it.

54,588. It is only three years ago?—Yes.

54,589. I may mention that on Friday last we had a strong statement from Mr George Malcolm, Invergarry, impeaching the accuracy of this very return. This statement rather staggered me, but it would appear as if some important lands had been left out of the return from whatever cause. The Crown Agent was, of course, obliged to depend for his information upon the factors and representatives of owners of land?—Yes.

54,590. But you are not able to suggest any explanation of the fact that Garbat Forest is not mentioned in the return, dated 4th August, 1891?—No, I cannot recall the circumstance in any way or remember having made any such return; but I will look up my correspondence in that year and endeavour to trace it.*

54,591. The forest had no other name, had it?—No.

54,592. It is a confirmation of what Mr Malcolm had suspected, viz.,—that the return is from whatever cause inaccurate?—All I can say is that if we had made a return we should certainly have endeavoured to make it as correct as possible, but I have no recollection whatever of having made one.

54,593. There must have been a return made in the cases of Coulmore and Drumrinnie and no return in the case of Garbat?—It is quite possible the return might have been made from Edinburgh or from the officials in London, but it is not likely it would have been made without reference to me.

54,594. So I should have thought, because you are on the ground and must necessarily know more about it than almost anybody else.

54,595. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated that the sporting rent you got from the farm of Glenskiach amounted to £1000?—Yes.

54,596. In addition, I understand, to the rent you get as a grazing farm?—Yes.

54,597. What is the rent you get for the grazing?—£225.

54,598. And for the sporting subject you get £1000?—I put £1000 down as the sporting value of the grouse ground which is wholly over Glenskiach; along with Castle Leod we get a considerably higher rent, but that includes the low ground shooting, which I have excluded, and the castle as a residence. As a matter of fact, our rent for Castle Leod and shooting was £1400, and I took off £400 for the low ground shooting and the house.

54,599. Did you hear what Mr Darroch said to-day about the return yielded by sporting subjects?—Yes.

54,600. This, then, is a return for grouse shooting alone on a grazing farm and it exceeds the grazing value by several hundred pounds at least, nearly double?—Yes, that is so.

* See explanation given at Ullapool, p. 1425.

54,601. Have you reason to suppose that if you let this grazing farm as a deer forest you would get very much more than that for it?—I do not know that we would; we might perhaps, but, as I have said already, overtures were made to us to have it cleared some years ago, but we were averse to clearing more land.

54,602. Whatever may be the case in other places, here, at any rate, we have got a subject, which let as a grazing farm and as shooting, fetches as much rent to the proprietor as if it were let as a deer forest?—Yes, quite so.

54,603. Now, have you any reason to suppose, from your experience all over the country, that there are several other localities in which the same thing occurs?—I have no doubt there are, in some good grouse districts.

54,604. I don't suppose it would matter very much how many people were upon this ground, so far as the grouse shooting is concerned?—I am afraid it would matter a great deal.

54,605. Do you not know on the east coast of Scotland any place where there is as good grouse shooting upon crofters' moors as anywhere else?—I do not happen to know any; my experience is quite the other way.

54,606. But you would not be surprised if I were to give you very explicit instances of that?—On the east coast of Sutherland and Caithness I could quite imagine it; that is a particularly good grouse country. Where the small tenants' ground happens to be very low ground I have no doubt the grouse will come in from the high ground. [*The Chairman.*—To get a little corn?] But our general experience is that on crofters' ground grouse shooting disappears. They rarely keep a shepherd; each man is his own herd, and it is nothing uncommon to see a dozen dogs on the hill at once. We have had that experience on the west coast.

54,607. There you come under a different set of conditions altogether, you contrast what it was on the east coast with what it was on the west, and I was going to bring that point under your notice. You stated that on crofters' ground on the west coast there were fewer grouse?—Yes.

54,608. Do you attribute that poverty of grouse to the fact of the land being in the occupation of the crofters, or of its being on the west coast?—To its being in the possession of crofters, because on adjacent land farmed by farmers properly burnt and attended to, and where care is taken of the grouse, the shooting is superior.

54,609. On the west coast?—Yes, in our own district of Coigach.

54,610. How do you account then for this statement of mine, that on the east coast I could point out to you, in the valuation roll, shootings on crofters' ground which are very much sought after?—I cannot explain it; I can only say it is not my experience.

54,611. But is it within your knowledge?—No, it is not even within my knowledge.

54,612. Do you know Rogart in Sutherland?—No; I have passed through it, but I have never been off the railway there.

54,613. Are you aware that Rogart has the most valuable grouse shootings in Sutherland?—No, I was not aware of that.

54,614. And that it is very thickly peopled with small tenants?—Has it always been under tenants?

54,615. Yes, within my memory, at any rate, and much longer than that. I presume, you brought it as an argument against the people of Strathpeffer getting back this grazing that the tenants who had it before did not agree about the management of it?—There were just four or five of their number, and that is my information got from the people themselves, who are now living.

54,616. Do you state that as a justification for taking it from them or as a difficulty that might be likely to occur again?—It merely explains why I suppose they were not able to pay their rent, and how the place fell into the proprietor's hands.

54,617. He settled the quarrel by taking the land

Dingwall. William Gunn.

into his own hands?—Yes, and wiped off the arrear of rent, which was irrecoverable.

54,618. He wiped off the arrears and then deprived them of it?—Well, of course, he could not go on leaving them with land that they were unable to pay a rent for,—especially such a small rent.

54,619. Do lessees of deer forests ever quarrel, do you know?—I am unable to say.

54,620. Have you ever known of it in your experience?—No, I have not.

54,621. You have never seen law-suits taking place about deer forests?—Oh, yes, I have seen law-suits about them.

54,622. So that disagreements are not peculiar to crofters or small holders?—Well, I think disagreements in the case of lessees of deer forests are exceptional, while the other are very common.

54,623. Do you know of law-suits regarding deer forests, which were a thousand times more expensive than all the quarrels crofters ever had?—That may be.

54,624. It is within your knowledge, is it not? The case is notorious?—Yes, I am aware of that case.

54,625. You sought credit for the management of the estate for the distribution of the land; far be it from me to say that you are not entitled to full credit compared with some distributions we have heard of.—I might have mentioned in confirmation of that a very extensive reclamation which was carried out on this estate in 1848 or 1850 at Knockfarrel where 150 acres were reclaimed by the proprietor at a cost of nearly £3000.

54,626. How was the land on the opposite side reclaimed?—Most likely by the tenants themselves gradually.

54,627. It is a most striking example of good cultivation, looking at it from a distance. Could you give us any information as to how it was carried out?—I am really unable to say; it was long before my time. There has been really very little reclaimed within the last 50 years. It is a feature of the Heights of Strathpeffer that the land on the north side facing the south, although high, is very good. There is some of it bad, but there is a great extent of good deep loam.

54,628. How long was the reclamation on the right-hand side as you go up, in being done?—It is impossible for me to say, perhaps 50 or 60 years ago.

54,629. Do you know if it was done under any security of tenure?—It would be probably on improving lease I should imagine, but as to that I cannot be certain.

54,630. They did not hold by lease, did they, previous to the passing of the Crofters Act?—Yes, they did; they all had leases.

54,631. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—How is the forest of Garbat returned in the valuation roll?—I have not the roll to refer to, but I think I heard the Chairman say that it was entered as grazings and shootings; if that is the case it is quite a slip. It is well known it is a deer forest.

54,632. The entry on p. 305 of the valuation roll is as follows:—'Shootings and grazings, Garbat, Walter 'Shoolbred, 10 Connaught Place, Hyde Park, London, 'W., tenant; rent £600, 2s.' Have you any explanation of that?—No, I can offer no explanation: it is quite beyond my recollection, having made any return in 1891.

54,633. But you remember making a return, no doubt, to the County Assessor?—Yes, the assessor gets a yearly return,—at least, it is simply revised if there is no alteration.

54,634. But you are responsible for the return made to the assessor?—Yes.

54,635. You are responsible for this deer forest being entered in the valuation roll as 'shootings and 'grazings?'—Very likely.

54,636. Not very likely, but certainly?—Yes, it may be so: I have no doubt it is. It has been entirely a slip; I quite see it ought to have been entered as a forest.

54,637. So that we find slips in the valuation roll as well as in the return that was made to Parliament?—Doubtless, we will find slips in very many things, unfortunately.

54,638. *Mr Munro.*—Mr Darroch in his paper says: '—I have, for a long time, been of the opinion that 'crofters had the first equitable claim to arable land 'lying near congested districts'; do you agree with that opinion, Mr Gunn?—Yes, to some extent I do.

54,639. I suppose you have heard that the crofters in the Heights of Fodderty and around Strathpeffer consider their holdings somewhat inadequate?—Some of them do, I daresay.

54,640. Would you be prepared to divide amongst them some of the neighbouring large farms, such as Brae and Fodderty?—Brae is not upon our estate; Fodderty is, and if you can produce a feasible scheme by which so desirable a thing can be accomplished without loss to the proprietor then I certainly say let it be done. But Fodderty farm is in a state of high cultivation, and is very fully equipped with costly buildings; and the question comes to be if you reduce its area what are you to do with these offices?

54,641. I am aware that Fodderty farm is in the condition you now represent it to be, and is an admirably conducted farm; but you have no general objection to giving land contiguous to crofts?—My plan would be this; I think that if crofters are to be assisted, they should be assisted by Government; and they should purchase estates when these come into the market, and not displace existing tenants who are doing well where they are.

54,642. If an experiment were to be made in that direction, you propose that the Government should step in and buy the land and experiment upon it?—Yes, that is my view.

54,643. That is in one shape, a scheme of land nationalisation?—Well, it may be that, but I think it would cure itself in time.

54,644. Mr Darroch also indicated an opinion that crofters might, with advantage to themselves and probably to others, be taken from some of the parts in the west coast and planted on the arable lands further south,—a scheme of migration, in short?—Yes.

54,645. Would you approve of a suggestion of that sort?—Yes, on the same principle that I have already stated, that the risk should not rest entirely with the proprietor.

54,646. But that the Government should first acquire the lands and then experiment upon them in that way?—Quite so.

HENRY VARY MACCALLUM, Solicitor, Inverness (34)—*examined.* Henry Vary Maccallum

54,647. *The Chairman.*—You appear on behalf of Major Jackson of Swordale?—Yes.

54,648. I understand he is not very well at present?—No, he is not. I am instructed by Major Jackson to make the following short statement.—'The estates of 'Swordale and Clare consist of 3823 acres, of which 60 'or 70 acres are turned up every year, on the Swordale 'portion. The Clare portion contains about 500 acres 'grass, which Major Jackson has limed and manured 'at considerable expense. The height of this portion 'above sea-level averages about 700 feet, and about '2345 acres is hill outrun, whereof about 1000 acres are, 'owing to their great height, only available for seven 'months in the year for pasture,—that is, for breeding 'sheep, as it does not pay in these times to keep a 'wedder stock.

'From experiments made by Major Jackson, he 'found that the farther west he tilled his land, the less 'was the return of grain. Major Jackson considers 'that in no way could the land on this estate support 'in comfort more mouths than it does at present. The 'size laid down by the Napier Commission for a pas-'toral croft was 10 acres arable and 250 outrun. Major 'Jackson now employs, besides unmarried workers on 'outside work, fifteen families, who, if they received 'land according to this calculation, would require 150

Dingwall. Henry Vary Maccallum.

'acres arable and 3750 outrun, a total acreage of 3900 'acres,—a quantity greater than this small estate con- 'tains, leaving, in fact, not a scrap of land for himself. 'Were land appropriated from this estate, it would 'compel him to dismiss families now in his employment, 'for whom he has the greatest respect and friendship.

'In 1885, Major Jackson wished to purchase a small 'estate to be farmed by himself, and on the strength 'of a letter from Mr Munro of Lemlair, dated 26th 'February, 1885, a certified excerpt from which is 'produced, he purchased Swordale. At the date of this 'purchase, there was no resident landlord on the 'property, and there were only twelve people employed 'on the estate, at an annual wage of £288, 15s., besides 'perquisites. Now, there is a resident proprietor, who 'lives all the year round on the property, employing 'twenty-five people outside, at a wage of £751, not in- 'cluding perquisites. There are besides eighteen people 'living or employed in the mansion-house; and in addi- 'tion to this, at many periods in the year, a number of 'outside labourers are employed. I would further state 'that not taking into consideration the building of the 'mansion-house, nearly £20,000 has been spent by 'Major Jackson since he came to Swordale, ten years 'ago.

'Major Jackson wishes me to add that he considers 'the parish of Kiltearn one of the most prosperous in 'the Highlands. During the last ten years, many new 'houses have been built in Evanton, and he knows of 'only one parish in the county where the poor-rate is 'lower. It is also the only Highland rural parish on 'the mainland where the population showed an increase 'at last census. In 1881, the population was 1182; in '1891, it was 1301.

'(Signed) H. V. Maccallum.'

4th September 1894.

Certified excerpt from a letter written by the former proprietor of Swordale, John Munro, Esq. of Lemlair, to Major Jackson, the present proprietor, dated 26th February, 1885.

'On payment of the price, I agree to grant a valid 'disposition and along therewith deliver a valid and 'legal progress of titles, and a search of encumbrances 'for forty years, showing the record clear of burdens. 'I guarantee that there are no crofters or cottars on, 'or having any claim to any part or portion of the 'estate.'—Certified to be a true excerpt.

(Signed) Randle Jackson.

3rd September 1894.

54,649. Can you tell me what is the expenditure per annum by Major Jackson upon his estate,—I mean upon grounds, gardens, and so on?—No, not definitely, but I shall be glad to obtain it, and put it in.

54,650. Is it the fact that Major Jackson looks in a friendly spirit upon the Crofters Act?—It is.

54,651. And would he be in favour of its extension to a wider area than it at present applies to?—Well, he certainly would be in favour of its extension to leaseholders; he has always said that he regarded the Crofters Act favourably, and that he thought it ought to be extended to leaseholders.

54,652. Is he in favour of its being extended to a larger area than the counties presently included?—I don't think that is a point on which I am in a position to speak.

54,653. Is he in favour of its extension in the matter of rent, to a higher rent than £30?—I have always heard him speak of the £30 limit.

54,654. In so far as he looks with a friendly eye on the Crofters Act, and is in favour of that legislation, we may take him as differing entirely both from Mr George Malcolm of Invergarry, and from Mr Duncan Darroch of Torridon?—I would answer the question, if your lordship would allow me, in this way, that Major Jackson has always been in favour of more people being placed on the land situated in the vicinity of congested districts, and he has shown that in the interest he took in the property of Knockrach, which immediately adjoins his own. About eighteen of the people of Evanton have been placed there.

Dingwall. Henry Vary Maccallum.

54,655. Who did that?—Major Jackson was the leading spirit, with Sir Hector Munro of Fowlis, the matter having come before the County Council.

54,656. As a member of the County Council, he favoured the movement?—He did: he was the moving spirit in the matter.

54,657. How many individuals got land in that way?—Twenty, I think.

54,658. And what is the extent of the holding?—They are in possession of the land now; they are tilling it now.

54,659. But they have separate holdings, I suppose?—Yes.

54,660. Do you know the extent?—It varies, I should say, from 4 acres to about 20.

54,661. Of arable land?—Yes; it is all arable land.

54,662. Were the rents fixed by agreement, or by the proprietor?—The property was bought by the County Council at a certain price, and the tenants paid down one-fifth of the purchase money. In point of fact, Major Jackson advanced one-fifth of the purchase price to them, as he wanted to try the experiment.

54,663. To the incoming tenant?—To the County Council: to enable them to buy this land, he became responsible to the County Council for one-fifth part of the price, which is required by the Small Holdings Act to be paid down when the land is purchased by the County Council. [*Mr W. J. Duncan, County Clerk.*—I may explain that it is not a case of tenants going in at all; it is a transaction under the Small Holdings Act, whereby the small holders actually purchase land from the County Council, paying the price in fifty years].

54,664. Now, you say that Major Jackson is in favour of the relief of congested districts by the migration of crofters?—I don't think I said that, my lord.

54,665. I thought you indicated something of that sort. He is in favour of congested districts being relieved?—He is, and of facilities being given for the acquisition of land in the vicinity of congested districts.

54,666. Then he would be in favour of crofters being migrated to new lands as nearly as possible contiguous to their present holdings, but more suitable than the lands they leave?—I believe he has suggested that the experiment should be tried first of a property being purchased, and the crofters being placed upon this land, to see how it would work, due advantage always being taken of the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts.

54,667. And he recognises that in many districts, such as the Lews and many others, there exists an acute condition of matters, requiring some vigorous treatment, with a view to the relief of the congestion?—Undoubtedly; I know that he recognises fully the gravity of the situation in the Lews.

54,668. And he is not at all in favour of what is called 'the land question' in the Highlands being left simply where it is?—No, certainly not; he fully recognises that it requires some remedy.

54,669. And therein he differs from some other proprietors,—we need not mention names?—Well, I believe he is credited with being more advanced than others, but I do not wish to draw comparisons.

54,670. But you say that he is much more advanced in his views upon the land question than his brother proprietors in the Highlands or the most of them?—Yes, I believe he is.

54,671. *Mr Munro.*—I think you mentioned that Major Jackson is in favour of putting as many people on the land as possible?—He has always said so.

54,672. In the light of that, would he be prepared to favourably consider any application that might be made to him to give the people the lands of Clair back again?—I believe he would. But I should like to add in regard to the lands of Clair, that the point which I endeavoured to bring out and which Major Jackson wished me to bring out, in my statement, is that, at

Dingwall. Henry Vary Maccallum.

present, there are more people living comfortably in Swordale than ever lived there before; and that is a fact that will not, I suppose, be denied. There is a resident proprietor, who has spent over £20,000 within the last ten years; and really, after all, Swordale is more of a small farm than an estate.

54,673. I am aware that it is not a large estate. Major Jackson took a considerable interest, I think, in letting the lands of Knockrash?—He did.

54,674. But that is not on his property?—No, it was a property that came into the market. He thinks there are always many properties that come into the market, which might be dealt with, before really taking any active steps to take property from people who possess it at present.

54,675. I am aware that you are all very willing to experiment upon other people's property?—But it is everybody's property, when it comes into the market.

54,676. I would like to see an experiment tried on his own property of Clair?—If it is a matter of experiment, I have no doubt that Major Jackson would be quite willing to experiment on his own land as well as on anyone else's: but these really are questions that I would prefer he should answer himself.

54,677. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—With regard to the experiment that was tried by the County Council, was it in answer to an application made by the people themselves that the thing was put in motion?—No, it was not. It was in this way—there is really nothing to hide in the matter:—The property of Knockrash fell into the market. Major Jackson held a second bond over it, and he was very anxious indeed that the experiment of putting more people on the land should be tried, as I have mentioned. He gave up his right to this second bond, and, as I mentioned already, he advanced or became security for one-fifth of the purchase price. He and Sir Hector Munro were the two real movers in the matter.

54,678. Then, was the property first offered for sale in the open market?—It was.

54,679. And failed to find a purchaser?—Oh, no; the County Council purchased it.

54,680. But I think you stated that it was offered through Major Jackson to the County Council, and I want to know when that offer came in,—whether it was after having made an ineffectual attempt to sell?—No, it was not.

54,681. How was it exposed in the open market, then, at all?—It was, I presume, advertised in the usual way. [*Mr W. J. Duncan.*—As clerk to the Council, perhaps I may be allowed to explain that the property was sold by a bondholder. Major Jackson convened a meeting of the villagers of Evanton, and suggested that that was a very good chance for an experiment being made. He advised them to apply to the Council, and get the place under the Small Holdings Act. Major Jackson generously gave the amount of his second bond back to the County Council, which, accordingly, reduced the amount payable to the County Council by the small holders. Thus he is advancing one-fifth of the price to certain small holders who are not in a position to meet it out of their own pockets,—the fifth that has to be paid down at once. The balance is payable, principal and interest, in a period of over fifty years. The property was sold first of all under the powers of a bond and disposition in security. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Who was the purchaser?—*Mr Duncan.*—The County Council, in virtue of an application from the district. The County Council purchased it in the open market.]

54,682. Have houses been built upon these lands? *Witness.*—No; all the occupiers of the land have houses in the village of Evanton, immediately adjoining the property; they are villagers in Evanton, who had formerly no land.

54,683. Is it your opinion, that in these experiments,—say when a sheep farm became vacant, it would be necessary to get Government aid for the crofters, in order to form new holdings upon it?—I have no doubt, from my experience in some districts, the crofters would be in a position to stock, but in other districts they would not, and I am afraid the majority would find the stocking of new holdings very difficult. To my mind, it is a very great difficulty.

Dingwall. Henry Vary Maccallum.

54,684. *Mr Sutherland.*—How many crofters are upon this property of Swordale?—There are none.

54,685. What population, then, do you speak of?—I speak of the people employed in the district.

54,686. Are there people employed on the estate who have no land?—It is practically a large farm, as I have explained.

54,687. Which has been consolidated, doubtless, before the present proprietor came to have it?—Yes. When he came, there were no crofters on Swordale.

54,688. You say he is willing that the people should be replaced upon the land?—No; I say if the experiment were to be tried in the Highlands I think he would be as willing to allow it to be tried on his own property as on any other; but his view is that there are many estates in the market already, without, in the meantime, taking the land from anyone.

54,689. But neither you nor he could contemplate any public action that was not of universal application, at least within the area to which it would apply?—Unless Government were to try the experiment of purchasing an estate in the market.

54,690. You go in for the nationalisation of the land?—Well, if you call it that.

54,691. We need not quarrel about the name, the thing is the same. You do not see any difficulty in the Government undertaking the management of land directly?—As an experiment. What I meant was the case of an estate coming into the market.

54,692. But, you see, estates could be brought into the market by legislation, which would have the same effect?—You could not then make any exceptions and it would no longer be an experiment.

54,693. If the State were to engage in transactions in land, that might very quickly bring every property in the country into the market: you have noticed that, I suppose, in the case of other countries?—It has not had that effect in Ireland, to a very great extent.

54,694. I take it then that the matter is only in the theoretical stage at present, in your mind and in that of Major Jackson. As regards the increase of population to which you referred, I took it that it applied to the parish, and not to the estate: do the estate and the parish coincide?—Taking it all over, I said the parish had increased in population during the last decade, and that applies equally to Swordale. Not so far as regards crofters, undoubtedly, because nobody can deny, as we heard to-day, that there were six crofters on Clair at one time.

54,695. Has the increase of population then taken place chiefly in the village of Evanton?—Oh, no; I think it is pretty well all over the parish.

54,696. With regard to the transaction entered into by the County Council,—I rather think that you are not yourself a member of the Council?—No.

54,697. But Major Jackson is?—Yes, he is.

54,698. Do I understand you to say that Major Jackson on the occasion in question forewent the amount of his bond?—Yes.

54,699. Was the first bond a heavy one?—Well, comparatively speaking, it was.

54,700. I wish to give Major Jackson the full credit for his action, but I would like to know from you if the margin of the second bond was large?—Yes, I can honestly say that it was. We went carefully into the matter at the time, and we found the probability was that if the property were sold at a good figure, he would receive the value of his second bond.

54,701. The full value?—Yes, the full value.

HUGH FRASER, Writer, Inverness, factor for Dunmaglass (50)—*examined.* Hugh Fras

54,702. At your sitting on Thursday last in Inverness there was a witness named William Macgillivray from Balnaberran, Errogie, who, in the course of his

Dingwall. Hugh Fraser.

evidence, said that two tenants on the Dunmaglass estate had been evicted under circumstances of severity. To that statement I have to give the most unqualified denial. They were neither evicted nor was there any severity; in short, these two men and the proprietor were on the very best of terms, and are still quite friendly: they had a very good feeling in regard to the whole circumstances of their removal and their stay there. Before I come to the correspondence which took place at the time perhaps I might just briefly say that Mr Sopper bought this property a few years ago, and has expended very large sums of money on the estate, and the labour being entirely local, all the people in the place were fully employed. The two houses which these two men occupied were on the private road leading to the lodge. They were thatched houses, built of stone and turf, and were common small 'black' houses which were in a very dilapidated condition; in fact, as compared with the effect of the improvements with which they were surrounded these houses became a disgrace to the place and could not be allowed to remain as they were. But Mr Sopper was very anxious that these men who had been so long on the estate should, if possible, not be removed, and with that in view, he made them the following offer. It is embodied in a letter addressed by me to these men on 17th September, 1892, and reads thus:—

Copy letter to Messrs A. and D. Macgillivray, Farmers, Achnaloddan, Inverness, 17th Sept. 1892.

'Dear Sir,—With reference to the recent conference 'between Mr Sopper and you and your neighbour, Mr 'Donald Macgillivray, in regard to your present hold- 'ings, which it is desirable to rearrange in connection 'with the general improvements now being carried out 'on the estate, I am to inform you that after the 'fullest consideration on Mr Sopper's part—specially 'with the view of retaining you as a tenant, he has 'resolved to offer to you and your neighbour in one 'holding all the lands on the north portion of Dunma- 'glass Proper, bounded as follows:—On the west by 'the march with Easter Aberchalder, on the south by 'the loch, policies, and river, to the present march of 'the Mains Farm, and thence along that march from 'the river northwards to the private road, and then 'along that road eastwards to the county road near 'the bridge, on the east by the said county road, and 'on the north by the march with Farraline. This new 'holding I now, on behalf of the proprietor, offer to 'you and Mr Donald Macgillivray jointly, or to either 'of you, subject to the lease thereof, containing the 'usual clauses applicable to such a farm, being approved, 'at a yearly rent of £110, which I am advised by an 'experienced valuator is a fair rent. At present you 'and your neighbour have 26 acres arable or thereby. 'By the above arrangement, the extent will be 32 acres 'arable, 19 acres out of cultivation, and 1000 acres of 'hill ground or thereby. If the offer now made is 'accepted I am authorised to say that Mr Sopper will 'build one dwelling-house and steading with suitable 'accommodation on the holding.

'This proposed arrangement, with its consequent 'large expenditure in buildings, is entirely out of con- 'sideration for you both. Had you not been so long 'connected with the estate the proprietor would not 'think of incurring the expense of these buildings— 'seeing that there already exists at the Mains more than 'is sufficient for all the lands.

'I am writing to Mr Donald Macgillivray in the same 'terms, and as Mr Sopper is to go south in about a 'week, and is anxious to have arrangements completed, 'please let me hear from you, as to the offer now made, 'with as little delay as possible.—Yours faithfully,

(Signed) 'Hugh Fraser.'

Copy Reply.

Achnaloddan, Dunmaglass, 21*st September* 1892.

'Dear Sir,—We received your letter of 17th instant. 'We much feel Mr Sopper's very kind considerations 'for us in offering to erect buildings an our account. 'Will you please convey our thanks to him. As one 'house and steading will not suit us, we have to decline 'the offer made, and hope that Mr Sopper will give us 'the usual privileges of out-going tenants, in taking over 'our sheep stock, &c. at valuation. The place would 'suit one of us, but we prefer being together.—Yours 'truly,'

(Signed) 'Alexander Macgillivray,
,, 'Donald Macgillivray.

'Mr Fraser,
'Factor for Dunmaglass, Inverness.'

That letter so very fully explains the whole case that I have very little else to say except this: after these men had themselves agreed to remove, and did wish to remove, and left with very good feeling, they asked the proprietor by letter, whether he would give them the advantages of out-going tenants. This Mr Sopper had done; he had paid them full valuations for all belonging to them, including sheep stock and everything else, and I may say that I am quite sure that the statements which were made before you the other day were not made with the authority of these two men, for I am sure the kindly feelings which always existed between them and the proprietor would not have permitted it.

54,703. *The Chairman.*—They got other holdings, did they?—Not on the estate.

54,704. But they were fully compensated for leaving?—Oh, fully.

54,705. How much did each man get?—There was a minute of reference fixing two arbiters to value the different things, and the result was as follows:—

Grass, fallow, manure, &c.	£27	and	£33	odds.
Sheep stock, . . .	431	,,	451	,,
Grain crops, later on, . .	38	,,	33	,,

The tenants were also permitted to remain in their cottages for another year, rent free.

William Allis Smith.

William Allis Smith of Glencalvie, Ross-shire (59)—*examined*

54,706. *The Chairman.*—You are proprietor of the estate of Glencalvie?—Yes.

54,707. Kindly read your statement.

To the Chairman and Honourable Members of the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands, 1892.)

'I bought the estate of Glencalvie, consisting of 4583 'acres, by auction at Edinburgh, on the 15th of May '1890, from Mr Charles Robertson of Kindeace, for '£12,500. The estate was publicly advertised as having 'no crofters or tenants upon it. On taking possession I 'found that there were three squatters living in three 'dilapidated tenements:—one woman, Ann Ross, aged '90, in the receipt of parish relief; two women named 'Bella and Margaret Mackay living in a dilapidated house; 'and Bella Campbell also occupying a dilapidated house. 'These people were there on the estate without any 'legal holding whatever, but instead of evicting them, 'I have had built for them two new houses, have 'broken up ground for them and fenced it in with 'wire fence, and have permitted them to have a cow 'each, and fenced in a cow-run of 36 acres each, 'and executed a lease for their respective lives at 'a charge of one shilling yearly. Nearly three hundred 'has been spent upon the properties without charging 'the squatters with any of the outlay. Since buying 'the estate I have laid out £5000 in buildings, road- 'making, fencing and draining, employing Scotch 'lawyers, architects, builders, and artizans, thus em 'ploying a large number of local men for three years, 'and have also spent during the three years upwards 'of £3000 buying my provisions locally. I keep 'permanently on the estate a coachman and gardener, 'with his family, a gamekeeper, with his family, and 'two men at work on the estate (all of them being 'Scotchmen). The 48 acres of available land I have

Dingwall. — William Allis Smith.

'surrounded with a mile and a half of deer fence, and 'I am cultivating and ploughing it up and find it will 'not suffice for keeping my horses, cows, &c. without 'buying extra food for them in the winter. It is my 'intention to stock the hill pasturage with cattle and 'sheep next spring. I have retired from my profession '(medical) with the purpose of making Glencalvie my 'home and farming it, having built a commodious 'lodge, stables, with coachman's house, keeper's house, 'walled kitchen garden, game larders, &c., and I reside 'there seven months of the year with my family, and 'have no intention of letting the estate, and it appears 'to me that it would be a great injustice if crofters 'were introduced by which any portion of the small 'amount of land capable of being cultivated were taken 'from me as there is not sufficient land available for 'my own personal use and that of my horses, cows, and 'stock. I regret that I was not made aware of the 'visit of the Commission to Glencalvie in November '1893, and most unfortunately had left Glencalvie the 'day before the honourable members arrived, otherwise 'I should have most certainly remained to make my 'personal statement at the time. I humbly, therefore, 'beg that the Honourable Commissioners will receive 'this statement and enter it into the blue-book, and 'bear in mind the large outlay I have made on this 'small estate with the sole purpose of making it a 'residential home for myself, and that all the land 'capable of cultivation I absolutely require for my own 'use.'

(Signed), WILLIAM ALLIS SMITH.

54,708. *Mr Sutherland.*—May I ask whether you were aware of the history of Glencalvie before you bought the estate?—Not the least. I saw the place advertised in a newspaper three days before I bought it. I came north to see an old gamekeeper and ask him whether he thought the estate would suit me; I then hastened back to Edinburgh and bought the estate. I only saw it three days before buying it, so I knew nothing whatever of the history of the property.

[ADJOURNED.]

SIXTY-THIRD SITTING.

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

POOLEWE, ROSS-SHIRE, September 7, 1894.

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
MICHAEL HUGH SHAW STEWART, Esq., M.P.
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
HENRY MUNRO, Esq.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

Malcolm Urquhart.

MALCOLM URQUHART, Crofter, Sand, Aultbea (57). —*examined.*

54,709. *The Chairman.*—Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The croft is No. 27, Sand; area 4 acres 2 roods 30 poles arable; 1 acre 7 poles outrun; one share in township common of 820 acres divided into 21 shares; old rent £6, 3s. 2d.; fair rent £3, 10s.; arrears £18, 11s. 4d., whereof cancelled £14, 11s. 4d., and ordered to be paid £4.]

54,710. Do you know the land hereabouts very well?—Yes, I should know it.

54,711. What is it you wish to say as to the land in this quarter?—I wish to state that we are short of pasture for our cattle. Poolewe, Ross-shire. Malcolm Urquhart.

54,712. I see that you have 820 acres of township pasture?—Yes.

54,713. Have you no common hill pasture besides?—No.

54,714. What is the general character of the pasture you have?—What we have is pretty good; it is just a mixture of good and bad.

54,715. Would you describe it as good mixed pasture on the whole?—Good mixed pasture on the whole. It is pretty fair in quality, but too limited in extent.

54,716. How much more, do you think, would be required?—We are put in great straits, because our forefathers had Beinn-a'-Chaisgein for pasture, and all the eild cattle and horses were sent there in summer-time.

54,717. That was your summer sheiling?—That was our summer sheiling, and that left the grass in the strath below for later on in the season.

54,718. Can you give us any idea of the extent of the Beinn-a'-Chaisgein pasture?—I know the ground very well, but I can give no idea of its size.

54,719. Was it larger than what you have?—Far larger; we had it along with what we have now.

54,720. Where does Beinn-a'-Chaisgein lie from your township?—It lies in a south-easterly direction; south or south-east.

54,721. How have you done since you lost that pasture?—We were forced to send the eild cattle if we had any to other places to graze, and as to our horses each one sent his to Assynt or wherever he could get it placed. Others were obliged to sell their horses after the spring labour was over, even at half price, as they had no grazing to give them.

54,722. So that it was a serious loss?—Yes, it could not have been more serious.

54,723. How is that land of Beinn-a'-Chaisgein used now?—It is a deer forest.

54,724. Is it part of the Letterewe forest?—Yes.

54,725. It is included within the limits of that forest?—Yes, and no longer used for sheep.

54,726. When did that happen?—I cannot give the date, but it was before I recollect that we lost Beinn-a'-Chaisgein. It might perhaps be in my time, but I have no recollection, though there are some present who do recollect it.

54,727. And if you had that pasture restored, or similar pasture, would that satisfy the desires of the township?—Yes.

54,728. You are able to speak I suppose on behalf of the whole township?—Yes, I am appointed by them as a delegate to appear before you.

54,729. At a meeting held recently?—Yes. We were in such straits that we applied to the proprietor for hill grazing for our eild cattle and our horses, but we did not come to an agreement.

54,730. When was that application made?—About two years ago.

54,731. And what was the answer given?—There were certain conditions.

54,732. Tell me what it was that stopped the negotiation?—We agreed to the conditions, and then we heard no more about it. I for one signed the paper about the agreement.

54,733. Have you got that paper?—I believe it was sent in to the manager of the estate, Mr Stewart.

54,734. You have not a copy of it yourself?—No, it was sent round among us.

54,735. Was it signed by all?—I cannot say that it was signed by all, but it was signed by those who were put to such straits that they did not know what to do. It was signed by a good many, I know.

54,736. By the majority?—I believe so.

54,737. You send your stock at present, which used to summer on this place, to Assynt and other quarters. What does that cost you on the average?—Every horse costs £1.

54,738. And has nearly every crofter in the township got a horse?—Most of them have, but there are a good

many who go to the market in the beginning of spring and buy a horse, and perhaps have to sell it at a loss when the labour is over, as there is no grazing for it.

54,739. And what do sheep cost you for this pasture?—We had to sell the sheep; I am not aware of any case where we send away the sheep. We sell them instead of keeping them on.

54,740. In fact, the want of that pasture produces a forced sale of the sheep?—We are obliged to sell the sheep because we have no place to keep them. I am not aware of any case where we send sheep to grazing. Then, we applied to the shooting tenant, Mr Perkins, and we applied to the present shooting tenant, Mr Laycock, and he would not consent to give us what we wanted. We wanted a bit of the forest that borders on the sea; it comes down as far as the seashore, and we wanted a bit for grazing, for which we were willing to pay a fair rent.

54,741. Where exactly was the bit you asked for?—Between the two rivers, the Little Gruinard and the Meikle Gruinard.

54,742. And sloping down to the sea?—Yes.

54,743. How far does the land go that you wanted from the proprietor?—About four miles, to Loch-a'-Mhadaidh.

54,744. That was the march of the land you wanted in that direction?—Yes.

54,745. What answer did you get to that?—If it would not take up too much of your time you could see the correspondence. I believe one here has the letters.

54,746. Who is it that has the correspondence?—Roderick Mackenzie.

54,747. Have any other townships besides Sand an interest in the 820 acres of grazing?—Yes, there are two townships called First and Second Coast that have an interest in it along with Sand; we have the pasture together.

54,748. The three townships of Sand, First Coast, and Second Coast have together an interest in this area of 820 acres?—Yes.

54,749. How many families are in Sand?—Fourteen.

54,750. How many in First Coast?—Seven.

54,751. And how many in Second Coast?—There are 18 between the two townships of Coast. [*The Secretary.*—The Crofters Commission dealt with 17 holdings in First and Second Coast, and 14 in Sand, and I believe there were one or two that were not dealt with.]

54,752. That makes 32 families. Have the townships of First and Second Coast any other grazing besides this 820 acres?—No.

54,753. So that the entire grazing which these three townships of Sand, First Coast, and Second Coast have is this area of 820 acres?—Yes.

54,754. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—How do you manage your present grazing? Does each individual have a certain number of sheep, and look after his own sheep?—Yes, every one looks after his own.

54,755. How many sheep would each sharer have?—Sixteen.

54,756. Do they keep to that limit?—Some do, and others do not.

54,757. It would be better, I suppose, if they all kept to the limit?—Some have not so many.

54,758. How many sheep would you say are on the grazing at present?—The present grazing would not accommodate so many as that.

54,759. You mean that if you multiply 16 by 21 that would be too many?—That would be too many; ten a-piece would be enough for the present grazing as far as I can judge.

54,760. What is your occupation?—I am a crofter.

54,761. Do you go to the fishing, or to other work?—I have been a farm servant, I have been a railway labourer, and I have been at the herring fishing; anything that comes in my way.

54,762. Are most of your neighbours employed in the same way?—Most of them are.

54,763. Some fish and some go away to labour?—Yes.

54,764. Do they go to the south?—Yes.

54,765. *Mr Sutherland.*—Tenants from your township applied to the Crofters Commission for enlargement of holding, I understand?—Yes.

54,766. From the farm of Drumchork?—Yes.

54,767. And the Commissioners did not see their way to grant the extension inasmuch as it was to be taken from a farm that was under £100 of rent; is that the reason why you did not get it?—That is the reason, as far as I understand.

54,768. But the application to the Crofters Commission showed your desire to get more land?—Yes.

54,769. In answer to a question put to you by his lordship you said that the land taken from you first was before you remember?—Yes, but there was land taken from us within my memory.

54,770. What was done with the land that was taken before your recollection?—It was a sheep farm, and now it is a deer forest.

54,771. It was taken from you for the purpose of making a sheep farm, and that sheep farm was afterwards turned into a deer forest?—Yes.

54,772. Now, tell me about the second time your pasture was curtailed; when was that?—Every time the farm changed hands they would take a slice off; at every renewal of a lease, or at the entry of a new tenant to a farm, they would take a slice off what we had.

54,773. Then, you said there were 32 families interested in this 820 acres of pasture. Are there more than 32 families in these townships you have mentioned?—There are more families.

54,774. Are there any families that have got no land at all?—Yes.

54,775. How many?—I cannot say at present.

54,776. Are there ten, do you think?—I have no idea, I cannot say off-hand how many there are.

54,777. But there are some who have got no land at all?—Yes.

54,778. And, consequently, no interest in this 820 acres?—No interest in it.

54,779. The 32 families who have an interest in it are entitled to keep 16 sheep?—Yes.

54,780. That makes a total of 512 sheep. Will that area graze 512 sheep?—There are only 21 shares.

54,781. Then, there must be eleven families who have no interest in the grazing?—Yes.

54,782. That must be the number of families who have no land at all, these eleven?—It must be so.

54,783. Is there any desire on their part to get land?—I believe there is; I hear among them that there is.

54,784. Are any of them fishermen?—We are partly fishermen, the whole of us, and partly crofters.

54,785. But those who have got no crofts, are they fishermen?—Not wholly. There is not what I would call a fisherman who lives altogether by fishing among them all.

54,786. But do some of them go to the east coast fishing as hired men?—Yes, but that has failed now mostly.

54,787. *Mr Gordon.*—Where does your present pasture lie? Does it extend over to the Little Gruinard River?—No, there is a burn that comes down on the north side of the Gruinard.

54,788. What is the name of it?—Allt-Bad-an-t-sluig.

54,789. Now, the portion of the ground which you applied for does not include the ground between Badan-Luig and the Little Gruinard river; why did you leave that bit out?—Little Gruinard is a sheep farm.

54,790. Little Gruinard is at present occupied as a farm?—As a sheep farm.

54,791. Have you any idea of the extent of ground that you applied for, up to Loch-a'-Mhadaidh?—As far as I can judge it would be between three and four miles, or about three miles.

54,792. It would be rather less than 3000 acres I should think from the look of it. Now, will you tell me how you would propose to occupy that ground?—We propose to occupy the ground by putting our spare stock on it, our eild cattle and horses, in summer.

54,793. But this ground that you have applied for is three times the size of the ground you have at present; you would require to occupy it to some more profitable

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Malcolm Urquhart.

purpose than simply as an additional grazing?—Well, if your lordships decided that that would be too much for us, of course it is not for us to say.

54,794. I don't say it is too much, but I want you to tell me if you are to apply for this ground, how are you to occupy it?—We will try and stock it; we will take it in shares.

54,795. Would you propose to stock it as a club farm?—We propose to stock it as a club farm and take it in shares.

54,796. Have you any experience of club farming in your present township?—No.

54,797. Is there any club farm in your neighbourhood?—No.

54,798. But so far as you know, yourself and your neighbours would be amenable to reasonable laws laid down for the management of a club farm, provided you got the land?—I don't think there would be any difference.

54,799. You would be willing to occupy this land under certain rules if you got it?—Yes, if we got it.

54,800. You spoke about the grazing of your horses. How many horses are there in your own village?—Eleven.

54,801. Is not that rather many? Are the rest of the crofts about the same size as yours?—I have a share and a half.

54,802. Don't you think eleven horses are too many to work 50 or 60 acres of arable land? Don't you think that keeping so many horses is a great loss to the township?—It would not be a great loss to the township, because when the time of the grazing comes we are forced to send them away.

54,803. When you lay down your crop?—Yes.

54,804. But you must keep them for a certain length of time?—Yes. Of course, if they were kept all the year round, it would be too many.

54,805. But during the time you do keep them, when you are laying down your crops, is it not a great scourge upon your cows and home cattle to have so many horses?—It is, but we cannot do without them.

54,806. Even if you got this land you would have to keep them?—Yes, during that time.

54,807. They would be the same scourge upon your cattle as they are now?—But if we got this ground the grass would be growing in the lower ground, and we would have more grass.

54,808. I would be afraid that if you got this ground it would only tempt you to keep more useless animals?—But there must be an agreement that we will not allow ourselves to keep too many. There must be a limited number.

54,809. Suppose you got the ground, do you think yourself and your neighbours would be able to stock it?—I think we would.

54,810. *The Chairman.*—I see that in the Order of 17th December 1888, issued by the Crofters Commission, reference is made to the farm of Udrigil which had been offered by the landlord to certain crofters. How does that matter stand now? Has the farm been given since then, or is it still occupied as a farm?—It is still occupied as a farm, but it is given to the crofters; the crofters have it. There are crofters settled in Udrigil.

54,811. Then, it is divided into holdings?—It is.

54,812. How many holdings were planted there?—Three.

54,813. Is the whole farm taken up with these holdings?—There are six altogether; three being on the other side of Udrigil that I did not remember about, and three on this side.

54,814. And do these take up the whole farm?—They do.

54,815. Were there buildings on the farm?—Yes.

54,816. What became of them?—The crofters have the buildings.

54,817. Do any of the crofters live in the farm-house?—Two of them.

54,818. And what became of the steading?—The steading is between the three crofters; they agreed among themselves to put up steadings for some, and the old steadings do for two, I think.

54,819. I suppose the two crofters who divide the dwelling-house between them will also divide the steading between them?—I think so, but I am not sure.

54,820. Do you know the forest of Fisherfield?—Yes.

54,821. That is a new forest, is it not?—Yes, it is.

54,822. I observe that in the Parliamentary Return of 1891 it is described as having been formed in 1883; I suppose that is correct?—Yes, that is correct.

54,823. And extends to 30,000 acres. How was that land occupied before it became deer forest?—As a sheep farm alone.

54,824. Was it one farm or more?—Lately it was one.

54,825. The sheep were cleared off and it was turned into a deer forest?—Yes.

54,826. Has any other land that you know of in this quarter been turned into forest since 1891?—None in our immediate neighbourhood that I know of.

54,827. Fisherfield, I suppose, is let as a separate forest, a forest by itself?—I believe so, but I cannot speak as to that. There is an island in the Bay of Gruinard, the island of Gruinard, which used to have four crofters, and there are none on it now.

54,828. What is done with it?—It is under sheep.

54,829. Do you mean as part of a farm?—The shooting tenant of Meikle Gruinard has it as part of his sporting ground.

54,830. What is upon it at present?—There is nothing upon it at present except a few sheep and horses; it is very suitable for three or four crofters.

54,831. Are there any deer upon it?—No.

54,832. *Mr Sutherland.*—I wish to ask you a question or two with regard to Udrigil. You say it is now given over to six tenants?—Yes.

54,833. When did that happen?—It happened three years ago, I think; it was after the Crofters Commission were here.

54,834. Do you know the tenants who went there?—Yes.

54,835. What did they do before they went there?—Some of them were tenants elsewhere, and others were cottars.

54,836. How many of them were cottars?—There are two in it at present who had no land when the Crofters Commission was here.

54,837. And how are these men doing now, generally?—They are doing well, as far as I know.

54,838. Have they built houses?—The houses were built before.

54,839. Who built the houses?—The proprietor built the houses; they were built before I was born, and the steading was built since I remember.

54,840. That was part of the equipment of the old farm?—Yes.

54,841. But how are the six separate tenants provided with houses?—They had to put up houses.

54,842. Have you any means of knowing how they did that? I mean, did they require to get assistance from outside in any way?—Not to my knowledge; but one of the tenants that went there at first left Udrigil and took another place.

54,843. But are they supposed generally to be prosperous and doing well?—I cannot say.

54,844. What do you think yourself?—Well, I cannot say.

54,845. Do you think those who had no land before are better off now?—I should think they would be better.

54,846. Who fixed the rent?—It was fixed between themselves and the proprietor.

54,847. Have they got leases from the proprietor?—I cannot say; but Mr Stewart is present.

54,848. Do you know what rents they pay?—No, I do not.

54,849. You have that as an example of what is called migration, forming new holdings?—Yes.

54,850. Is Udrigil far away from here?—About nine miles.

54,851. How many cottars are in Sand?—There are none in Sand to my knowledge; there are paupers, but no cottars except one.

54,852. Do you happen to know how many cottars are in First Coast?—I don't think there are any.

54,853. Or in Second Coast?—Three, I am told.

54,854. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—About the houses in Udrigil, how many crofters there have built their own houses?—Three, I think.

54,855. Did they build these houses entirely by themselves, without any help?—I think so, as far as I know.

54,856. Do you know the houses yourself?—There are some houses that I never saw.

54,857. But you know these three?—I know the men, but some of the houses I have never seen; I have not been there since the houses were built.

54,858. So you have not seen them?—No.

54,859. *Mr Stewart, Factor for Lettervee and Gruinard.*—I am sorry to say that Mr Bankes is unable to be present, owing to ill-health; he has gone to France. [*To Witness*].—You applied to the landlord for grazing for your horses?—Yes.

54,860. Did he not lay down certain rules and conditions?—Yes.

54,861. What did you do with these?—The paper was sent round, and I for one signed it.

54,862. Did you return that paper after it was signed?—It is my belief that it was returned.

54,863. Are you sure it was returned?—I have no proof that it was, but I made all the inquiry that I could, and I was led to believe that it was returned.

54,864. You stated that you had only 820 acres of pasturage for three townships?—I never measured the land,—it was his lordship who told me the extent of the ground.

54,865. As far as my memory serves me, it was 820 for Sand alone. [*The Chairman.*—He states his impression that the townships of Sand, First Coast, and Second Coast have a share in it, but we can correct that, if it is wrong.] *Witness.*—I understood ever since I remember that we were mixed together; I could not say exactly what belonged to Sand or what to Coast except on the extreme west side. [*The Secretary.*—According to the Crofters Commission Report, Sand has 820 acres, and First and Second Coast have a separate area of 420 acres.]

54,866. *The Chairman.*—There seems to be a matter of over 1200 acres, 21 shares being held by Sand, and 18 by First and Second Coast?—Yes.

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

John Macleod.

JOHN MACLEOD, Crofter, Sand (40)—*examined.*

54,867. *The Chairman.*—Was your croft valued by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—Holding No. 23, Widow Isabella Macleod, 6 acres 2 roods 35 poles arable; 2 acres outrun; 1½ shares in the common of 820 acres; old rent £8, 1s. 2d.; fair rent £4, 10s.; arrears £4, 1s. 2d., which were cancelled.]

54,868. Did you hear the evidence given by Urquhart?—Yes, most of it.

54,869. Were you appointed as a delegate to attend here along with him?—Yes.

54,870. And do you agree with the evidence he gave?—Yes, as far as I can understand or remember it.

54,871. The main complaint of the township of Sand seems to be the want of hill grazing?—Yes, that is the most of our complaint.

54,872. And that results as the previous witness says from having lost the pasture of Beinn-a'-Chaisgein?—Yes, and some between this and Beinn-a'-Chaisgein since.

54,873. What is the name of it?—Such as the Heights of Drumchork and part of Little Gruinard.

54,874. Was that all part of the same hill grazing?—Yes, at one time.

54,875. And the desire of the township of Sand is to have a restoration of that grazing, or, at all events, to have some addition made to the grazing they presently possess?—Just so.

54,876. I think we may take you as concurring in the evidence of Urquhart, unless there is anything additional you desire to submit?—No, he spoke just according to our views.

54,877. According to the views arrived at at the meeting where you were appointed?—Yes; only there is one other thing that I remember. It was suggested that it was too much to keep so many horses; I think it might be made feasible that the whole estate is in need of grazing for horses, and that they are also applying for horse's grazing on the same hill such as Laide and Mellon-Udrigil. We have delegates from these places and you will hear what they have to say afterwards.

54,878. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did the eleven horses include mares and foals, or are they all working horses?—They are all working horses.

54,879. *Mr Sutherland.*—Horses are a necessity for the proper cultivation of the land, are they not?—Oh, yes.

54,880. And I understand you to say that if you had plenty grazing you could keep as many horses as would be necessary for the cultivation of the land?—Certainly.

54,881. Is it not a fact that the spring work must be done in a very short time,—you must take advantage of the good weather as soon as it arrives?—That is a fact.

54,882. Perhaps you might do with fewer horses if you had more time to get ready for putting down your crop?—To be sure, the shorter the time the more horses you require; that is why we keep so many.

54,883. *The Chairman.*—What do the crofters of Sand mainly depend upon for their livelihood besides their holdings?—A few of them depend upon the herring fishing.

54,884. And what do others do?—They work wherever they can.

54,885. But the whole of them I suppose have to supplement what they make out of the croft by labour elsewhere?—Most of them.

54,886. *Mr Stewart, Factor, Lettervee and Gruinard Estates.*—Did Mr Bankes offer you free grazing for your horses on the farm of Little Gruinard two years ago?—No, as far as I understood he did not.

54,887. Did he not offer you free grazing for your horses if you would herd them from neighbouring farmers or neighbouring proprietors?—No, as far as I understood it: his terms were to charge £1 for the season.

54,888. You never heard of him offering you free grazing?—No.

54,889. *The Chairman.*—He offered you grazing, if you would pay £1 for it?—Yes.

54,890. But you did not agree to that?—The majority of the tenants agreed, but I did not agree.

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

John Macleod.

RODERICK MACKENZIE, Crofter, Laide (55 or 56). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Roderick Mackenzie.

54,891. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

54,891A. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—No. 2, Laide; area 6 acres 1 rood 1 pole arable; 2 acres 1 rood 9 poles outrun; one share in the common pasture of 780 acres, divided into 21 shares, 16 of which were dealt with by the Commission; also of the Lower Laide Parks, 29 acres divided into 11 shares, of which 9 were dealt with. This delegate has a share in both commons. The old rent of his croft, exclusive of the share in the Parks, was £4, 3s.; the fair rent, including the Park share, is £4, 4s.; the arrears were £2, 2s. 1½d., which were cancelled.]

54,892. Were you appointed as a delegate?—Yes.

54,893. What is it you wish to submit to us?—We want more land to put stock on.

54,894. Additional grazing land?—Yes; the pasture of the township of Laide is very small.

54,895. Is there land, in your opinion, available in the vicinity of the township?—I do not think there is, near the township.

54,896. Where is the nearest land that you consider available?—We consider the land on the farm of

Poolewe, Ross-shire. — Roderick Mackenzie.

Fisherfield, now held as a deer forest, the most suitable for us.

54,897. How far is the nearest boundary of Fisherfield from the land of your township?—I am not quite sure; there are no milestones, but I take it to be 3½ or 4 miles.

54,898. How is the land occupied that lies between your township and this forest of Fisherfield?—There are three crofting townships, and there is also a piece of ground under sheep,—the factor's sheep. This is Little Gruinard.

54,899. What are the names of the townships?—Sand, First Coast, and Second Coast.

54,900. Do you remember Fisherfield being made into a forest?—Yes.

54,901. That was eleven years ago?—I am not quite sure of the number of years, but I remember the time quite well.

54,902. It is a recent afforestment of land?—Yes. The first year it was let as a forest, the shooting tenant had my horse during the shooting season.

54,903. That land which is now forest was before held as a sheep farm, I suppose?—Yes.

54,904. Who was the farmer?—Mr Scott.

54,905. Is there land there suitable for an extension of the grazings of the township of Laide?—Yes, very suitable.

54,906. Is it only suitable for summer feeding or for both summering and wintering?—I would not put myself up as a judge of land, but I think it is suitable for both summering and wintering.

54,907. Have you, and those who are acting along with you from this township, formed any opinion as to what extent of additional land you require?—Yes, it would be more suitable to take the land between the two rivers.

54,908. Between the Little Gruinard and the Meikle Gruinard?—Yes.

54,909. How far back would you go from the sea?—We have not considered that, as we were not sure how many tenants on the estate are desirous of getting a share of the land.

54,910. Were you deprived of land at any time?—No. What was taken from us has since been mostly restored to us, except one park. We got the lower parks, but not the others.

54,911. Suppose you got this additional land between the two Gruinards, could the crofters of your township put the necessary stock upon it?—I think we could, by helping each other.

54,912. Do you keep a cattle stock at present?—Yes.

54,913. And a sheep stock?—We do not have many sheep; we have no ground that will maintain them. Our outrun is very small.

54,914. But has the township a desire to keep sheep if it had the requisite land?—Yes, sheep would be very useful to the people if they had the means of keeping them.

54,915. Do the crofters of that township, or any of them keep horses?—Yes.

54,916. Has each of them a horse?—No, they cannot all keep horses.

54,917. Do you happen to know how many horses are in the township?—During the working season, in spring, we have nine or ten horses, but when the work is over we are obliged to sell them, as there is no place to keep them.

54,918. How do the crofters of your township of Laide mainly earn their livelihood?—In various ways; they go to various works, to the salmon fishing, the herring fishing, and to railway work, and out as trawlers. Some of them go to the forest to make footpaths.

54,919. Has there been a good deal of labour going on in the neighbourhood of your township?—There has been more recently than I remember, owing to a pier that is in course of construction, and some repairs to the high road.

54,920. Is it the desire of your township to get such an extension of grazing as would occupy the time of the crofters wholly, or is it merely in supplement of the means of livelihood they already have?—Although they got the land I refer to, it would not be sufficient to keep them at home always; they would have to go from home to earn money to pay the rents.

54,921. *Mr Munro.*—You mentioned that the crofters in your township followed a variety of occupations, such as fishing and labouring on the railways?—Yes.

54,922. Do your crofts suffer in any degree from the absence of the crofters who follow such occupations?—Undoubtedly, when they are away like that they cannot be working at drains, or making dykes, or putting the ground in good order.

54,923. You cannot do the two things properly?—No. If the land would maintain ourselves we would stop at home and keep it in better order; as it is, we have to go about and earn money to pay the rent with and buy food.

54,924. If you got a sufficient extent of land, you think you could live upon it without going away to follow another occupation?—Yes, we are of that opinion.

54,925. Could you stock that additional land if you got it?—Some of us could stock such a holding, others could not, but we might help each other.

54,926. *Mr Gordon.*—The land that you have applied for in Fisherfield forest is all pasture, is it not?—Yes.

54,927. There is no arable land in that part?—There is arable land there, but I don't know any who is wanting arable land.

54,928. The wants of your township are for pasture land?—Yes.

54,929. How would you propose to occupy that pasture land?—We could go in shares.

54,930. But what stock would you propose to put on it?—We were not sure that we would get it, and, accordingly, we did not contemplate that.

54,931. It is more for your extra stock, I suppose?—Yes.

54,932. Would there be sufficient ground in the portion of the forest for which you have applied to keep a hirsel of sheep?—There is a lot of very bad land there; there are acres of land there that would not maintain a sheep.

54,933. Is it rocky ground?—Yes.

54,934. With reference to a question put to you as to the croft being self-supporting, is there enough land in the crofts to keep a man occupied throughout the year?—No; many of the crofts have only four acres and so on up to seven.

54,935. Is there any possibility of getting additional arable land enough to keep the families on the lands in your own neighbourhood?—There is not land near us that is suitable.

54,936. Then, before you could make these crofts self-supporting you would require to remove one-half of the men from the present township?—As we are presently situated, we are obliged to leave portions of our crofts out in grass; if we had the land we are applying for, we could take in more of our crofts by sending our stock to the outlying pasture.

54,937. But would yourself or your neighbours be inclined to move to another part of the country so as to make the crofts bigger?—I cannot speak for others, but for my own part I would not like to shift: since the Crofters Commission was here I made very extensive improvements on my croft, and it was my intention to terminate my life upon it.

54,938. If you got this additional grazing you would prefer to remain as you are?—Yes.

54,939. Did your township apply for any of this land between the two rivers? Were they a party to the application?—Yes.

54,940. The Sand township applied for a certain extent of ground between these rivers extending from the sea on the north to Loch-a'-Mhadaidh on the south. Now, were you a party to this general application?—Yes.

54,941. So that there were more townships than those of Sand and First and Second Coast applying for this land?—Mellon-Udrigil and Aultbea also

applied for it, and Badfern: all the townships were looking for this land.

54,942. If there was more land than was required to keep your extra animals, would you be willing to work it as a club stock farm?—I think that is the way we would work it.

54,943. And, do you think you would be able to stock it?—Yes, I think so, by helping each other; if one was behind with means, another would help him.

54,944. Your main want being additional pasture, you would be content if you got this ground?—Yes, undoubtedly.

54,945. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—What is your own occupation?—I am a blacksmith.

54,946. Do you remember Fisherfield as a sheep farm?—Yes, very well.

54,947. Do you know what the rent of it was?—No.

54,948. I may tell you it is entered in the Parliamentary Return as £1100 before afforestment. Have you and your neighbours ever considered what rent you would be prepared to give for the grazing of Fisherfield if you got it?—I cannot very well speak on that point; there may be some in the township who, if the rent were valued too high, would not consider themselves able to afford that price for it.

54,949. Do I understand that there are enough wanting the grazing to occupy the whole forest of Fisherfield?—We do not want the whole forest.

54,950. How far back would you go?—We were thinking that from the shore up to Loch-a'-Mhadaidh would be enough.

54,951. It is the same ground that the applicants from Sand would like, is it not?—Yes, the desire was that it should be occupied by the tenants of the estate altogether.

54,952. Do you know how many sheep were formerly wintered on Fisherfield when it was a sheep farm?—I do not know.

54,953. Have you no idea?—No.

54,954. It is not so very long ago since it was a sheep farm?—No, but I have no knowledge about it at all.

54,955. Do you know anything about the management of sheep at all?—I don't know about the habits of sheep.

54,956. *Mr Sutherland.*—Is all the land in your neighbourhood in deer forest?—Every township on the estate has some hill ground, and the rest is deer forest.

54,957. Are there no sheep farms in your neighbourhood?—Only the one farm that Mr Stewart has.

54,958. What is the name of it?—There is Drumchork and Little Gruinard, they are held together. These are the only two sheep farms on the estate.

54,959. Is Drumchork near your holdings?—Yes.

54,960. What is the size of that farm?—I cannot tell you.

54,961. How many sheep are on it?—I cannot say.

54,962. Is it a large farm?—Middling.

54,963. Is it made up of two farms, do you say?—It used to be two farms, but Mr Stewart now has the whole.

54,964. When was it made into one farm?—I am not quite sure; he had the two farms for a considerable time before the Crofters Commission were here in 1888.

54,965. And, is there good land on that farm?—Some of it very good, but some as bad as there is to be found in the world.

54,966. All over, is it as good as the forest land you were speaking of?—About the same.

54,967. *The Chairman.*—The farm of Drumchork seems to be held at a rent of £80 and the farm of Little Gruinard is said to be in the hands of the proprietrix, and is entered in the valuation roll at a rental of £40. Now, suppose you got an assignment of grazing from the forest of Fisherfield, would you and those you represent be prepared to put up any necessary fences?—It would not be easy for us to do that, and that is one of the reasons why we wanted the ground between the two rivers from the sea; the rivers themselves would be the boundaries. That was our object in selecting that particular piece of land.

Poolewe, Ross-shire. Roderick Mackenzie.

54,968. But if a fence were wanted from river to river across the country by the side of Loch-a'-Mhadaidh, would the township be prepared to put up that fence?—If we get that, we are not of opinion that we should be at the whole expense of the fence.

54,969. You think you should put up one half, and those on the other side fence the other half?—We thought it should not go more than that against us.

54,970–71. But you would be prepared, as I understand, to do that?—We are so desirous of getting the place that we would make our best endeavours to do that.

54,972. Now, you said something about the improvements you had made upon your holding since the decision of the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

54,973. Have these improvements been both upon land and buildings?—I erected a dwelling-house, and I also made some improvement on the land.

54,974. Have some of the other crofters in the township done similarly?—Yes, they were doing very well, according to their ability.

54,975. Both upon buildings and upon land?—Yes.

54,976. Has there been a marked improvement on the buildings, and in reclamation since the passing of the Crofters Act?—All those who were able to improve, did so, undoubtedly. They have a surer foundation than they had before.

54,977. The surer foundation being security of tenure?—Yes.

54,978. Then, you are able to say that there has been much more improvement during the eight years since the Act than during the eight years immediately preceding it?—Oh, yes, there are hundreds of pounds spent in the township to which I belong, and in the adjoining township.

54,979. *Mr Stewart, Factor for Letterewe and Gruinard Estate.*—Did you know that the farm of Little Gruinard was advertised to be let?—Yes.

54,980. Why did you not apply for it then?—I did not consider it suitable for me.

54,981. You stated that Little Gruinard was in my hands?—Yes, I said so.

54,982. Who told you that? [*The Chairman.*—I ascertained from the valuation roll that it is in the hands of the proprietrix.]

RODERICK MACKENZIE, Merchant, Laide (62).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

54,983. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

54,984. Was your croft valued by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—No. 4 Laide; area 8 acres 2 roods 20 poles arable; and 5 acres 7 poles outrun; one share in the common of 780 acres, divided into 21 shares; also a share in the Laide Parks. Old rent, exclusive of the parks, £8; fair rent, including the parks, £5, 10s., arrears £7, which were cancelled].

54,985. Were you appointed as a delegate from this township?—Yes.

54,986. Along with the previous witness?—Yes.

54,987–88. Did you hear the evidence which he gave?—Yes, I heard it. The whole district is applying for the land mentioned by Malcolm Urquhart.

54,989. I suppose you can confirm and corroborate the evidence he gave?—Yes.

54,990. Have you anything to add?—The only thing I have to add is that Mr Bankes had offered us land up in the hill, but we had to pay the money in advance. We had to send our horses to a fank, and we would not be allowed to go and see them again: supposing the horse died we would not get the money back. We were to deliver the horses to the herd at the fank, and they themselves would send the horses to the hill.

54,991. These were the conditions made?—Yes.

54,992. We would like very much to see these conditions in writing; have any of you got a copy of them?—Some of us signed the conditions, but the paper did not remain with us. The money had to be

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Roderick Mackenzie.

paid in advance, and we would not be allowed to go and see the horse unless the herd was along with us.

54,993. Who had charge of the paper among you?—The paper was circulated through the townships.

54,994. Was it sent back to Mr Stewart or Mr Bankes?—I think it was returned.

54,995. Mr Stewart, could we see that paper? [*Mr Stewart.*—I did not get it back, my lord].

54,996. But you have your own copy, no doubt?—[*Mr Stewart.*—I have no copy. I jotted down the conditions just as Mr Bankes told me verbally; I handed them the paper, but they never returned it to me.]

54,997. But did you not keep a copy of it?—[*Mr Stewart.*—No.]

54,998. Has Mr Bankes not a copy of it?—[*Mr Stewart:* —No, I just jotted it down at the Martinmas collection.]

54,999. To whom did you hand the paper to be circulated through the townships?—[*Mr Stewart.*—I could not say exactly, but it was to some of those who were at the rent collection; and it was with Sandy Mackenzie, merchant, Sand, for some time. If any one could say that he returned it to me, that would be sufficient.]

55,000. At any rate, was there a difficulty among you about acceding to the conditions laid down?—*Witness.*—Some of us were against the conditions, but we had such a desire for grass that some signed.

55,001. Some signed and others refused to sign?—I think the majority of them agreed.

55,002. Did you sign yourself?—Yes.

55,003. Perhaps you could tell us the conditions you agreed to?—The condition was that if we took the land referred to, which was in the hill above Little Gruinard, we were to deliver the horses at the fank at Little Gruinard and bring £1 along with each horse, that being the grazing rent.

55,004. And the horse would be sent by the estate management to the hill?—They were not bound at all if anything went wrong with the horse, and in that way we might lose both the horse and the grazing rent.

55,005. Only you, yourself were so anxious to get additional grazing that you agreed to these conditions?—Yes, for I am obliged to tether my horse on the croft; it is there I keep it.

55,006. But the transaction never was carried through?—No.

55,007. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did you advise your friends to fall in with the agreement, or did you advise them not to?—I was not in favour of it at first, but latterly I saw that every one was in such want of grazing that they agreed. Formerly we used to get grazing for our horses on other estates, on the estate of Gairloch, and also in Elphin, in the parish of Assynt, Sutherland. Now, on every estate they say 'keep your horses to your own estate.'

55,008. But if you became in favour of the agreement, how was it that it was not gone on with?—I don't know, I cannot tell that; perhaps they thought that we would not agree to the conditions, or were only desirous of shutting our mouths.

55,009. But did Mr Stewart understand that you all wanted to fall in with the agreement?—I think he understood so.

55,010. But you are not sure?—My impression is that he understood it; he was among us, and was speaking to us about it.

55,011. But the simplest way would have been to return the paper and say that you would abide by the conditions, instead of which you did not return the paper?—I don't know whether it was returned or not; it was circulated through the township, and where has it lain if it was not returned?

55,012. Was it never in your charge?—It passed me and I signed it.

55,013. Who did you give it to?—It went from our township to Mellon-Udrigil.

55,014. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Did you ever hear of pasture being offered by the proprietor free for your horses?—No, I never heard that.

55,015. You heard a question put by Mr Stewart to-day conveying that suggestion?—He need not put such a question as that to me; it was never offered to me.

JOHN URQUHART, Crofter, Badfern, Aultbea (40). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

John Urquhart.

55,016. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The croft consists of 3 acres 3 roods arable; 2 roods 30 poles outrun; and a share in a common of 290 acres, divided into six shares; the old rent was £3; and the fair rent is £2, 12s. Arrears amounting to £1, 15s. were ordered to be paid].

55,017. Are you appearing as a delegate?—My brother was elected a delegate, but he is from home and I came in his stead.

55,018. What is your brother's name?—Donald Urquhart.

55,019. Where has he gone to?—He is in the Letterewe Forest.

55,020. Were you present at the meeting at which your brother was appointed?—No, I was not present.

55,021. What is it you wish to say?—I wish to say that we are anxious to get more land to carry through the stock.

55,022. Do you mean grazing ground?—Yes, grazing for a horse.

55,023. For all the horses in the township?—We did not use to have but one horse in the township that I am in, and a horse that another one had.

KENNETH MACLEOD, Crofter, Tighnafaoilinn, Aultbea (68). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Kenneth Macleod.

55,024. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The area of the croft is 4 acres 2 roods 17 poles arable; 1 rood outrun; share in the pasture of 620 acres, common to the townships of Tigh-na-faoilinn and Aultbea and the farm of Aird, and divided into 21 shares; also of 18 acres of land common to the township of Tigh-na-faoilinn; old rent £5, 0s. 2d.; fair rent £3, 8s.; arrears, £7, 19s. 1½d. cancelled.]

55,025. Are you here as a delegate?—Yes.

55,026. Was there a meeting of the Tigh-na-faoilinn and Aultbea crofters?—There was a meeting held at Laide of the whole of the townships of Laide, Tigh-na-faoilinn, Coast, Mellon-Udrigil, and Sand.

55,027. Is it additional pasture that you want?—Yes.

55,028. The land between the two rivers?—Yes.

55,029. Up to Loch-a'-Mhadaidh?—Yes.

55,030. The same land that was spoken to by Malcolm Urquhart and John Macleod?—Yes.

55,031. That is all the land I suppose that you ask our attention to?—Yes.

55,032. And if you had some such assignment of land as that, you would be satisfied?—We agree that we would.

55,033. *Mr Stewart, Factor for Letterewe and Gruinard.*—Did you get any additional land from Mr Bankes since the Crofters Commission fixed your fair rent?—Yes, I did.

55,034. How much?—How many acres, Mr Stewart?

55,035. That is what I am asking you. [*The Chairman.*—Probably the witness cannot give the extent in acres; what is the extent?]—*Mr Stewart.*—The extent is about 45 acres arable, and the commonty that Mr Muir had on the farm of Aird. That farm has been cut up since the Commission was here, and given to Kenneth Macleod and six or seven others, in addition to the holdings they had. It is not exactly handed over under the Crofters Act, but it is quite possible it will never be taken from them as long as they pay their rents. [*The Chairman.*—Are you willing to let them have it under the Act?]—*Mr Stewart.*—I am not prepared to say so, as Mr Bankes is not present.

55,036. *Mr Sutherland.*—Has that land been a great benefit to you and the others?—It will do us good; we cannot cultivate it without a horse; we have to tether the horse, and we cannot keep both horse and cows.

55037. But if there are 37 acres of arable land, I surey you can keep a horse on the addition?—We can

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Kenneth Macleod.

only keep the horse or the cow, as they have taken from us the hill ground that our forefathers had.

55,038. *Mr Gordon.*—Do you know the farm of Drumchork?—Yes.

55,039. How far is it from your township?—Scarcely a mile.

55,040. Does the tenant reside on Drumchork?—Yes, Mr Stewart.

55,041. What is the extent of the farm?—I don't know. [*Mr Stewart.*—Forty-five acres arable and about 2500 acres pasture].

55,042. Does the pasture of Drumchork lie contiguous to the townships of Aultbea and Tigh-na-faoilinn?—Yes, it is adjacent to Badfern and up to Sand and the Coasts.

55,043. Did the crofters in these townships ever apply for any part of the grazings of Drumchork?—[*The Chairman.*—They applied for land and it was refused by Order, dated 17th December 1888].

55,044. How would the hill grazings of Drumchork suit these townships in comparison with what they applied for at Gruinard?—The land between the two rivers would be more suitable when there are a large number of us about it.

55,045. But I speak only of the township in which you are a crofter?—All the townships on the estate are in one concern for the land between the two rivers.

55,046. Does the pasture of Drumchork march with the pasture of your township and the other townships in that quarter?—It marches with Badfern, with Sand, and the Coasts.

55,047. And Badfern marches with the pasture of Aultbea?—Yes, and with Tigh-na-faoilinn; and it also marches with Laide and the Coasts behind.

55,048. What is the distance between Tigh-na-faoilinn and Little Gruinard, roughly speaking?—Five miles.

55,049. And how far would the pasture of Drumchork be from Tigh-na-faoilinn?—It is scarcely a mile between my house and Drumchork house.

55,050. Would it not be more convenient for you to put your cattle and horses there than to send them five miles away from home?—Yes, but that might not suit.

55,051. Why?—It would suit us well enough in that way.

55,052. Do you mean that it would not suit the estate management?—How would that suit, when we were wanting to get the land and after all did not get it?

Alexander Maciver.

ALEXANDER MACIVER, Crofter, Tigh-na-faoilinn (67). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

55,053. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—Area of croft 4 acres 0 roods 5 poles arable; 3 roods outrun; same grazing as the previous witness; old rent £6, 0s. 2d.; fair rent £3, 10s.]

55,054. You came to give evidence I think about getting more hill grazing?—Yes.

55,055. From Fisherfield?—Yes.

55,056. We have heard a good deal of evidence about it already. So far as you are able to follow it, do you agree with that evidence?—Yes.

55,057. And the township of Tigh-na-faoilinn would be satisfied if they got an assignment of additional grazing such as they are asking for?—Yes.

55,058. Have you anything special of your own that you wish to mention?—No, only that we would like to get what we were applying for, in order that we might have our stock there. We are cramped down on the shore here.

55,059. We quite understand that from our witnesses, and we will see the ground ourselves.

Duncan Urquhart.

DUNCAN URQUHART, Crofter, Aultbea (47)—*examined.*

55,060. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter at Aultbea?—A crofter and miller.

55,061. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—No.

55,062. What is it you wish to tell us?—I want to tell you that we are short of pasture for our cild cattle and for our horses.

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Duncan Urquhart.

55,063. In the township of Aultbea?—Yes.

55,064. Are you speaking on behalf of the township as a delegate?—Yes.

55,065. What pasture have you at present?—We have between four and five acres of arable land, and we have the common between Tigh-na-faoilinn and Aultbea.

55,066. You are here to say on behalf of the township that the pasture you have is too limited, and you desire to get more land if it can be obtained?—Yes.

55,067. What land do you point to for such an extension?—We point to the lowest end of Fisherfield forest.

55,068. That is the land between the two Gruinard rivers, and up to Loch-a'-Mhadaidh?—Yes.

55,069. It is the same land we have been hearing so much about?—Yes.

55,070. And, I suppose, you agree with the evidence we have had already upon that matter?—Yes.

55,071. Have you anything to add?—Nothing particular, but I may say that Drumchork is marching with our common pasture.

55,072. Were you one of the applicants for a part of Drumchork?—No.

55,073. Is there land forming part of the farm of Drumchork which would be suitable for an extension of your grazings?—Yes.

55,074. Speaking as a man who knows the locality, which of the two portions of ground is in your judgment more suitable,—part of the farm of Drumchork or part of Fisherfield?—Drumchork is marching with us.

55,075. Is the grazing as good?—Yes, very good.

55,076. You are referring particularly, I suppose, to the land which was applied for in 1888 and refused?—Yes.

55,077. And if you had that, would it meet the desires of the township?—I think it would.

55,078. It would afford a sufficient expanse of grazing for the cattle you have?—Yes.

55,079. And would you and the others in the township be able to add such additional stock as that new assignment of land might require?—I think we would.

55,080. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you know any land in this neighbourhood suitable for making new holdings?—Yes.

55,081. Where?—There is plenty round about.

55,082. Could you specify the places?—Isle of Ewe, Gruinard Island, Kernsary, Strathnasealg, Letterewe, and Inverewe here.

55,083. Is that all?—Yes, that is all.

55,084. Are you of opinion that we ought to see these places and satisfy ourselves whether they are suitable?—They are suitable for cultivation.

55,085. How is Isle of Ewe occupied at present?—By a sheep farmer.

55,086. Is it a farm by itself or only part of a farm?—A farm by itself.

55,087. How is Gruinard Island occupied?—Just as a rabbit-warren.

55,088-89. Is it not part of any grazing farm or shooting?—No, Mr Baring, the shooting tenant, gave it to the crofters for grazing their horses.

55,090. How is Kernsary occupied?—It is occupied as part of a deer forest, the Inverewe forest.

55,091. Does it constitute a large part of that forest?—Yes, it is the best part of it.

55,092. How is Inverewe occupied?—Mr Osgood Mackenzie works the arable farm for himself.

55,093. Has Inverewe Forest any other name?—Kernsary forest.

55,094. I understood you to say that Kernsary was part of the Inverewe Forest?—Yes.

55,095. How does it come to have a separate name?—I cannot tell you that; it was a separate farm, but it is on the same estate.

55,096. When was Inverewe made into a deer forest?—Nine or ten years ago.

Poolewe, Ross-shire. — Duncan Urquhart.

55,097. Who is the proprietor of the Inverewe Forest?—Mr Osgood Mackenzie, Inverewe.

55,098. These places are, in your opinion, fit to make new holdings?—Oh, yes.

55,099. If such holdings were made, would the people be in as favourable a condition as they are in the holdings down on the sea coast?—I think they would be much better.

55,100. Are there a number of people in this neighbourhood who would be in a position to take such holdings?—Yes.

55,101. And to stock them?—Yes.

55,102. And erect houses on them?—Yes.

55,103. All would not be able to do it?—No, not all.

55,104. The most prosperous of them would?—Yes.

55,105. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—How many crofters could you place on the Isle of Ewe?—I think 12 or 15 could be very comfortable there.

55,106. Do you mean that they would be comfortable as fishermen with a patch of potato ground, or as small farmers?—Small farmers: they could have a good many acres arable.

55,107. How many acres would go to each, roughly speaking, taking your lowest estimate of 12,—what size of a holding would each have?—I am not sure, but I think it would make between 12 and 15. I have been there as a farm servant.

55,108. You consider the whole island to be arable land?—Yes, and there is good outrun on it besides; it keeps a few hundred sheep on the outside.

55,109. But how much of it, do you think, could be cultivated?—I do not know the acreage of it; there are 13 good fields in it, some of them between 40 and 50 acres.

55,110. How is it occupied now?—As an arable farm.

55,111. What farm is it?—It belongs to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie.

55,112. As to the Isle of Gruinard, how many holdings would it accommodate?—It would do for four.

55,113. And Kernsary?—Four or five, I think.

55,114. And the Inverewe farm?—Six or seven, at any rate.

55,115. Do you say there are a number of people in your neighbourhood who could stock the land?—I don't know, I cannot say.

55,116. You said so just now; Mr Sutherland asked you if they could stock the land and build the houses and you said, yes?—I know they could build a house for a croft of 10 or 12 acres.

55,117. What would it cost to build such a house?—Between £50 and £60.

55,118. What kind of house would you build for that?—I think a comfortable house for a crofter.

55,119. But just describe it, please?—A four-roomed house.

55,120. What kind of roof?—Slated roof.

55,121. A stone and lime house with slated roof?—Yes.

55,122. You could build that for £50?—Between £50 and £60, with their own labour.

55,123. And they could stock these holdings themselves, some of them?—Yes, I know there are some who could do it.

55,124. And still have enough over to pay rent for the land?—Yes. The stock would pay the rent.

55,125. Not in bad years, would it?—They might have something to lie over for a year or two.

55,126. But would not most of their money go in the preliminary expenses?—It all depends what farm they would get; if they would get a farm to put on stock, they might do it.

55,127. I am taking the places you mentioned as good places for farming. Do you seriously think they would not get into debt by erecting their own houses, stocking the land and paying a fair rent?—I don't think they would, if they knew how to work.

55,128. They would require to be good farmers?—Of course, they would.

55,129. Would they depend upon fishing at all?—Oh, yes.

55,130. They would fish besides?—Yes.

55,131. And would that occupy their whole time,—supposing they had their houses built and land stocked, could they live by the crofts?—Yes, if they got the land they would have more opportunity in the winter and spring to work their crofts, and they could stay at home when the fishing was done.

55,132. They would have to go to the fishing?—Oh, yes.

55,133. And who would work the croft?—The croft would have to be neglected sometimes; the wife and children perhaps would look after it till their return, during the fishing-season when the men are away at the fishing.

55,134. But there is a great deal to be done on a small farm in the fishing season?—Well, if they got enough land, perhaps it would take all their time to keep it right, and they would live on it.

55,135. What would you call enough land to keep a man entirely occupied?—I would think between 12 and 15 acres.

55,136. Then that would not accommodate so many as you mentioned.

55,137. *Mr Gordon.*—About this pasture that you applied for at Gruinard,—were you one of those who applied for it?—Yes.

55,138. What was your reason for not applying for the Drumchork pasture? Was it the belief that you would not get it?—Yes, and we were told that the farm was not paying sufficient rent to be broken down under the Crofters Act.

55,139. You were under the impression that it would not be available?—Yes.

55,140. Now, about the Isle of Ewe; is the arable land there under cultivation in the meantime?—Partly.

55,141. Are you aware that this Commission cannot deal with land under cultivation?—That is what we were told.

55,142. How is the Home Farm of Inverewe occupied?—By Mr Mackenzie, the proprietor.

55,143. Is it cultivated?—Yes.

55,144. Both these farms are cultivated, Isle of Ewe and Inverewe?—Yes.

55,145. Is there any cultivation at Kernsary?—I think not.

55,146. Nor in the Island of Gruinard, I suppose?—No.

55,147. Is there old arable land at Kernsary?—Yes.

55,148. Land that has been cultivated at one time?—Yes.

55,149. Is there any such on Gruinard Island?—Yes.

55,150. Do you think both these places could be reclaimed again?—Yes.

55,151. What is the size of the Inverewe Farm?—I cannot say.

55,152. It is the Home Farm of the estate?—Yes.

55,153. Beside the mansion-house?—Yes, and there is another farm, Tournaig, on the same estate.

55,154. Is there old arable land there?—Yes.

55,155. How is the farm occupied at present?—By Mr Mackenzie.

55,156. Is the land under grass or under crop?—Under crop partly.

55,157. Is there a house and steading upon it?—Yes.

55,158. In good repair?—Yes.

55,159. What would you do with the house if you broke up the farm? Would it be suitable for a croft?—No.

55,160. Who lives in the house?—Mr Mackenzie, at present.

55,161. What like are the houses upon the Isle of Ewe?—A farm-house and steading.

55,162. Are they substantial buildings?—Yes.

55,163. Would they be suitable for a crofter?—Not for one.

55,164. Could you put more than one crofter into the same house?—Yes.

55,165. Would they agree, do you think?—I do not know.

55,166. Are there any buildings at Kernsary?—There are.

Poolewe, Ross-shire. Duncan Urquhart.

55,167. How are they occupied?—By Mr Mackenzie's keeper.

55,168. Is there more than one dwelling-house there?—Not at present.

55,169. *The Chairman.*—I observe that the deer forest of Kernsary is entered in the valuation roll at a rent of £90, and the Home Farm of Inverewe is in the proprietor's hands, at a rent of £160.

55,169A. Do you know the forest of Letterewe?—Yes.

55,170. I see it appears to be let as deer forest grazings to Mr Laycock, at a rent of £540; but that is in a different locality?—Yes, it is up Loch Maree side.

55,171. When you were talking over this matter with your friends, did you and they consider the subject of new holdings?—No, we only want the pasture for our cild cattle and horses.

55,172. You did not consider the question of new holdings or how they might be stocked and the buildings put up?—No.

55,173. And, therefore, you did not consider whether such new holdings might be formed?—No.

55,174. So that the evidence you have given us on that subject is your own individual opinion on the matter, and not the result of conference with your friends?—Just so.

55,175. *Mr Stewart, Factor for Letterewe and Gruinard.*—Do you know well the ground in this part of the forest that you have applied for?—Yes.

55,176. What is the length of fence that would be required to enclose it as a horse park?—I am not quite sure, but I think between the two rivers about 3½ miles or perhaps 4.

55,177. Is the big river proof against horses, or could horses ford it?—Partly.

55,178. Do not horses ford it and cross to the other property?—Yes, of course, in dry weather.

55,179. Do not they do the same at Little Gruinard?—Yes.

55,180. Is there a road passing below this ground that you want, the county road?—Yes, the road goes through it.

55,181. You have no idea of the length of fence that would be required?—No, if both rivers were to be fenced down alongside.

55,182. Would not the ground require to be wholly surrounded by a fence?—We were thinking of putting a fence at the top end, and that a herd would be a good help for them.

55,183. *Mr Osgood Mackenzie of Inverewe.*—You said, I think, just now, that 15 acres was the right quantity of arable land for a crofter?—I beg your pardon; I said I thought if a crofter had that he could make a living off it.

55,184. Do you know how many acres arable there are at Kernsary?—No.

55,185. May I tell you that there are, I think, 16 acres. How could you put five crofters comfortably on 16 acres?—I think there were five crofters on at one time.

55,186. Were they comfortable?—I cannot say.

55,187. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you accept the 16 acres as all the arable that is on Kernsary?—I don't think so.

55,188. Do you know what a 'deer forest grazing' is?—No.

55,189. In the valuation roll, Letterewe is called a 'deer forest grazing'?—Yes.

55,190. Can you explain to us what that is?—No.

55,191. *The Chairman.*—I think it right to say that I cannot find the forest of Kernsary, or the forest of Inverewe or whatever be the proper name of it, in the official return of 1891. Are you quite clear that it was made a forest ten or twelve years ago?—I could not be quite sure of that.

55,192. But is it more than three years ago?—Oh, yes.

Murdo Mackenzie.

MURDO MACKENZIE, Cottar, Laide (47)—*examined.*

55,193. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No.

55,194. Are you a cottar?—Yes.

55,195. Have you no land?—I am sorry I cannot speak English very well.

Poolewe, Ross-shire. Murdo Mackenzie.

55,196. You wrote to the Secretary in these terms:—'No. 1 Laide, Aultbea, Dingwall, March 30th, 1893. 'Sir,—I am writing this in order that you will lodge 'my claim before the Deer Forest Commission for a 'patch of land situated between the county road and 'the sea, part of the deer forest of Fisherfield, on the 'estate of Letterewe and Gruinard, which was once in 'possession of people that were making a good living 'in it; and if I would get it (the ground) at the rent 'fixed by the Commission I am sure I could make my 'living.—I am yours truly, Murdo Mackenzie.' Does this letter set forth the claim you wish to make now?—Yes.

55,197. We have already heard a great deal of evidence about this forest of Fisherfield and the land that is desired. Have you anything further to say?—Yes, I would like to get hold of a piece of land on which I could live with my family.

55,198. You mean a piece of arable land?—Yes.

55,199. What sort of croft are you in quest of?—The size that I could live on with my family.

55,200. How many acres arable?—About twelve or fifteen.

55,201. And hill grazing to correspond, I suppose?—Yes.

55,202. What family have you?—Ten of a family, the eldest only thirteen.

55,203. Could you stock such a holding as that?—I think I could.

55,204. And put up the buildings?—Oh, yes.

55,205. Without any assistance?—If I would get some help.

55,206. From friends?—Yes.

55,207. Have you any land at all?—I am only in the house with my brother.

55,208. You live upon his holding in short?—Yes.

55,209. Do you pay any rent?—No.

55,210. Do you think you could take up a holding and pay a rent of £5, or £8, or £10 for it?—Yes.

55,211. You wish us to consider whether there is such land in your vicinity available for that purpose?—Yes.

55,212. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Were there ever crofters on Fisherfield?—Yes.

55,213. Can you tell us when?—I cannot say exactly when.

55,214. It was long held as a sheep farm, I suppose?—Yes.

55,215. Are there ruins of houses there?—Yes.

55,216. Are there many such?—Yes, in some parts of it.

55,217. And signs of old cultivation?—There were crofters' houses on the whole place, between the road and the sea; the whole way between the two rivers.

55,218. And you think that place is suitable for forming new holdings?—Yes.

55,219. *Mr Angus Stewart, Factor for Letterewe and Gruinard Estate.*—Are you aware that Mr Bankes has two crofts vacant at present?—Where?

55,220. In Slaggan?—That is a place where no poor man can live very well; he cannot take anything there to his family without carrying it five miles on his back. There is no road to it.

55,221. Is there not a bridle path leading to that township? [*Mr Gordon.*—Where is it?]—It is close to the sea, at the mouth of Letterewe on the north side.

55,222. Did you know Hector Macgregor, the former tenant of that croft?—He had to leave it because he could not live there.

55,223. Hector, I mean,—the old man who is now dead; did you know him?—Yes.

55,224. Did he rear up a large family in comfort there?—Oh, I daresay he did.

55,225. Are they not well off, every one of them, just now?—There are none of them there just now.

55,226. But they have made their way in the world, and they got out of that place even although it is so

Poolewe, Ross-shire.
Murdo Mackenzie.

isolated. You never thought of applying for these crofts?—Yes.

55,227. For the Slaggan crofts?—Yes, but I was afraid I could not live there.

55,228. You did not ask Mr Bankes or me about them?—No, I never did.

55,229. *The Chairman.*—Why did you not make any inquiry about these crofts since they were vacant?—Because I was thinking that I could not live there very well.

55,230. Are there not people living there at present?—There are three families there, I think.

55,231. And the crofts that are now vacant were previously occupied by crofters, I suppose?—Yes.

55,232. Did you make no examination of the holdings to see whether they might not suit you?—No, I never looked at them.

55,233. But you knew they were vacant?—Yes.

55,234. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Is it the case that you do not think crofter life is a very useful one unless you can live entirely by your croft? You said you want land that you could live entirely by?—Yes.

55,235. Is that the reason why you did not apply for one of these crofts at Slaggan?—Yes.

55,236. Because you knew you could not live by it?—There is no school there for my children to go to.

55,237. That is one good reason, but is another reason because you want land where you can make a living out of the holding itself?—Just so.

55,238. Have you ever seen a man make a living off his own croft without getting work elsewhere?—There is many a croft such as I want, but there are crofters in them.

55,239. I should like to see a croft which will maintain a man entirely without getting work outside; where can you show me one?—In the township of Laide where I live.

55,240. What is the number of the croft?—Donald Maciver for one.

55,241. Does he not take work anywhere else?—He is taking work; he is not going to the fishing.

55,242. He is earning wages somewhere else?—No, he is not a night away from his own house for work.

55,243. But he does take work in the day-time?—Yes.

55,244. Is he a roadman?—Yes.

55,245. Is he a salmon fisher also?—No, he has been working on the roads for two years, and I could not get a day's work on that road.

55,246. There is no croft in your neighbourhood where the crofter has not to go and work at times?—No.

55,247. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did you ever know a farmer that had not to work?—I know of plenty of farmers who have servants to work for them.

55,248. Have you ever been in Coigach?—Yes.

55,249. Are there holdings there upon which a family lives without other work than on the croft?—I am not very well acquainted there.

55,250. But about Slaggan and the holdings there, did you think that if you had applied for one of these you would have got it?—I cannot say.

55,251. You did not try it?—No.

55,252. Had you any opinion about it?—Yes, I would not like to go there with the family I have: that was the very reason.

55,253. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—What is the distance between it and the nearest school?—Six miles of very bad road.

55,254. Are there children at Slaggan just now?—I cannot say.

55,255. There seem to be a number of houses there; do you know whether there are any children and how they are educated?—I know there are children but I don't know whether they are not above school age.

55,256. You don't how their education is attended to?—I was told by the last man that left Slaggan that he left it for want of a school. [*Mr Stewart.*—There is a school in the township and has been for 20 years back.—*Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is there a certificated teacher there?—*Mr Stewart.*—No, he is not a certificated teacher; he is a student kept there by the Ladies' Association.]

Poolewe, Ross-shire.
Murdo Mackenzie.

55,257. *Mr Stewart, Factor for Letterewe and Gruinard Estates.*—Do you know the farm of Udrigil?—Yes.

55,258. Is there good arable land there?—I have never seen it very good.

55,259. Do you know that Mr Bankes cut it up for six crofters?—No.

55,260. Did you know that two of these crofts fell vacant last Martinmas?—Yes.

55,261. Why did you not apply for either of these two crofts?—I did not think I could live there with the heavy rent that was on it.

55,262. Did you know that the crofters there got their crofts at their own valuation? (*No answer*).

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, Crofter, Achgarve (55)—*examined.*

Alexander Mackenzie.

55,263. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

55,264. Was your croft valued by the Crofters Commission?—Yes. [*The Secretary.*—The area of the croft is 4 acres 6 poles arable; 1 acre 3 roods 18 poles outrun; pasture 730 acres in 8 shares; old rent £4, 10s.; fair rent £3.]

55,265. What is it you wish to tell us?—I have nothing to say, but that I would like to get a share of the grazing like the rest.

55,266. Do you refer to the land between the two rivers of Gruinard?—That is what they want.

55,267. And is that what you are here to speak about too?—Yes.

55,268. Are you here as a delegate, or as an individual? Was there a meeting held among you?—Yes.

55,269. And were you asked to come and give evidence about the grazing?—Yes.

55,270. The land you have to speak of is the land we have heard so much of to-day already on the forest of Fisherfield, lying between these two rivers and up to Loch a' Mhadaidh?—Yes.

55,271. *Mr Sutherland.*—Do you agree with what has been said about that place?—Yes.

55,272. And have you anything to say in addition?—No.

55,273. *Mr H. V. Maccallum, Solicitor, Inverness.*—Are not you one of the men who got the farm of Udrigil broken up by Mr Bankes?—Yes.

55,274. You got a sixth share of that farm?—Yes.

55,275. What rent were you to pay?—£12.

55,276. How long ago is that?—Five years ago, I think.

55,277. Have you been paying the rent?—Yes, we pay the rent very nearly.

55,278. Have you given it up?—Yes.

55,279. *Mr Gordon.*—Why did you give it up?—Because we could not be honest, and it was not paying.

55,280. The rent was too high?—Yes.

55,281. Who fixed the rent?—Mr Bankes.

55,282. You did not offer the rent yourself, did you?—No: well, I was wanting it a little cheaper, but plenty others would have given the rent.

55,283. He would have got it from some other person at the time?—Yes.

55,284. And you find, after an experience of five years, that you could not pay the rent he had fixed?—Yes.

55,285. And, therefore, you left the place?—Yes.

55,286. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Do you know what the rent of Udrigil was before it was broken up into crofts?—It was very dear before that.

55,287. Did you get the whole farm of Udrigil?—Yes.

55,288. But you do not know what the rent of it was?—I could not say. [*Mr Stewart.*—It was £120 in 1881, and they got it at a gross rental of £51.]

55,289. *Mr Sutherland.*—What was the rent when they got it? [*Mr Stewart.*—£83.]

55,290. *The Chairman.*—What extent of arable

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Alexander Mackenzie.

land had this man when he had this holding?—[*Mr Stewart.*—About 6¼ acres.]

55,291. What rate per acre arable did it pay? [*Mr Stewart.*—He paid £12, but there is a commonty of 1200 acres.]

55,292. You had to do with the apportioning of the ground, I suppose? [*Mr Stewart.*—No, my lord, they themselves agreed with Mr Bankes about it.]

55,293. But you were cognisant of it all?—I was.

55,294. Just tell us when you fixed the rents what rate you put upon the arable? [*Mr Stewart.*—It was not fixed that way.]

55,295. Was it not fixed by the simple process of taking a rate of so much per acre arable, and of so much for the cow on the hill, and putting the two together? [*Mr Stewart.*—No, not at all, in that way.]

55,296. How was it done? [*Mr Stewart.*—They gave a slump sum for the pasture and arable together.]

55,297. Was there not a calculated sum bringing out a rent which you or Mr Bankes believed to be a reasonable rent? [*Mr Stewart.*—Not that I am aware of].

55,298. Then, the rent may have been quite out of the question? [*Mr Stewart.*—No; they can give a good idea by the carrying properties of any land,—the number of sheep and cattle it carries.]

55,299. You are aware, of course, Mr Stewart, that a farm broken up into small holdings could not be expected to yield such an amount of rent for each holding as would make up the total formerly paid? [*Mr Stewart.*—Yes, I know that.]

55,300. And that the reasonable way to go to work is to assess the rate having regard to the size of the holding, and its particular locality and all about it,—assess the rate arable and then take in the carry of the hill? [*Mr Stewart.*—Yes.]

55,301. But you did not do that? [*Mr Stewart.*—No, we did not do that.]

55,302. *Mr Sutherland.*—Are you willing to go to the Crofters Commission to fix the rent now? [*Mr Stewart.*—It is in different hands now: these two shares have been let.]

55,303. But for those who still hold the shares? [*Mr Stewart.*—I am not prepared to say anything in the absence of Mr Bankes.]

55,304. You say Mr Bankes is unwell? [*Mr Stewart.*—Yes, he is unwell, he has gone to France for the benefit of his health.]

55,305. *Mr Maccallum.*—Did these tenants who gave up ask a reduction of rent before they left? [*Mr Stewart.*—Yes.]

55,306. And were refused, I suppose? [*Mr Stewart.*—Yes, Mr Bankes could not see his way to reduce it for them.]

Alexander Maclean.

ALEXANDER MACLEAN, Fisherman, Mellon-Udrigil (54)—*examined.*

55,307. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—No, a fisherman.

55,308. Were you appointed as a delegate from the tenants of Mellon-Udrigil to come here and give evidence?—Yes.

55,309. Just tell us in your own way what you wish to submit to us?—What the rest were asking about Fisherfield,—the grazing for horses.

55,310. The grazing from the shore up to Loch-a'-Mhadaidh between the two rivers?—Yes.

55,311. That is what the tenants of Mellon-Udrigil are most anxious about?—Yes.

55,312. Do they concur in the views expressed by the crofters of Sand and Laide and other places?—Yes.

55,313. So that your evidence is to the same effect as we have heard already?—The same.

55,314. Do you wish to say anything further on the matter?—No

MURDO MACKENZIE, Crofter, Buaile-na-luib (63)—*examined.*

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Murdo Mackenzie.

55,315. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

55,316. Your holding extends, according to the blue-book, to 5 acres arable and 1 acre outrun; there is a common pasture of 2442 acres common to the townships of Mellon-Charles, Buaile-na-luib, and Ormiscaig, divided into 80 shares, whereof 74 were dealt with by the Crofters Commission. The old rent of the croft was £4, 15s.; and the rent fixed £4, 2s.; the arrears were £9, 10s. 6d., of which £6 were ordered to be paid, and £3, 10s. 6d. cancelled. What is it you wish to say?—I only want a bit of that hill pasture.

55,317. The same land we have heard so much about,—the land of Fisherfield?—Yes.

55,318. Are you here speaking for yourself, or as a delegate?—As a delegate.

55,319. Whom do you represent?—I was appointed at the meeting held at Laide.

55,320. And you have the same statement to make to us with regard to the grazing of Fisherfield that we have heard from so many others?—Yes.

55,321. You have paid your arrears, I suppose?—Yes.

55,322. There was a special question raised in your case as to whether you were a crofter, and about a portion of land, which gave rise to a good deal of discussion?—Yes.

55,323. And you now wish that additional grazing?—I have to send my horse away every year.

55,324. Where do you send it to?—I have sent it to a place near Garve for the last three years.

55,325. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—You are not a fisherman, are you?—I was, but I am getting too old, so I dropped it.

Angus Stewart.

ANGUS STEWART, Factor for Letterewe and Gruinard Estate (39)—*examined.*

55,326. *The Chairman.*—You are factor to Mr Bankes of Letterewe?—Yes.

55,327. For how long have you been factor?—For eleven years.

55,328. Were you formerly a farmer?—Yes.

55,329. And do you now hold the farm of Drumchork?—Yes.

55,330. Do you hold any other farm on Mr Bankes' estate?—No.

55,331. In the Order by the Crofters Commission dealing with the Drumchork enlargement of 1888, the farm is set down as rented at £93?—Yes.

55,332. In the valuation roll the rent is stated to be £80?—Yes.

55,333. What is the present rent?—The rent is £93.

55,334. How then is it entered at £80 in the valuation roll?—That deduction is made for the upkeep of the buildings which I have to maintain myself.

55,335. And an allowance of £13 is made for the upkeep?—Yes, for upkeep of the buildings, fences, etc.

55,336. Is that a provision in the lease?—No, it is not.

55,337. Is it a verbal arrangement, then?—I think it is mentioned in the lease, but I am not exactly sure.

55,338. Do you hold the farm under a written lease?—Yes.

55,339. Can you produce the lease, or a copy of it?—Yes.

55,340. I would like to see it. What is its endurance?—It is for twenty-one years, and eight years have run.

55,341. It is a current lease?—Yes.

55,342. Has it any breaks?—Yes, a break in five years.

55,343. I find from the blue-book that the lease has been produced to the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

55,344. And we can look at it again?—Yes.

55,345. Has this obligation with regard to the up-keep of buildings received effect in any other valuation roll besides the current one?—Yes, it is what people are

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Angus Stewart.

legally entitled to,—to make deductions from the rental of house property for upkeep.

55,346. And has it been in the valuation roll since the lease was entered into?—Yes.

55,347. *Mr Sutherland.*—The percentage, I understand, varies very much; but what is the percentage allowed in this locality for the upkeep of buildings?—It is very heavy.

55,348. It must be; I never heard of its being more than 5 per cent., but this appears to be much more?—I believe it is as heavy on this coast as in any part of Scotland, because of the storms to which the country is liable. Ten per cent. would not cover it in some cases.

55,349. *The Chairman.*—Does this difference cover the cost of repairs in your case?—Sometimes.

55,350. I understand you have a statement to submit?—Yes.

55,351. Kindly read it?—The estate is composed of a deer forest, two sheep farms, and about 120 crofts.

Prior to 1883 what now is a forest was occupied as large sheep runs. As the leases of these expired, it was impossible to get new tenants for them, and the proprietrix had no alternative but to take the sheep stock at valuation from the outgoing tenants and dispose these off by auction at a ruinous sacrifice.

Since then these sheep runs has been occupied as a deer forest at a rental of close on £2000, and the lessee, therefore, employs labour in the way of keepers, stalkers, gillies, boatmen, &c., to upwards of £700 annually, and pays about three-fourths of the entire rates applicable to occupiers of land on the estate.

There are not more than two acres arable and about five old arable in the whole forest, and these are mostly small detached pieces formerly attached to shepherds' houses. The lower portion or that nearest the sea-shore is very inferior grazing.

During the last few years the proprietrix cut down three farms and formed these into separate crofter holdings, or enlarged existing holdings, one of these the farm of Udrigil for which a rent of £120 was paid in 1881, with the best arable land on the estate, was formed into six separate holdings, with a commonty of about 1100 acres, at a gross rental of £51 or less than half the former rent. In November last three of these tenants asked to be relieved of their shares, and the proprietrix had the greatest difficulty in finding tenants for two of the crofts thus vacated, one of the new tenants having to be admitted from outside the estate, otherwise this croft would be unlet. The third tenant is still there; we did not wish to put him away, and we had no other croft to put him on.

The proprietrix is unable to let two other crofts, the area of each being five acres arable with one-fifth of 1000 acres commonty attached; also the farm of Little Gruinard comprising seven acres arable and about 2500 acres pasture, formerly let at a rent of £90. For these subjects not a single offer has been received. Five years ago some of the crofters applied for horse grazing, Mr Bankes offered the upper portion, or about one-half of this farm as a horse park for the estate; the scheme did not meet with the applicants' approval, and the offer was not accepted. The proposal was that Mr Bankes should give the fencing material, and they should cart it from the steamer, gather the stones, and do the working of it.

55,351A. Under supervision, I suppose?—Under supervision. Mr Bankes was to get a herd who would have charge of the park, and charge them £1 for every horse that would summer there.

55,352. That is for three months' grazing?—From April to the end of October. The following year seven applied and Mr Bankes offered them free grazing on this farm. That was because the fence was not proceeded with, and they had the horses at home; and several complaints reached him that they were going into other people's corn. He offered them free grazing if they would herd their horses on that farm. Now, although none of them have said so to-day, they went so far as to speak to a herd and try to engage him for it; and I can produce the herd if you wish to speak to him, when you visit the ground. Mr Bankes offered them free grazing for their horses, the only condition being that they should herd them, but this offer was also declined.

(Signed) Angus Stewart.

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Angus Stewart.

55,353. You say that the forest previously consisted of farms; how many farms?—The farms of Fisherfield, Letterewe, and Ardlair; three farms.

55,354. What was the rent of Fisherfield farm?—£750.

55,355. And of Letterewe farm?—£350.

55,356. And Ardlair?—£80.

55,357. Were they all grazing farms?—Yes.

55,358. To what do you attribute the difficulty of those tenants in Udrigil who left their holdings getting on well?—I believe the holding was too large. I do not think a crofter is capable of looking after more than three or four acres of arable land.

55,359. When you say a crofter, I take it you mean a crofter in the townships round this quarter?—Quite so.

55,360. That is the district you know most of?—Yes.

55,361. When you say 'not capable' do you mean by that that what he has always been accustomed to has been a holding where he supplements the produce by his labour?—Yes.

55,362. That is the sort of thing their minds have been brought up to?—Yes, and if a crofter leaves his home in search of labour, then the croft is neglected. If it is no larger than four acres or so, the wife and family are usually able to take care of it in his absence; but if it is larger than that, the place is often in ruins when the crofter returns; everything is not kept as it should be and the consequence is that there must be a loss.

55,363. Is it your opinion that what we have sometimes called self-sustaining holdings, *i.e.*, holdings by which a crofter might live, are not holdings in the view of the crofters in this quarter?—The land is not capable of sustaining a crofter unless he could get about 30 acres arable, such as we have here, and about 2000 acres of the kind of pasture we have. Unless he could get that, he cannot live all the year without doing something else. It is impossible; I have tried it and I know by experience what it is.

55,364. What rent would you put upon the 50 acres arable and 2000 acres pasture? What rent do you suppose it would pay?—I would put between £80 and £90 on it.

55,365. You do not refer to a £30 rent?—No, I do not, because I don't think the arable land we have here or the pasture we have here at a rent of £30 would be capable of keeping a man engaged all the year, or paying him for what he had invested.

55,366. You do not think a man who had a holding fairly rented at £30 could have land in this quarter by which he could live and have a profit?—No, I do not.

55,367. You say you have tried it?—Yes.

55,368. Where did you try it?—I had the farm of Little Gruinard for seven years.

55,369. What is the extent of it?—The extent there is only seven acres arable.

55,370. And how much grazing?—About 2500 acres grazing.

55,371. What rent did you pay?—I paid £70, and I found it was a loss four years to every one year of profit.

55,372. You tried your best to work it to a profit?—I did, and I knew how to work it. Of course, I had not the extent of arable land that it required; the arable land is not in the country, that is the difficulty; it is not there to be got.

55,373. Had you all the arable land that you could get?—Yes.

55,374. How much would you have required suppose it had been there?—I would have required about 50 acres to work the hill grazing properly.

55,375. But could you not have got arable land from the landlord somewhere about that would have made up 50 acres?—No, there are not more than eight acres

arable close to it, and these were in the hands of this man who had the farm of Fisherfield at that time.

55,376. What was his name?—Mr Scott.

55,377. Do you base the conclusion you have stated to us on your experience in Little Gruinard?—Yes, I do, and upon the kind of climate we have for crops.

55,378. You mean rain?—Yes, rain.

55,379. Now, about the horse park,—were not the conditions a little unusual?—No; the cost of getting the material first would be about £300.

55,380. You mean the material for the fence?—For the fence.

55,381. Was it not a condition that the horse was to be sent up to the grazing by the estate, or a servant of the estate?—Yes.

55,382. And the crofter, the owner of the horse, had no right to go and look after the horse when it was on the grazing?—No, because there was a herd supplied there to look after the horses.

55,383. By the estate?—By the estate.

55,384. Don't you think these conditions were a little invidious or odious?—No; if you were to allow every crofter to roam after his own horse, you would not have a horse in the park.

55,385. But could you not have proposed that while they could not all get there, they might have appointed a small committee of two or three of their number to attend to their horses?—From all the experience I have had of crofters' committees I have never seen them work. I don't think there is one committee on our estate, though they have tried over and over again to have a committee.

55,386. Doubtless you are aware that the legislature specially authorises and recognises the formation of such committees under the Act of 1891?—Yes, my lord, and I supplied them with copies of that Act.

55,387. If the legislature recognises these committees, don't you think an estate manager might do so too?—Yes, I say it is a very proper thing, but I cannot get them to do it.

55,388. Did you not think of trying it?—I did; I put the Act into their hands.

55,389. For these horses?—To regulate everything.

55,390. Supposing they had appointed a committee to look after these horses instead of the herd, would you have agreed to that?—Yes, we would have agreed to any reasonable proposal, but they never came to us with any proposal.

55,391. I gather from the tone they take about it that they felt these conditions to be somewhat disagreeable?—If they could get grazing on more favourable terms, there is no doubt they would prefer it; but, of course, first of all, the fence had to be put there, and it would have cost about £300; they had to do the carriage and the haulage and the erecting, which was a good deal of labour. Then Mr Bankes would require a little rent for the land; he could not give the land for nothing, and he could not invest £300 without getting some return for it.

55,392. There is another matter I want to mention. There seem to be materials for coming to some friendly arrangement about this; there was the old application of 1888 for a part of Drumchork, and the present proposition submitted by so many crofters from different townships for a part of what is now the forest of Fisherfield?—Yes.

55,393. Would you not be disposed to recommend Mr Bankes to consider some such assignment of land as would meet these wants?—He is very willing to give Little Gruinard.

55,394. What is the extent of it?—Two thousand five hundred acres.

55,395. How is it occupied at present?—The proprietrix has it in her own hands.

55,396. Is it under sheep?—Yes.

55,397. That is the farm you tried yourself?—Yes, I had it for seven years.

55,398. Is it as good grazing as Fisherfield?—It is the same grazing; I cannot see any difference.

55,399. Was there any proposal submitted to the crofters about that?—It is for the upper portion of that farm; it is there that Mr Bankes intended to put this horse park.

55,400. How far is it from the holdings of most of them?—It is quite close to First and Second Coast, but it will be about 3 or 3½ miles from the most distant. Mr Bankes has been friendly towards the crofters all along; he has cut up the farm of Udrigil, he has cut up Culchonich, and he has allowed them the Laide Parks, and allowed them to fix the fair rent. He tries to meet them in every way.

55,401. *Mr Sutherland.*—I think you stated that when the proprietrix changed the sheep farms into deer forests she did so at ruinous sacrifices?—Yes.

55,402. Why should that be?—Because the valuations of stock are generally higher than the prices to be got at sales or in the open market. Valuations are, as a rule, 5s. or 6s., and sometimes 10s., a head higher than they will realise in the open market.

55,403. We have heard something about that custom; but look at the matter in this way. You state that it was made into a deer forest because the rent for sheep farms had gone down?—Because it could not be let.

55,404. It could be let if you came low enough?—There was not a single offer.

55,405. Not at the rent you wanted?—We did not specify a rent at all; we invited offers.

55,406. Don't you think the rent would be supposed to be the old rent?—No, we asked for offers and got none.

55,407. But have you any reason to suppose that if you reduced the rent 60 per cent. you would not get offers?—I have reason to believe it.

55,408. We have heard evidence regarding the reductions of rent that had to be made, amounting to 30 per cent. in some cases?—Yes.

55,409. How long would it take at a reduced rent of say 30 per cent., before the proprietrix could recompense herself for the ruinous sacrifices you have referred to?—I don't quite understand the question.

55,410. She sold off the sheep stock at a loss; but she could continue to farm at a lower rent in order to avoid this ruinous sacrifice?—She was quite willing to accept a lower rent.

55,411. How long would it take, in your opinion, for the enhanced value as a sheep farm to recompense her for the ruinous sacrifice; or has she been recompensed already?—It is probable that she has.

55,412. What is the difference between it as a deer forest and as a sheep farm?—I could not say, because we did not get an offer for it as a sheep farm.

55,413. But take the last rent she got for it as a sheep farm?—£750.

55,414. What does she get for it as a deer forest?—Close on £2000.

55,415. For the same area?—For the farms rented at £750, £350, and £80, or £1180 in all. Instead of £1180 she gets £2000.

55,416. Was there a sporting value besides the sheep farm rent?—It was very precarious.

55,417. But if it were let for grouse, what did she get?—I am unable to give you the figures.

55,418. Would it bring you up to the present deer forest rent?—It would still be about £600 short.

55,419. What did the sacrifice she incurred in selling the sheep amount to?—To about £1700 on the Fisherfield farm, but I cannot give you the exact sum on the Letterewe and Ardlair farms.

55,420. So that taking these losses into account, I suppose she has profited very little by the transaction of turning the farms into deer forests?—But she was compelled to do so, because she did not get a single offer from any man.

55,421. Could not she continue the sheep farm after taking over the stock?—She could not continue it, not having the money. You cannot take over £20,000 worth of sheep stock and continue to work the farms, if you have not the money to do it.

55,422. Could she not have got the money advanced, if she wished to carry on the sheep farm?—If you go to the Jews and get money advanced, you know how they make you pay for it.

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Angus Stewart.

55,423. You stated that the tenant of the deer forest paid three-fourths of the rates for all land in the parish?—Yes.

55,424. That means, of course, that he has three-fourths of the land in the parish?—No; it means that he pays three-fourths of the rental.

55,425. Because he has three-fourths of the land?—Not necessarily, he may not have three-fourths of the land, or anything like it.

55,426. Is he paying any more than he ought to pay?—There is no doubt that sporting rents are much higher than you can get from any one who works arable and pasture land as a farm; about double.

55,427. But this question of assessing rates upon deer forests is simply an indication of how the land is divided?—I do not see that.

55,428. If he only paid half the rent he pays, he would only pay half the rates?—Yes; but the sporting rent does not compare in any way with an agricultural rent, so in dividing the land the one would not compare with the other.

55,429. I should say the agricultural rent is fixed very much higher than any deer forest per acre,—treble?—I am not aware of that.

55,430. Do you mean that land which is rented at £1 an acre does not pay higher rates than land that is rented at only 2d. an acre, and is the proportion of rate assessable on that not higher?—The rates are paid according to the rent of the land.

55,431. So that three-fourths of the rates means three-fourths of the land?—Of the rent of the land.

55,432. How many besides this shooting tenant have land in the parish?—There are about 100 crofters on the Letterewe and Gruinard estates.

55,433. Are there any other farmers?—There is not a farm now except the one I own myself and the one in the hands of the proprietrix. There are some other shooting rents; the shooting of Drumchork, and some fishings.

55,434. Roughly stated, that means that one man has three-fourths of the land on the estate, and 130 families have got the other fourth?—He pays three-fourths of the rental, at any rate.

55,435. We take it that the rent represents the land. Then you said that those people who got Udrigil reclaimed it at less than half the former rent?—Yes, Mr Scott's rent.

55,436. Was that in 1881?—Yes, that was in 1881.

55,437. When did they get it?—They got it the year after the Crofters Commission was here: that would be 1889.

55,438. How was the land occupied between 1881 and 1889?—It was occupied by two tenants who went in after Mr Scott left, at a reduction of rent; it was let in the interval at £83.

55,439. The year 1881 I suppose represented very nearly the high-water mark of rental, did it not?—No.

55,440. Had rents begun to go down before that?—Yes, before then; from 1879 at latest.

55,441. The rent that was fixed by you for this extension holding was not the rent that was fixed by the Crofters Commission. Have you any reason to suppose that they might reduce that rent in proportion as they reduced the old rents?—I don't know what they would do.

55,442. Seeing that is so, what objection could you have to get it fixed by the Crofters Commission?—Of course it was Mr Bankes who did it voluntarily.

55,443. But do you know any reason why it should not have been done?—There was no reason so far as I know.

55,444. It was not a rent that was fixed by the Crofters Commission at any rate?—No; under the Act I don't know that the Crofters Commission could deal with it.

55,445. They could deal with it I suppose by consent of parties?—By consent, just as they did with the Laide Parks.

55,446. But the consent was not given, I presume?—It was never asked by the crofters.

55,447. And they never thought of taking the initiative?—No, we thought we could arrange the rents ourselves.

55,448. But the result of the previous arrangement was that the Crofters Commission reduced crofter rents?—Yes.

55,449. You said there were several vacant tenancies for which no application was made. Do you know the provision in the Act for consolidating holdings as they fall vacant?—Yes.

55,450. Is your preference for that consolidation, or for getting new tenants?—Our preference is for consolidating the crofts.

55,451. Do you want to consolidate those that are vacant now?—Yes, we would let these two crofts to the township if they would take them.

55,452. Have they applied for them?—No, they will not accept them. We have consolidated about eight or nine crofts since the fair rents have been fixed.

55,453. Did you divide them?—We divided them, and we gave them sometimes to two or three of the adjoining crofts.

55,454. Would not the fact that you are in favour of consolidation have prevented offers being made for these vacancies?—I don't think it could, when they knew that the adjoining townships would not accept it, and when posters were put up that these were vacant. Any man that wanted land should apply then.

55,455. But if it is looked upon as the right under the Act of other tenants to get that added to their holdings, there might be some prejudice against applying for it?—There is no prejudice that I can see with any of them; if they require it they will come and ask for it. I have seen no such prejudice among our crofters.

55,456. They are anxious to get more land, then?—They are anxious to get it where they would like.

55,457. There is a great demand for land?—No; if there were a great demand for land, they would take the Little Gruinard farm.

55,458. You said there was a demand for it?—They are very anxious to get it where they like, but not where we have it to give.

55,459. You gave us your own experience as a crofter, and I think you will admit that the proportion of arable land to grazing was entirely too small; it is not well proportioned if only 7 acres of arable go to 2500 acres of pasture?—No, I quite agree with that; I told you I would have required 50 acres to work that place properly.

55,460. You stated that neither were your offers with regard to the horse grazing park accepted?—Yes.

55,461. We had two witnesses here to-day who agreed to your terms?—Yes, but you have several who did not.

55,462. But you could have given it to those who agreed?—You could not expect that the proprietor would lay out £300 for fencing without getting the number of offerers to make use of the park. If you had £300 in your pocket you would not throw them out on a barren hillside with the chance of having only three horses to put into that park.

55,463. I would consider whether it was necessary; I would consider alternative schemes?—We waited for alternative schemes, but never got any proposals from them yet.

55,464. May I ask you whether you confined yourself to the horses when you were thinking of such schemes?—How many horses are there in all the townships?—I do not know.

55,465. I think your evidence to-day went to show that there are not many?—I cannot say; they have not always the same number when they work the crofts. They will have more than appears from the evidence to-day; perhaps double.

55,466. That was to deal with stock they already have?—They have these horses, double or three times the number that was given in evidence. There is no doubt that they require a horse park, and there is no doubt Mr Bankes would be very willing to give it, but the question is how is it to be fenced?

55,467. Why must it be fenced? Are sheep farms fenced?—No.

Poolewe, Ross-shire. Angus Stewart.

55,468. Why then should a horse park require to be fenced?—Because there is the greatest difference between 40 horses and 1000 sheep. One shepherd can command 1000 sheep, but it would require ten shepherds to command 40 horses.

55,469. In the park?—Without a park; the park itself would command them.

55,470. But you do not expect a horse to be driven like a dog?—You won't find any cattle so difficult to drive as horses, except where they are attached to a particular farm.

55,471. But you know that as a rule, sheep farms are never fenced off from each other?—Yes, I know.

55,472. But all deer forests seem to be. Could you explain to us why it is necessary to fence off a deer forest?—To prevent the deer from leaving it, or any others from getting in.

55,473. To prevent the stock mixing?—Yes; and to prevent sheep straying into it. [*Mr Shaw Stewart.*—And to prevent the deer getting on to crofters' crops, sometimes?—Yes.] You cannot compare a sheep stock with horses that may come from different townships. If you gather together 40 horses, each from a different place, you need not expect that they will remain on any pasture. Ten shepherds would not keep them.

55,474. Have you anything to say with regard to this offer that you made and that never came back to you; how does that happen?—I cannot account for it; I was waiting for it and Mr Bankes was waiting, and next year when six or seven applied, Mr Bankes said:—'Well, 'there is the grazing, you never came back with the 'paper you got; if you can get a herd go and get one 'for the land.'

55,475. When was the land of Udrigil given?—The year after the Crofters Commission fixed the fair rent, —1889, I think.

55,476. The necessity would not be greater then than at any previous time, I suppose?—No.

55,477. But the land was not given till then?—The land was in other peoples' hands till then; the place fell vacant at that time.

55,478. But it had fallen vacant I have no doubt at several times before that?—Yes, but two crofters got it, Murdo Gunn and William Mackenzie. The latter is a merchant and the former is a cattle-dealer, but they are crofters all the same. It was in 1883 that these two got it.

55,479. *Mr Munro.*—I think you mentioned that the sheep farms brought in a gross rental of £1180 before they were converted into a deer forest?—Yes.

55,480. And they now bring in a rental of?—Close to £2000.

55,481. Now, without trying to fix you down to a definite sum, what would these forests fetch if re-let as sheep farms to-day?—I don't know that they could be let at all to-day. Farmers have got so disgusted with what they suffer from valuations that they do not care to go into large sheep farms.

55,482. Could they not be let at a reduction of rent?—Well, when Fisherfield was advertised in the newspapers, we had not a single offer, and it is the best farm of the three.

55,483. And no inquiries?—No inquiries, and about 10,000 sheep to be taken over by the proprietrix. Some of these were valued at 38s. for the ewes and 49s. the wedders.

55,484. That is when taken over by you?—Yes.

55,485. In what year was that?—At Whitsunday 1893.

55,486. I suppose it is quite usual for sheep to be valued at considerably more upon the ground than they would fetch in the market?—Yes, they are worth 3s. or 4s. more, being acclimatised to the place; they do not stray, as new sheep bought in the market would.

55,487. So that whether it was the farmer or the landlord who was taking over the sheep, he would have to pay the extra price?—Quite so.

55,488. Could you not say now that any rent could be got for these farms if re-let for sheep purposes?—Our experience with the three farms was that not a rent could be got.

55,489. Not even an inquiry?—Not even an inquiry; and I believe the same is the case with a good many sheep runs throughout the Highlands at present.

55,490. But if re-let, I suppose they would be re-let at a very considerable reduction?—At a very low rent indeed. Farmers will not go into a large sheep farm to-day without having it at a very low rent.

55,491. Then that goes to show that there is a very strong temptation offered to all proprietors to convert sheep farms into deer forests where they are adapted for such a purpose?—Some of them have no choice; unless they have the money to work the land themselves as a sheep farm. They must convert it into what will yield a rent of some kind. They cannot keep on shepherds and take such an immense stock as that unless they have the necessary funds; they are compelled to sell off the stock.

55,492. So that it is a mere matter of time when all sheep farms will have to be converted into deer forests, at that rate?—Yes; in the case of those proprietors who have no money to work them.

55,493. But even supposing that they had to take them over, if they had to work them at a loss, would they not still have the same temptation to convert the land into deer forest?—Quite likely.

55,494. Then in regard to your own farm, did I understand you to say that your actual rent was £93, and that you are entered in the valuation roll at only £80?—Yes.

55,495. And that the £13 of reduction is allowed in respect of your having to keep up the buildings?—Yes.

55,496. Is that a common practice in the county?—There is no reduction in the rent; the reduction is in the rates. I have to pay the former rent.

55,497. You pay £93 to the proprietor, and you are entered in the valuation roll for £80?—Yes.

55,498. Is that done by arrangement with the Assessor for the county?—It is according to the Act; there is an Act for that purpose.

55,499. Does a crofter get a similar reduction for upkeep of his buildings when he is entered in the valuation roll?—No, he does not.

55,500. Is not there some inconsistency there?—You cannot compare a crofter's house with a large steading and a farm house.

55,501. That is a mere matter of proportion?—Of course it is.

55,502. Then does the Assessor not know that you pay £93 of rent?—Yes, he is aware of it; at least, I understand so. It is a general custom in the place.

55,503. Do you, in returning your schedule to him, say that you pay a rent of £93, but that you claim £13 of rebate in respect of the upkeep of the buildings?—I don't know that I wrote it in the schedule; but I have no doubt I had a talk with him when he was about.

55,504. Could it not go into the schedule thus:—Rent £93; rebate for upkeep £13; net rent £80?—There are no such columns in the schedule.

55,505. It is easy to specify it without a column?—There is another difference between a crofter and a farmer; the crofter's house is his own property.

55,506. Still he has to keep it up?—Yes.

55,507. But as the matter now stands you are in a privileged position, the crofter gets no rebate and you do. Now, do all people in the county get a similar rebate?—This deduction is general on large buildings of that sort.

55,508. As a matter of fact, it is not entered in the schedule that you return to the Assessor that this rebate is taken off by you?—No.

55,509. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You are factor on the estate?—I am manager on the estate.

55,510. Do you make the returns to the Assessor?—I do.

55,511. Don't you know whether you give the exact rent or not?—I know that I did not give it in writing. The Assessor comes down and we talk over the matters.

55,512. But he sends a schedule to every factor to be filled up?—Yes.

Poolewe, Ross-shire. — Angus Stewart.

55,513. And do you not know whether in that schedule you put in the full rent or not?—I know I did not.

55,514. Then you make this deduction yourself?—Yes; and there is that deduction made on slated crofters' houses on the property.

55,515. You make the reductions?—Yes, on slated houses. It was done on the farm of Udrigil and on Aird and all other such houses.

55,516. Are the deer forests on your estate put down in the valuation roll at £2000?—Not £2000, but quite close to it.

55,517. They are let, are they?—Yes, £1930, I think it is.

55,518. What is the gross rental?—£1930.

55,519. But what is paid by the tenant?—That is the gross rent; there are no deductions there.

55,520. Are there no deductions for buildings or for payment of wages?—The buildings are not on this estate; they are on the estate of Mrs Bankes, Letterewe.

55,521. Then the sum that is put down in the valuation roll is the exact sum paid by the shooting tenant?—Yes, nearly.

55,522. *The Chairman.*—Suppose that you chose,—I am not suggesting that you would,—but suppose you had chosen arbitrarily to say that the deductions should be £25 instead of £13, would there have been any check upon that form of transaction, suppose you had put in £70 instead of £80?—Yes, I think there would have been a check, because he would not consider it was a fair rent for the place.

55,523. Suppose it was stated to him as the actual rent?—He is generally very good at checking, I assure you.

55,524. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Then do you account for it in this way, that you put down £80, because you thought he would take that as a reasonable sum?—No, but because the difference was expended yearly, and over it sometimes, in the repairs to these houses and fences.

55,525. Just in your own opinion?—Not in my own opinion, but, in fact; the cost of repairs would average £10 to £12.

55,526. And you think that whatever you spend on houses you are entitled to deduct from the rent to be put in the valuation roll?—Yes.

55,527. And you think he does not know the exact rent you pay?—I think he does.

55,528. Did you give it to him?—I did not give it to him in writing.

55,529. Where would he get it then?—He comes round every year and inquires into everything that he does not quite understand, and he could have asked for the lease.

55,530. But if he gets a wrong return how is he to make up the roll—if you put down £80 instead of £93, how is he to make up a proper roll, and don't you seem to constitute yourself the Assessor—don't you seem to be taking over yourself the function of Assessor by making these deductions without consulting the Assessor?—I don't know that I do.

55,531. You said that you have consolidated a number of crofts since the Crofters Commission was here. How many crofts have disappeared since then?—I cannot give you the exact number without referring to my books.

55,532. But you can give us a rough idea; did you say eight or nine?—Yes.

55,533. Was anything paid in compensation to these outgoing tenants?—Yes; their houses and everything they have are valued, and the amount of the valuation is paid by the proprietor.

55,534. Do you know how much has been paid in compensation to crofters in these holdings?—No, but I could give in a supplement stating that.

55,535. Now with regard to Udrigil, first of all it was made one of the objections you see, against the granting of an enlargement that 'the respondent, Mr 'Bankes, has offered and still offers the applicants the 'farm of Udrigil for enlargement of their holdings;' and then I see the Commissioners put in their Note dismissing the application—'The respondent seems not 'insensible to the reasonableness in itself of the applica- 'tion for enlargement of holdings, and accordingly offered 'to the applicants the farm of Udrigil in response to 'their claim.' How did they not get the farm of Udrigil?—Because they would not come forward and live in Udrigil.

Poolewe, Ross-shire. — Angus Stewart.

55,536. It was as an extension of their grazings that they wanted it; they were not to come and live in it?—But if there was any congestion, that would relieve the congested townships.

55,537. But you see it was offered as an enlargement of holdings, and one of the reasons why the application was dismissed is that they were likely to get it as an enlargement of their holdings. Now, I want to know why that was not carried through?—I think that when these crofters have been taken out from among the applicants in these townships that would enlarge the remaining crofts.

55,538. But that is not the point at all. You see you made this an objection to their getting an extension from your own farm, that you were offering another farm for extension of holdings. It is put on record. Now it is right to find out what you did in order to carry out this that is in the Note; why you did not try to carry it out. If you did so, let us hear what you did? (*No answer.*)

55,539. The only thing is that you did not try to carry out this which the Commissioners lay so much stress upon?—I did not know that they would lay so much stress upon it. I do not remember the very words of Mr Bankes' offer, but I have no doubt he had it in his mind to give up the farm at that time; but whether he was going to give it as enlargement of holdings is quite another thing.

55,540. But you do not remember that it was put down in the record in that way?—I don't know; there is no doubt he was willing to give it to crofters.

55,541. But not as an extension of holdings?—No, not as an extension of holdings, except in the way I have indicated.

55,542. *The Chairman.*—But if I may interrupt, I suppose that the case put before the Crofters Commission was, among other things, that he was prepared to consider favourably a proposal for the extension of holdings by taking the farm of Udrigil?—Yes, I suppose that would be so.

55,543. I am correct in so saying, I think?—I cannot remember the words exactly, My Lord.

55,544. And that, of course, is quite a different thing from new holdings altogether?—Yes, quite a different thing.

55,545. It was no good telling the Crofters Commission that you were prepared to make new holdings, because they have no powers to make new holdings as a Commission, but only power to grant extension of existing holdings?—No.

55,546. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—You see it is stated here on record that Mr Bankes offered the applicants the farm of Udrigil in response to their claim; and the fourth objection that you have is 'that the respondent 'has offered and still offers the applicants the farm 'of Udrigil for enlargement of their holdings?—Well, the farm of Aird has been given them to enlarge their holdings since then.

55,547. It is not mentioned?—No, but it was after that.

55,548. But that enlargement has been given, I think you said, under the Crofters Act. Had they to build houses, those who got the farm of Udrigil?—Yes, three on the back, but those on this side had not.

55,549. Who were the three who gave up their holdings,—those who built, or those who did not?—Those who did not build. One of them did not leave, because we had not another croft vacant to give him.

55,550. Are the two who still remain paying their rent, or how are they succeeding?—Only one of these three has remained.

55,551. But there are two who did not give up their holdings at all; how are these succeeding?—Only one that did not give up.

55,552. Were there not five who got the farm, of

Poolewe, Ross-shire.

Angus Stewart.

whom three have given up, and two remained?—Six got the farm; the three on the back did not ask to be removed.

55,553. How are they getting on?—They are getting on very well; one of them is a little back.

55,554. And have they built their own houses?—They have.

55,555. Without, of course, the security that the Crofters Act gives?—Yes.

55,556. Have they leases?—No.

55,557. *Mr Gordon.*—Where was the part of Gruinard which you offered them for a horse park? Was it to the south of Loch-na-h-Uidhe?—I will point it out on the map.

55,558. I see that the part you offered them for a horse park was to the south of Loch-na-h-Uidhe?—Yes.

55,559. What sort of land is that?—Just the common black land of the country, the same as from here to Gairloch.

55,560. There appear to be a good many 'dubh 'lochs' in it?—Yes.

55,561. Is it rocky ground?—Some rocky and other places mossy.

55,562. It would be rather inaccessible; there is no road to it?—There is no road through any of the hills there, but you can go with a horse.

55,563. Do you say that Mr Bankes is still anxious to oblige these crofters with horse ground?—I think so.

55,564. Does this land which he offered them adjoin the forest?—The river separates it from the forest.

55,565. Otherwise there is no fence?—No.

55,566. And if you were to take the sheep off that ground, the deer would get on to it?—Yes, some of them would.

55,567. Is there any special objection why he should not give the horse park at the north end of the farm, where there is a public road?—I believe Mr Bankes would give the whole farm.

55,568. But would he give the horse park at the foot of the farm?—I did not question him about that.

55,569. Would you not have thought that a more advisable arrangement?—Yes, I don't see any difference between the lower and the higher part of it, except the fencing. There is the difference of sending them there.

55,570. Judging from the appearance of the map the ground would seem to be better, but the great point is that it would be more accessible; and as a matter of fact, if it is to be fenced it would be more easily fenced?—I don't know that it would, because you have the county road running through the lower portion, and if you come through that way you will see it would be more expensive to fence it.

55,571. But suppose you were to give between the public road and the sea as an extension to the Second Coast people, and the south part lying to the south of the road up to Loch-na-h-Uidhe to Sand and the other townships, would that not suit the crofters better?—Yes, it would, except for the cost of fencing.

[ADJOURNED.]

SIXTY-FOURTH SITTING.

Ullapool.

ULLAPOOL, September 10, 1894

Present:—

DAVID BRAND, Esq., Advocate, Sheriff of Ayr, and Chairman of the Crofters Commission, *Chairman.*
MICHAEL HUGH SHAW STEWART, Esq., M.P.
ANGUS SUTHERLAND, Esq., M.P.
GEORGE GORDON, Esq.
REV. MALCOLM MACCALLUM.
WILLIAM MACKENZIE, Esq., *Secretary.*

THOMAS MACKENZIE, Doire-nam-Muc (29). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

Thomas Mackenzie.

55,572. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—I speak for Hector Mackenzie.

55,573. Are you the son of Hector Mackenzie?—I am his sister's son: Hector Mackenzie is not at home.

55,574. Do you live with Hector Mackenzie?—Yes, in the same house. [*The Secretary.*—Hector Mackenzie's croft extends to 5 acres 15 poles arable; 4 acres 1 rood 17 poles outrun; and a share in the common of 1211 acres; the old rent was £6, 15s.; and the fair rent is £5, 10s.; arrears £1, 3s. 9½d., which were cancelled].

55,575. What is it you wish to say on behalf of Hector Mackenzie?—We are fenced in, and the land was taken from us.

55,576. When was the fence put up?—Last year.

55,577. Between what two points does it run?—It runs between the river Strath and the river Gruinard.

55,578. It was put up, I suppose, by the proprietor?—Yes.

55,579. Was it erected on his own ground?—It is on the boundary.

55,580. But in passing along the boundary does it trespass upon your grazing?—No.

55,581. Before that, did the crofters' sheep cross the march?—They did.

55,582. And now they are obliged to keep to their own side of the fence?—They cannot get past that now.

55,583. The fence does not take any land from you that you had before?—The crofters in olden times had the land.

55,584. But does it deprive you of any land which the crofters in the township had under the Act of Parliament?—No.

55,585. Is that the whole matter of which you have come here to speak?—That is all. We expected to get a piece of the land at Gruinard.

55,586. Was there an application for enlargement?—There was.

55,587. What has become of it?—We have got nothing as yet.

55,588. Has the application been disposed of?—We wrote a letter to the Commissioners.

55,589. I understand from the Secretary there was no application to the Crofters Commission for enlargement from Gruinard, and that the letter received was the letter offering to give evidence here to-day.—It was to get some more land that we appear here to-day.

55,590. Where do you think there is available land?—In the boundary for the sheep.

55,591. Where the fence is?—Yes.

55,592. What is on the offside of the fence, is it forest, or sheep farm?—Deer forest.

55,593. It is part of the forest of Dundonnell, I suppose?—It is part of the forest of Gruinard.

55,594. Is that land on the further side of the fence?—It is.

55,595. Did it formerly form part of the farm of Mungasdale or Monkcastle?—Yes.

Ullapool. Thomas Mackenzie.

55,596. Do you happen to know when it was afforested?—I think it was eight years ago.

55,597. Do you know how many acres were afforested?—No, I do not know. The whole estate of Gruinard is a forest to-day.

55,598. What extent of land on the farm of Mungasdale was put into the forest of Gruinard?—The whole of the farm.

55,599. What was the area of the farm?—I cannot say.

55,600. Do you remember the last tenant of the farm?—I do.

55,601. What was his name?—Mr Murray.

55,602. What rent did he pay?—I cannot say.

55,603. Do you know what stock he kept?—No, but it was a large stock.

55,604. The case you submit to us, then, is that your township grazing is too small, and that you desire us to consider as to an assignment of land from the farm of Mungasdale now afforested?—Yes, there are people from another township, Badcall, who want a piece along with us from the same forest.

55,605. How many crofters are in Doire-nam-Muc,—how many families?—Thirteen families.

55,606. And can you tell me how many cottars there are?—None at all.

55,607. How many families are in Badcall?—I cannot say; there are delegates present from Badcall.

55,608. Then, is this desire for land from the townships of Doire-nam-Muc and Badcall?—Yes.

55,609. And from no other township?—There are some from Badluachrach here as well, but they will speak for themselves.

55,610. Are they to speak about the same farm?—The same farm.

55,611. These three townships, Doire-nam-Muc, Badcall, and Badluachrach are all the townships that are represented here asking for land from the farm of Mungasdale?—Yes.

55,612. Is that the whole matter that you wish to submit to us?—That is all.

55,613. Was Hector Mackenzie appointed a delegate?—He got a letter, but he was not at home.

55,614. But was your uncle appointed a delegate, at a meeting?—No. There was a meeting, but no one in particular was appointed.

55,615. Was there a meeting at which it was arranged that Hector Mackenzie should come forward?—We have all appeared here; we thought we would all have to speak.

55,616. In your conversations about land, before coming to this meeting, was there anything said between you about new holdings?—We were talking among ourselves about getting so much of the Gruinard land within the fence.

55,617. Can you tell me what extent of stock is kept on the 1211 acres of township pasture?—I cannot say.

55,618. Can you tell me how the stock that is kept there in summer is wintered?—About one-half of them died for want of proper grazing.

55,619. And how were those that survived wintered?—On the crofts at home.

55,620. Does the township keep both a sheep stock and a cattle stock?—Both.

55,621. And do you keep horses?—One horse.

55,622. On each croft?—There are about seven horses to the township.

55,623. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—How many shares are there in the grazing?—Every crofter in the township has a share.

55,624. And how many sheep has each?—I cannot say as to the number of sheep.

55,625. Is there no limit?—No; they were talking about a limit.

55,626. I suppose it would be much better for the stock if there was a limit for each?—It would be better for the stock; we have not the grazing to keep the stock.

55,627. Is the fence on the north side of the road, on the top of the hill?—Between Little Lochbroom and—

55,628. Does it run from east to west?—Yes.

Ullapool. Thomas Mackenzie.

55,629. If the fence ran along the roadside, would that give you sufficient grazing?—No, it would not.

55,630. Can you tell me how many sheep there are on the farm of Mungasdale?—There are no sheep to-day; only deer.

55,631. Can you tell me how many horses there are altogether on the grazing in connection with the three townships?—I cannot say; there is one in Badcall.

55,632. And how many in Badluachrach?—I cannot say; they pay the summering for their horses.

55,633. *Mr Sutherland.*—Can you tell us how many families are along the whole of the south side of Little Lochbroom?—I do not know how many.

55,634. How many townships are there?—Six.

55,635. What are their names?—Camus-nan-Gall, Ardessie, Badbea, Badcall, Doire-nam-Muc, and Badluachrach.

55,636. You cannot tell us how many families are in all these townships?—No.

55,637. Can you tell the acres of land they have got among them?—No, I cannot say.

55,638. Do you yourself remember when the farm of Mungasdale was cultivated partly?—I do not remember, but there is another man from the township.

55,639. Do you remember when the land that is now lying waste at Mungasdale was cultivated by any person?—Yes, I do remember that.

55,640. How many years ago?—I cannot say.

55,641. *Mr Gordon.*—On what estate is the farm of Mungasdale?—On Mr Catton's estate.

55,642. And on whose estate is Badluachrach?—On Dundonnell estate.

55,643. Did the fence which they have erected run along the march between the two estates?—The fence is on the march.

55,644. Then, the land which you are presently applying for is upon Fisherfield or Gruinard?—It is part of Fisherfield; it is part of Gruinard Forest.

55,645. Where was the march formerly between Mungasdale and the forest?—The old people here know it, but I myself do not know it.

55,646. Do you know the ground?—I know the ground well.

55,647. Where do you suggest that the march between the crofting land and the forest should be?—It should be taken to bits so that people should have some land.

55,648. Where would you suggest that the march fence should be shifted to? Do you know a loch above Doire-nam-Muc called Loch-a'-Bhad-Choille?—That loch is near the road in our own land.

55,649. Does your present pasture go up to that loch or past it?—Our land goes up to that loch.

55,650. Does it go beyond that loch?—It does.

55,651. Does it take in Loch-an-t-Seilich?—One end of it is on our ground and the other is in the forest ground.

55,652. Is Loch-an-t-Seilich the present march between Doire-nam-Muc and the forest?—There is no fence at yon end of the loch.

55,653. Where does the fence cross from Little Lochbroom to the south-west?—The boundary is just at our crofts, at Lochan-na-Cairill.

55,654. But there is a considerable extent of ground between Loch-a'-Bhad-Choille and the sea opposite Gruinard island which you have not at present?—That is part of the forest.

55,655. And is that the land that you wish to get?—It is.

55,656. Does the pasture of the crofting township of Badbea go up to the top of Sail-Mhor?—I think it does.

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, Crofter, Badluachrach (40)—*examined.* Alexander Mackenzie.

55,657. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

55,658. Was your rent fixed by the Crofters Commission when they were here?—Yes.

55,659. What was your former rent?—£6.

55,660. And your new rent?—£4, 4s. [*The Sec-*

Ullapool. Alexander Mackenzie.

retary.—Murdo Mackenzie's croft has 5 acres 0 roods 29 poles arable; 25 poles outrun; and share of 1321 acres of common pasture; the old rent was £6 and the rent is £4, 4s.; arrears were £9, 0s. 6d., whereof new £6, 0s. 6d. were cancelled, and £3 ordered to be paid].

55,661. Is your grazing held in common by Badluachrach, Doire-nam-Muc, and Badcall, or have you a township grazing of your own?—Yes, each township is clear.

55,662. Your township grazing is held by the township itself and extends to 1321 acres?—One thousand six hundred acres.

55,663. Were you appointed as a delegate to attend this sitting?—Yes.

55,664. What is the view you wish to lay before us?—I wish to lay before you that Badluachrach was spoiled when the crofters were sent from Mungasdale. There were only nine at first in Badluachrach; my father was born and bred in Mungasdale and my grandfather before him, and the land was taken from them in Mungasdale except at the last year they got some patches for potatoes. My father then got a croft in Badluachrach when there were only nine crofts there, and it is now divided into 33 crofts.

55,665. But I suppose with an extended area of land?—Not a bit extra beyond what the nine had.

55,666. What was formerly occupied by nine crofters is now occupied by thirty-three?—Yes.

55,667. Do you happen to know when that occurred?—No, I was not born at the time.

55,668. But it happened, I suppose, in your father's time?—Yes.

55,669. Were all the crofters that had been in Mungasdale transferred to Badluachrach?—Most of them, except two.

55,670. How many were in Mungasdale?—Ten.

55,671. Eight of them went to Badluachrach?—Yes.

55,672. And the other two went somewhere else?—Yes.

55,673. Was Mungasdale then turned into a sheep grazing?—Yes.

55,674. That did not happen in your day, but perhaps you can tell us about what date it occurred?—Yes, about 44 years ago.

55,675. And ever since then till eight years ago or so, this farm has been held as a sheep farm?—Yes.

55,676. But now it is turned into forest?—Yes.

55,677. Was the last witness correct in saying that it was turned into forest eight years ago?—Yes, the lowest part of the ground, but not the upper part. The march of the first forest came down about the middle of Loch-na-Sealg when Mr Murray had the farm.

55,678. That is an older afforestment than the afforestment of Mungasdale?—Yes.

55,679. What was the extent of land afforested eight years ago? Was it just the whole farm of Mungasdale as it then stood?—No, it was only what was above Lochan-na-Cairill; between that and Achanuaridh.

55,680. But you do not know the extent?—No, I cannot tell the number of acres.

55,681. What became of the farm-house?—The house and steading are going to ruins.

55,682. You wish us to consider as to whether the land which originally formed the Mungasdale township and afterwards the farm, and now the forest, should be in whole or in part re-assigned to the Badluachrach crofters?—Yes.

55,683. Are the crofters of Badluachrach and Doire-nam-Muc and Badcall ill off for grazing?—There is not a township in the whole estate of Dundonnell that was spoiled so very bad as Badluachrach, because all the Mungasdale crofters except two were driven into Badluachrach and so spoiled the place.

55,684. Did they get no extension of grazing when the people were brought from Mungasdale?—Not a bit, except the old marches.

55,685. Additional families were put there, but no additional land was given?—No.

55,686. Is that the only matter that you wish to put before us,—this question of the grazing?—Well, if it is impossible for us to get Mungasdale, we applied several times to Mr Purves for Gruinard Island.

55,687. How is Gruinard Island occupied at present?—By Mr Baring.

55,688. Is it part of the forest?—No, it is a rabbit-warren.

55,689. What answer was given to this application for Gruinard Island?—It was said that we would get a chance of it when the lease was out; but when we applied for it and made an offer, it had been given on lease to Mr Baring a second time, and Mr Purves gave it to a farmer from Lewis, Mr Sinclair.

55,690. And has Mr Sinclair got it at present?—Mr Baring has it.

55,691. Is it a suitable island for grazing purposes?—We had no summering for our horses in Badluachrach this year, and we did not know what to do with them. We could not get grazing for them on our own estate, and Mr Baring kindly gave us the grazing of our horses for £1 each on Gruinard island; and the horses are there at present.

55,692. Did you make any application for this land on the mainland, the farm of Mungasdale?—No, but when we heard that there were Royal Commissions appointed to break deer forests and sheep farms, we thought our chance was as good as the rest.

55,693. Would you say that the township of Badluachrach is congested,—that is to say, that there are too many families in it?—No mistake about that. In winter it is as black as Rotten Row, owing to the large numbers of people in the township tramping back and fore upon the small patches of land the crofters have.

55,694. How many ought to be in it, in your view?—There ought to be just the number there were in the olden times, nine.

55,695. You think the proper number is nine?—Yes.

55,696. Would you take out all the rest and put them somewhere else?—Yes.

55,697. Where would you put them?—There is plenty ground in Dundonnell, and all through the big farms.

55,698. Any ground they could get on that estate would put them, I suppose you think, in a much better position than they are in at present?—Yes, Badluachrach is a very rocky barren point, and it is impossible for any one to make his living the way they are situated at present: not even a road except a footpath that they got last year, and in winter you can hardly make out where it is.

55,699. Suppose new holdings were formed, say on the Dundonnell estate, or somewhere in the neighbourhood, could the tenants in Badluachrach take such holdings themselves without assistance?—Well, we would do our best.

55,700. Do you think they are able?—I think some are, but not all.

55,701. Would they be able to stock such new holding?—I cannot say: that would depend on how the rent might be fixed.

55,702. Are you yourself desirous of getting a new holding, or do you wish to remain where you are, with extended grazings?—Well, I would shift; but I could do as I am if I got an extension of grazing.

55,703. *Mr Gordon.*—What march would you propose for the south boundary of the crofters' grazing?—We would like to get from Lochan-na-Cairill, just where the forest fence joins that loch,—we would like to have what is on this side of Lochan-na-Cairill. The deer forest fence joins the upper end of the lochs.

55,704. How would you extend the boundary to the east of that, towards Sail-Mhor?—The fence fixes the boundary there already.

55,705. Would Loch-an-t-Seilich be in the middle of your ground in that case?—Just about the edge Doire-nam-Muc comes in to the east side of Loch-an-t-Seilich.

55,706. Then the boundary would be from Lochan na-Cairill to Loch-an-t-Seilich?—Yes.

55,707. Does the Doire-nan-Muc grazing go to the south of Loch-an-t-Seilich at present?—They have that place called Arishaig further on.

Ullapool.

Alexander Mackenzie.

55,708. Now, supposing you were to get this land, how would you propose to occupy it? Would your present stock be sufficient for it?—No, but we would try and stock it.

55,709. Have you any idea of a club stock in this country, or how it is worked?—It is not worked in our neighbourhood as yet.

55,710. Would you propose to occupy this ground along with the Doire-nam-Muc crofters, or would you suggest that whatever addition is made should be made as a township grazing?—We would take it either way, but I think Badluachrach ought to get it, as it is the people that came from Mungasdale who spoilt the grazing of Badluachrach.

55,711. This land that you propose would include the whole farm of Mungasdale?—It would include what is on this side of the Glen Burn.

55,712. Then, you do not want to speak as to anything further up Little Lochbroom side?—No.

55,713. If you got that land, would you be prepared to erect a fence, or is there at present fencing there?—It does not want a fence except a small bit from the end of that loch to Gruinard river. There is an old dyke above the road which could be easily repaired, adjoining the loch.

55,714. Do you propose that the extension of pasture should go down to the Gruinard river?—We would be content supposing it did not go down to the river; we do not want to interfere with the Gruinard marches.

55,715. Did the ground which your township formerly occupied ever go up as far as Loch-an-t-Seilich?—We have a narrow neck going up to Loch-an-t-Seilich, but our march does not come up further than the sky line of the watershed of Druim-nam-Fuath.

55,716. *Mr Sutherland.*—You said in reply to questions by the Chairman that the farm of Mungasdale was made out of small holdings?—Yes.

55,717. And the people who had these small holdings, I think you said, were sent down among you to Badluachrach?—Yes.

55,718. And after that, the farm of Mungasdale was allowed to go out of cultivation and made into a deer forest; is that the history of it?—Yes.

55,719. You surprised me when you said there were 33 families in Badluachrach?—There are 33 crofts and 25 families.

55,720. Then, there are more crofts than families?—Yes, a few of them have two crofts.

55,721. How did that happen?—Because some went abroad thinking they could make a better living of it, and the neighbour got the croft left vacant.

55,722. Then the sub-division was not made by the people themselves?—It was made by the late Hugh Mackenzie.

55,723. It was the proprietor who made the sub-division, and not the crofters?—It was the proprietor.

55,724. Did any of them when they came there first get holdings on the grazing of those who were there already, or did they get arable land ready made for them?—No, some of it was nothing but heather.

55,725. Did they make the arable land themselves out of the heather?—They did, some of them.

55,726. And did they build their own houses?—Yes.

55,727. Without any assistance?—Well, some of them got rough timber from the laird.

55,728. Was that all the assistance they got?—It was.

55,729. Was it in the wood they got the timber?—In the wood.

55,730. They just got leave to cut down timber?—They had to cut it themselves and get it carted.

55,731. And they had the houses to erect?—Yes.

55,732. Some of them had also the land to reclaim afterwards from the heather?—Yes.

55,733. I see that you got considerable reductions of rent when the Crofters Commission went round there. Was that rent which was reduced by the Commission put upon the labour of the people themselves after they made the heather into arable?—All that was translated to the Crofters Commission.

55,734. You are talking of people who were put down upon a barren heath, without any houses, without any arable land, who got no assistance except the rough timber growing in the wood, yet they built houses themselves and reclaimed land and paid rent?—Yes.

55,735. And I find that when the Crofters Commission went round they reduced that rent considerably?—But those who lived in both ends of the township did not apply to the Commission.

55,736. I observe that only 14 applied to the Commission?—Yes. There are some who come in at both ends of the township, to cultivate this land which was all heather, and these did not apply to the Commission.

55,737. Why did they not apply to the Commission?—Their rent was not so large as ours.

55,738. Was your father there before you?—My father was in Mungasdale, and he was in Badluachrach at the time of the Commission's visit.

55,739. He was sent to Badluachrach?—Yes.

55,740. What sort of land did he get when he went to Badluachrach?—He had a ninth share of the place, and he could cultivate the best in the town, as it was not divided into crofts as it is at present. They had a piece about, the nine of them, and they had both ends as pasture for their cattle.

55,741. You have your hill grazing separate from the people of Doire-nam-Muc?—Yes.

55,742. Is there a fence between you?—Not a fence, but we know the marches.

55,743. You know the marches and you can keep them?—Yes.

55,744. And if your stock trespasses on their grazing, their stock trespasses on yours, I suppose?—Yes.

55,745. You do not find any need for fencing?—No, I think not.

55,746. Why do they put fences between the deer forests and the crofters' land?—That is to keep the sheep out of the deer forest.

55,747. It is for the protection of the deer forest that fences are put up?—Yes, surely; it is not for the benefit of the crofters that that is done.

55,748. In your opinion then, supposing the people of these townships that you refer to got the land adjacent to them which is now deer forest, what would you propose should be done with the arable land that has been allowed to go out of cultivation round about the farm-house of Mungasdale? Would you use it as pasture, or would you propose that it should be ploughed up again?—Well, it would give a better crop than what we are using just now; it ought to be cultivated, undoubtedly.

55,749. Would it help to relieve the crowding that at present exists in your township?—Yes.

55,750. Have they all got some stock in your township?—Yes, a few; some have thirty sheep, others again as few as six.

55,751. Are there any who have no sheep?—Some have only one sheep.

55,752. Is Gruinard Island a good subject for peopling, do you think?—There were six crofters in it in former times.

55,753. And you state now that you get your horses grazed there from the tenant of the shooting?—Yes, Mr Baring.

55,754. And you pay £1 each. For how long do you get that grazing?—Till Martinmas.

55,755. From when?—From 26th May.

55,756. That is practically half a year?—Yes.

55,757. How many of you send horses there?—Six from Badluachrach and two from Doire-nam-Muc.

55,758. That is at the rate of £16 a year for the island?—The other half-year, I don't know what would be on it.

55,759. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—I want to understand how the grazing is held now between your township and the others. Do the three townships graze in common, or is there a march between you and Doire-nam-Muc?—Yes, there is a march, but there is not a fence, and the sheep can go back and fore. Most of the Doire-nam-Muc sheep stay on their own side, except a few that cross the march. Doire-nam-Muc is between us and Badcall.

Ullapool.

Alexander Mackenzie.

55,760. Did the last witness speak truly when he said that half your stock of sheep died every year?—I cannot say; maybe half of his died. There are a good many deaths in the winter. Last year it was pretty wet and stormy, but perhaps other years may not be so bad.

55,761. Perhaps he was only referring to last year?—Very likely.

55,762. Is it more important for you to get more summer grazing, or better wintering ground?—We require both.

55,763. Which is the more important of the two?—What is the good of summering when we have not the wintering.

55,764. Do you send any of your sheep away to wintering?—No.

55,765. Has there been much sub-division of crofts in your township?—I told already the number of crofts; 33 crofts and 25 crofters.

55,766. But I want to know whether that has arisen partly from sons getting parts of their father's crofts, or has been solely from new crofters coming in from Mungasdale?—It was divided into 33 crofts, 44 years ago.

55,767. And there has been no increase since?—No.

55,768. Then, there has been no sub-division since 1850. Can you specify any land upon which crofters could be placed on the Dundonnell estate to relieve Badluachrach?—There were some crofters throughout the low ground, about Dundonnell, about these fields that you saw. They were there in former times, at the same time as in Mungasdale.

55,769. But most of that land is now under crop?—Under crop in the landlord's hands.

55,770. But it is cultivated?—Part of it is cultivated and part not.

55,771. I saw a good many fields of corn, and large turnip fields there?—Yes, but you also saw a good many fields of pasture uncultivated.

55,772. Some of that was in rotation, was it not?—Well, there were crofters on the other side of the river as you pass up near Braigh where there is an old woman's house, but it is nearly heather now.

55,773. But most of the strath about Dundonnell house is in rotation, is it not,—most of the best land?—Yes, the best land.

55,774. And the terms of our remit prevent us from dealing with or making recommendations with regard to land under crop; are you aware of that?—I would leave it to yourselves.

55,775. But it is not a matter that is left to our discretion; it is laid down for us that we have only to take into consideration land which is at present under deer or under sheep?—Well, we do not want any land that is under crop at present.

55,776. Then, can you specify any land that is not under crop which could be formed into new holdings?—The only land I want is the land of Mungasdale, the land of my forefathers, where my father and my grandfather were born and bred, and my great-grandfather paid rent to old Davidson of Tulloch.

55,777. If you got the lands of Mungasdale farm as an extension of grazing, would that satisfy your wish?—Yes.

55,778. About the deer fence,—is not a deer fence a benefit to crofters in keeping the deer from the crofters' crops?—Not a bit; we would rather have the sheep among the deer even with the deer among the sheep.

55,779. So you have not a great opinion of your crops?—No.

55,780. Does that arise from the soil, or the climate, or why are your crops so poor that you would not mind seeing them destroyed by the deer?—They very seldom come to us. We are at the outmost point of Dundonnell at the seaside, but the deer only want a secret place.

55,781. Then, as to Gruinard Island, do you consider an island a suitable place to send families to live on?—Yes, but we would rather get it as grazing for the township if we could not get Mungasdale.

55,782. I would certainly agree with you that an island is better for grazing than for habitation, because of the difficulties of sending children to school?—Yes.

55,783. Or getting a doctor in case of illness?—Yes, that is very true.

55,784. *The Chairman.*—Is your own croft a half croft or a whole one?—It is a whole croft.

55,785. But some of the others, I suppose, are only parts of what were formerly crofts?—The whole of them were made the same size, but there is not so much arable land in one as in another.

55,786. Then, when these people came from Mungasdale, were the original nine crofts cut up into separate holdings?—There were only nine before, but they were not made into crofts at that time; they had just piece about of the township; and now when the crofters came from Mungasdale it was divided into 33 crofts, with the same area in each croft, but the centre of the township was best; there was more cultivated land there, and those that came from Mungasdale picked up the end.

55,787. Were there 33 separate houses erected?—Yes.

55,788. And now there are 25?—Yes.

55,789. Has each crofter his own land now?—Yes.

55,790. Formerly the land was held in runrig?—Yes.

55,791. When the crofters came in from Mungasdale, did they each get a portion of the land, or did they cultivate the land in common with those who had been there before?—They got just a croft on those outskirts of the township.

55,792. On the pasture?—Yes, and those who were in first got the first chance of the centre of the township.

55,793. Did those who got crofts on the outskirts get pieces of land to themselves belonging to their dwelling-houses?—Yes.

55,794. Is that what happened, or are you not sure?—I am sure they got the crofts when it was divided; they got a croft the same as the rest though there might not be so much arable land in it.

55,795. What stock have you at present — how many cattle?—I have got four cows and twenty sheep and one horse.

55,796. And you have also followers, I suppose?—Yes, I have one stirk and two calves.

55,797. What loss, if any, did you sustain in sheep last winter?—I had fourteen hoggs and I only clipped four of them.

55,798. Were the rest lost?—Yes.

55,799. From the severe weather of last winter?—Yes.

55,800. May we take that as indicative of the loss among the other crofters in the township; did they lose similarly?—Yes, pretty nearly the same average.

55,801. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Has there been much improvement in the houses in your township since the crofters got the security of the Crofters Act? Have they improved their houses or built any new houses?—We built a new house.

55,802. Is it an entirely new house?—Yes.

55,803. And have others built new houses?—A few of them in Badluachrach.

55,804. Have they generally improved their houses since then? Are they better now than they were at the passing of the Act?—Yes, inside, but there are no new slated houses built; they are under turf and thatch, the same as in the olden times as yet.

55,805. But is your new house a slated house?—No, it has a zinc roof.

55,806. Would you propose to transfer some of the crofters to the arable land of Mungasdale, seeing that they are so congested there? Is it your idea that some of them should be planted in the old arable ground at Mungasdale?—Yes, it is a pity to see that good land under rabbits.

55,807. You say ten crofters had Mungasdale before?—Yes.

55,808. Had these ten the whole of Mungasdale farm?—Well, they had very nearly all except one man

Ullapool. — Alexander Mackenzie.

they called Coinneach who had a small patch on the south side of it.

55,809. But was there not a large grazing of Mungasdale?—Yes.

55,810. Who had the extensive grazing of Mungasdale? Had the crofters it?—Of course, they had it in former times, except the small patch that this man had. It was not a sheep farm then, and there were no slated houses, nor anything at that time.

55,811. Can you tell us the extent of land that these men had, the ten crofters? How much grazing had they?—I cannot tell that as it was not in my time, but I know some of them went as far as Loch-na-Sealg.

55,812. You think that all the old grazings and arable land could now be profitably occupied by crofters?—All that is on this side of Loch-na-Cairill, on this side of the fence.

55,813. Is there no land on the other side, beside the Gruinard river?—Not fit for cultivation.

55,814. But for grazing?—Yes, fit for grazing.

55,815. Is it good grazing land all along the Gruinard river?—Very good.

55,816. When you speak of this particular land you refer to the want of your own township?—Yes.

55,817. But you think that the rest of the ground round the Gruinard river might be profitably occupied by some others?—Well, I don't know: I only speak for myself.

55,818. You refer only to the wants of your own township?—Yes.

55,819. But the ground beside and along the Gruinard river is good grazing ground,—you know the ground, do you not?—Yes, good grazing all along to Kinlochewe from the seaside.

55,820. Is there a deer fence between your sheep and the deer forest?—No.

55,821. Not a sheep fence?—No, there is no fence between Badluacrach and the forest.

55,822. Are you going to point out to us any other land on the Dundonnell estate, or do you know any other land that might be profitably occupied by crofters?—No.

55,823. Do you know Kildonan?—I know it, and I have heard about it.

55,824. Were there crofts on Kildonan?—Yes, there were.

55,825. What is your opinion regarding the land there?—I do not know what condition they were in there; it was not in my time.

55,826. You do not give any opinion at all about it?—No.

55,827. Have you any idea how long it is since that place was cleared?—No, I cannot tell you about that.

55,828. Was Strathbeg occupied by crofters before?—Oh, yes, the crofters were scattered from there.

55,829. By whom was the land there brought under cultivation?—It was the late Hugh Mackenzie that cleared the crofters out of it.

55,830. When was that?—I cannot say what year.

55,831. *Mr Gordon.*—How are you occupied at present when you are not working on your croft?—I am a gillie at Mr Wythers, Dundonnell.

55,832. How are the crofters in your township usually occupied,—do they go to the fishing?—Most of them do, and to the Fort-William railway; they are scattered anywhere they can earn a living. There is not much work in this neighbourhood.

55,833. What sort of crofts would you suggest being made at Mungasdale, would they be small crofts something like what you have?—That would be rather small: I think four crofters would do in Mungasdale if they got it at a fair rent.

55,834. Could four crofters live at Mungasdale if they got it at a fair rent, without going to the railway or to the fishing?—I think so, if they got the old boundaries of Mungasdale pasture.

55,835. Which you have described?—Yes.

55,836. What would your township do if you got that?—The four of them who would come out would do some good to the township.

55,837. But would you propose to share the pasture with the Mungasdale tenants?—We would take Mungasdale as a pasture if you could manage to give us it in that way.

Ullapool. — Alexander Mackenzie.

55,838. I want to know what you would suggest yourself. You said you thought the tenants should be removed from Badluachrach and placed on the arable land of Mungasdale, is that so?—Yes, that would do.

55,839. Then, would you suggest that the pasture should be held in common by the two townships within the boundaries which you have described; is that what you mean?—Mungasdale must have boundaries of its own when the crofters go there, and every township must keep to its own bounds.

55,840. You prefer that each township should have its own pasture set aside for itself?—Yes.

55,841. How many crofters would have to be removed from your township before the crofts would be of the size you would suggest?—Before it would be as good as it was in the old times it ought to be left at nine.

55,842. But if you only took four out of 33 you would leave 29?—Well, if they got Gruinard island as well for grazing, that would improve them.

55,843. But you would still have small crofts there?—But we would be better than we are at present.

55,844. But after all, you would be obliged to depend more upon the wages earned for labour than the produce of your crofts?—We could not help that; we must do the best we can.

55,845. How many men in your township are employed as gillies besides yourself?—There are only two from Badluachrach, myself and another.

55,846. And how many township men would be employed in the neighbourhood?—There are only six gillies altogether.

55,847. But is there no other work?—There are a few working in the river for the laird,—six or seven people.

55,848. Is there any local fishing with you at all?—No, without the railway there is no chance to send the fish to market.

55,849. Is there any harbour near your township that could be utilised in the event of a railway coming near?—No harbour, or pier, or road, or anything. We have to carry everything on our backs like the very slaves. We have no roads except a footpath which was made last year, and that is of no use to us with a cart.

55,850. But suppose the railway came, would your township take to fishing naturally?—Yes.

55,851. Is there any place where you could land your boats at home?—We could run to Ullapool, past Cailleach Point any day, with whatever fish we might have.

55,852. You think the fishing industry would be stimulated if you got a railway to Ullapool?—No mistake about that.

55,853. Would you suggest that as a better means of supplying a livelihood to the crofters upon Lochbroom than additional land?—They would require both of them to make a good living.

55,854. But some of them might naturally take to fishing, and that would leave more room for the others?—Yes, that is so.

55,855. Then, in the event of a railway coming here, would you suggest provision being made for fishing crofts as well as for self-supporting crofts?—Yes.

55,856. *The Chairman.*—Is there any idea in your township of new holdings of a self-sustaining kind by which the crofter could live, or is the view of the township confined to holdings whereby they lived partly and supplemented what they got from their crofts by outside labour?—They have a notion of holdings by which they could live entirely.

55,857. Holdings large enough and with sufficient grazing to enable them to live exclusively by the holding?—Yes.

55,858. Without resorting to either fishing or labour?—Yes.

55,859. There is a desire in that direction? Or do you think that has been considered among you?—Yes,

Ullapool. Alexander Mackenzie.

it has been considered among us that we would rather have land that would keep us going without having to go to fishing or labour,—that the farm should keep the family going.

55,860. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated in reply to a question that was put to you, that if you put four new tenants into Mungasdale that would not practically relieve the congestion that at present exists in your township,—four would not be a very great relief to you, would it?—I meant that it would be enough for four to make a living by. If you put more in Mungasdale they could not make a living; they would have to get outside work.

55,861. But don't you know any other lands in this neighbourhood that are at present occupied as deer forests, or sheep farms, which are as good at Badluachrach was when the people went there first?—I don't know; I only just want the land of my forefathers.

55,862. But you are not speaking for yourself?—I am speaking for the township.

55,863. And what does the township think? Are there not good lands up Strathbeg and Strathmore?—I am sure there are.

55,864. Better than Badluachrach?—Better than Badluachrach, of course; but if you put too many in any place it will spoil it.

55,865. There are not too many people in Strathbeg and Strathmore at present?—No.

55,866. They are not congested, are they?—No.

55,867. And you think there is good grazing there?—Yes.

55,868. And land that could be easily made into arable land?—Yes.

55,869. *Mr Aitken, of Messrs Purves & Aitken, W.S., Edinburgh, Agents for Dundonnell Estate.*—I think the witness might have an opportunity of correcting a statement he made about the fence between the pasture of Doire-nam-Muc and Gruinard. There are only a few hundred yards at the end of Loch-na-Cairill fenced, the rest of the march is quite unfenced?—That was a mistake.

55,870. Then I think Mr Maccallum brought out that some of the arable land presently in the little Strath was brought into cultivation by crofters at one time: was there any of the arable land at present in the hands of the laird that was ever brought into cultivation by the crofters?—I cannot tell you exactly about that.

55,871. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Is the whole of the land in Strathbeg in the occupation of the proprietor?—[*Mr Aitken.*—That is so.]

enneth ackenzie.

KENNETH MACKENZIE, Crofter, Badluachrach (45)—*examined.*

55,872. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

55,873. Was your case dealt with by the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

55,874. Your holding seems to have 9 acres arable; and 4 acres outrun; with a share of 1321 acres of common pasture. Do you appear as a delegate elected at a meeting?—Yes.

55,875. Were you appointed at the same meeting as the previous witness, Alexander Mackenzie?—Yes.

55,876. And you are to represent the same views?—Yes.

55,877. Does his evidence fully set forth what you wish to say?—Yes.

55,878. Then, we may take you as concurring in his evidence?—Yes.

55,879. Have you anything further to add?—No.

55,880. What is your occupation? Have you any other means of livelihood besides carrying on the croft?—I am a merchant; I sell groceries.

55,881. How long have you been a merchant?—Nineteen years.

hn aclean.

JOHN MACLEAN, Crofter, Badluachrach (70)—*examined.*

55,882. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

55,883. Your holding has 6 acres 3 roods 11 poles arable; and 4 acres 21 poles outrun; with a share in the common pasture of 1321 acres; the old rent was £6, 10s.; and the new rent is £4, 14s.? Were you appointed at the same time as Alexander Mackenzie?—Yes. Ullapool. John Maclean.

55,884. To come here and tell us about that grazing?—Yes.

55,885. And you confirm what he said, I suppose?—Yes.

55,886. Have you anything additional to tell us, or did his evidence, which was taken at great length, cover all the points?—He said everything, and it was very well said.

JOHN MACKENZIE, Crofter, Badluachrach (69)—*examined.* John Mackenzie.

55,887. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter at Badluachrach?—Yes.

55,888. Your holding has 4 acres 1 rood arable; 3 roods 18 poles outrun; and a share in the common pasture of 1321 acres; the old rent was £5; and the new rent is £3, 8s. Were you appointed at the same meeting as Alexander Mackenzie?—Yes. I agree with what he said, and have nothing to add.

55,889. He stated the case for the township pretty fully?—I think he did.

55,890. And you agree with his views?—Yes.

55,891. *Mr Sutherland.*—Were you born in Badluachrach?—Yes, and my father before me.

55,892. Was your father one of the original nine who were there?—Yes. I was in it myself at that time.

55,893. Do you know any other place except the farm of Mungasdale that is suitable for making new holdings in?—No.

55,894. You do not wish to speak of any other place than that?—No.

ALEXANDER MACKENZIE, Fisherman, Badluachrach (41)—*examined.* Alexander Mackenzie.

55,895. *The Chairman.*—Do you concur in the evidence that we have had already?—Yes.

55,896. What is your occupation?—I am a fisherman.

55,897. A crofter and fisherman?—Yes: I just cultivate part of the croft that my father and my forefathers had.

55,898. Do you live on your father's holding?—Yes, my father is an old man now, upwards of 80 years of age, and unable to work.

55,899. Are you married?—Yes.

55,900. Have you a separate fire?—No.

55,901. You live in the house with your father?—Yes.

DONALD MACIVER, Crofter, Doire-nam-Muc (63). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.) Donald Maciver.

55,902. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

55,903. Your holding has 2 acres 2 roods 15 poles arable; 18 poles outrun, and a share in the common pasture of 1211 acres; the old rent was £3, 7s.; and the new rent is £2, 6s. Were you appointed at the same meeting as Hector Mackenzie to give evidence about additional grazing?—Yes.

55,904. And do you agree with the evidence he gave?—I do.

55,905. Have you anything further to say, or did he state the views of the township pretty well?—I wish to add that if I am to get any land, it is from Mungasdale I expect to get it.

55,906. The only land you ask our attention to is on the farm of Mungasdale?—Yes.

55,907. Is that land for new holdings that you have in your mind, or for grazing, or for both?—We would take it for both.

55,908. And is the land suitable for both?—Yes.

Ullapool. Donald Maciver.

My father and my grandfather and myself were all born in Mungasdale.

55,909. It is a very old township?—Yes.

55,910. Is the land you are thinking of land that is under grass at present, or land under crop?—It is all under grass just now.

Murdo Macgregor.

MURDO MACGREGOR, Crofter, Doire-nam-Muc (65)—*examined.*

55,911. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter at Doire-nam-Muc?—Yes.

55,912. Your holding seems to extend to 3 acres 3 roods arable; 3 roods 10 poles outrun; and a share in the common pasture of 1211 acres; the old rent was £8, 17s. 2d.; and the new rent is £5, 3s. Were you appointed at the same meeting as Hector Mackenzie?—Yes, the same meeting.

55,913. And you wish to give us the same views about land?—I don't know anything about Mungasdale.

55,914. What is it you are here to tell us about?—Just to say what Alexander Mackenzie said.

55,915. Alexander Mackenzie told us about additional grazing, and do you agree with his statement?—Yes.

55,916. Are you a fisherman?—I was a fisherman and crofter.

55,917. But perhaps you are too old now to go to the fishing?—Yes.

55,918. Have you a son that goes to the fishing?—Yes.

55,919. Does he live with you?—No.

55,920. Where does he live?—He lives at Lochcarron.

55,921. How do you make a living?—I have another son who lives with me.

55,922. And he carries on the croft, and goes to the fishing?—Yes.

55,923. What is his name?—Alexander Macgregor.

Kenneth Mackenzie.

KENNETH MACKENZIE, Crofter, Badcall (40)—*examined.*

55,924. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

55,925. Your croft appears to have 2 acres 3 roods 35 poles arable; and 1 acre 30 poles outrun; with a share of 877 acres of common pasture; the old rent was £5, 3s. 2d.; and the new rent is £3, 10s. Did you attend a meeting in view of the sitting of this Commission?—Yes.

55,926. Were you there appointed a delegate?—No.

55,927. Are you here then as an individual?—Yes.

55,928. What is it you wish to tell us?—That I want to get more land.

55,929. You have a grazing of 877 acres,—is it too small?—Yes.

55,930. The land that would suffice for grazing was formerly part of the farm of Mungasdale, was it?—No, the deer forest of Gruinard.

55,931. Is it now part of the deer forest of Gruinard?—Yes.

55,932. How long have you been living at Badcall?—Nineteen years.

55,933. Do you agree with the evidence we have had to-day with regard to the forest of Gruinard; or does it come to this that you are here to-day as an individual asking us to consider as to additional grazing for your croft from the forest of Gruinard?—Yes, for the Badcall township.

55,934. Are you speaking for yourself, or for the township?—I am speaking for myself.

55,935. Not for the township?—No; there are some of them here.

55,936. Were you appointed to speak for the township, or are you only speaking for yourself?—I am speaking for myself.

55,937. And you wish us to consider as to land that is now in the forest of Gruinard?—Yes.

55,938. What stock have you at present?—I have 42 sheep. Ullapool. Kenneth Mackenzie.

55,939. How many cows?—Three cows.

55,940. Have you any stirks?—Two stirks, 42 ewes, and wedders and hoggs.

55,941. Have you a horse?—No.

55,942. And you say the grazing you have is too limited for the stock you have?—Yes.

55,943. And you wish additional grazing?—Yes.

55,944. Would you be able to put additional stock on the new grazing?—Yes.

55,945. Are you a fisherman as well as a crofter?—Yes.

55,946. Do you go to the herring fishing?—Yes.

55,947. Have you a share of a boat, or do you go as a hired hand?—I go as a hired hand.

55,948. To the east coast fishing?—Yes.

55,949. Have you been to the east coast this year?—Yes.

55,950. And had a good season?—Yes, but a poor fishing.

55,951. What do you mean by a good season but a poor fishing?—I mean we had good weather.

55,952. *Mr Sutherland.*—How many tenants are in the township of Badcall?—Ten; there are eight shares.

55,953. How many sheep have they got among them?—I do not know.

55,954. If each of the 10 had 42 as you have, that would make 420?—There are not the half of that.

55,955. That would be a heavy stock upon 877 acres. Where do you say that you would like your holding enlarged from; is it from the old Mungasdale farm?—From the deer forest.

55,956. Does your township adjoin the old farm of Mungasdale?—No.

55,957. You adjoin what is called Dundonnell, do you?—We adjoin the deer forest of Gruinard.

55,958. And is there land there suitable for enlarging your holding?—There is good pasture there.

55,959. Is there good pasture all over the forest?—Yes.

55,960. Is it as good as the pasture you have now?—Yes, and far better.

55,961. All over?—Yes.

55,962. So that if it is suitable for grazing on this particular part, it would be suitable all over the forest?—Yes.

55,963. *Mr Gordon.*—What part of the forest of Gruinard do you think would be suitable; is it the part adjoining your present grazing?—Yes.

55,964. You march on the east side with the small township of Badbea?—Yes.

55,965. And does your pasture, at present, go as far up as the summit of Sail-Bheag?—Yes.

55,966. Does the Badbea pasture meet you at the top of the hill there?—No.

55,967. Is the Badbea march with you the old parish march, or the old county march?—The county march.

55,968. How many crofters are there in Badbea?—Two.

55,969. With whom do they march?—With Ardessie.

55,970. Badbea marches with you on the one side and with Ardessie on the other?—Yes.

55,971. Would the pasture of the lands of Ardessie not be more convenient for you than the forest, for an extension of grazing?—No.

55,972. Why not?—It is not in the bounds, except a small part.

55,973. But supposing that the township of Badcall and the township of Badbea were to have common pasture, which would include the present pasture of the farm of Ardessie, would that meet your views?—I do not follow you.

55,974. How much additional grazing would you require?—We were speaking about 1½ miles square.

55,975. Well, the farm of Ardessie is much larger than that. If there are only eight crofts in your township and two at Badbea, that would not be too many people to share in the common grazing, would it?—I do not understand. (*Question put in Gaelic*)?—It would not

Ullapool. Kenneth Mackenzie.

meet our demands; there is little enough for Badbea as they are already.

55,976. But if they got the farm of Ardessie added. Is the farm of Ardessie as good pasture as the portion of the forest to which you refer?—No, it is not such good land.

55,977. What part do you refer to?—Down from Sail-Mhor to Lochan-Gaineamhaich, a straight line.

55,978. Down to the Gruinard river?—No, not that way at all.

55,979. Would you cross the top of Carn-na-Beiste?—Not quite that length.

55,980. What would be the southern boundary?—A loch on this side of that Cairn.

55,981. You would want to go from Lochan-Gaineamhaich along the stream Allt Craigour?—Yes.

55,982. And up to the top of Carn-na-Beiste?—We don't want to go that length.

55,983. Where would you get a good boundary otherwise?—There is a burn coming up from Craigour.

55,984. But where would the west boundary of the ground you are speaking of be?—The burn comes up to the fence.

55,985. Suppose you got this additional land, how would you propose to stock it?—We would put stock on it as we could, and it would do good to the stock we have at present.

55,986. But would you propose to work it as a club stock?—No.

55,987. You have 42 sheep yourself, but you say others have not half that number?—That is so; some have not near that number.

55,988. Are you aware that under a club stock each man would be restricted to his own number of sheep, so that one man would not be able to take advantage of the poorer crofters?—Each would put an equal number on.

55,989. Do you understand what a stock club means?—Yes.

55,990. But you would not approve of a stock club?—I don't know; there are others here.

55,991. How would you regulate the stock on the ground? How would you suggest that it should be regulated otherwise than as a club stock?—I think the most of them are fit to stock the land already.

55,992. But is it not a fact that at present they have too many stock on the ground?—They are overstocked already.

55,993. How would you propose to prevent overstocking in the future?—I don't know.

55,994. *The Chairman.*—Do you keep more sheep at present than you ought to keep?—Yes.

55,995. What is the number you are entitled to keep? [*Mr Aitken.*—Sixteen].

55,996. Are you entitled to keep 16?—Yes.

55,997. How many ewes have you got at present?—Sixteen ewes, with lambs.

55,998. What else have you got?—Twenty-six other sheep.

55,999. You are keeping at present an over-stock?—Yes.

56,000. Why is that? You are aware that an overstock is injurious to your neighbours, because your sheep eat grass to which you have no right?—Yes.

56,001. Well, kindly explain to us why you keep an over-stock; is it because you just find that they do not prevent you?—I am trying to take my living out of the stock.

56,002. At the expense of your neighbours?—A number of the crofters in the township have the souming.

56,003. But you have more?—Yes.

56,004. Well, why do you keep more than the souming?—I cannot tell.

56,005. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Did I understand you to say that if you got an extension of grazing you do not know how the stock could be regulated in the future?—I said so.

56,006. Do you think it is reasonable to ask us to recommend an extension of grazing for a township if the new grazing is liable to be over-stocked in the same way as the old?—We would put an equal number of sheep on the new grazing.

56,007. But you ought to put an equal number of sheep on the present grazing, ought you not?—By rights we should.

56,008. Do you pay a bigger rent for keeping a larger sheep stock than your neighbours?—I am not paying a bigger rent.

56,009. Then, you can give us no guarantee that if we recommended extension of grazing, the proper limit would be better respected in the future than it is now?—We will guarantee that. Any crofter who had an overstock in the new grazing would have to pay for the overstock to the man who had less.

56,010. *The Chairman.*—Do you pay anything at present to your neighbours for your over-stock?—I pay nothing.

56,011. Is it because you have an over-stock that you wish an extension of grazing?—Without a doubt.

56,012. Suppose you and the others in the township kept to your proper souming, would the grazing you have suffice?—No, there is not sufficient land for the souming.

56,013. *Mr Sutherland.*—Were there any estate rules regulating the amount of stock crofters could keep in your township?—There was no souming made in the township since I came to it.

56,014. Did the estate ever put such regulations into force if they existed?—I do not remember.

56,015. You never saw it done?—I did not see a souming in the township I am in since I came to it.

56,016. Do you know that an Act of Parliament exists for regulating grazing stock?—No, I am not aware.

56,017. And do you know that if he is not satisfied with the way in which the stock is managed, the landlord can put that Act into operation?—I know that the proprietor could make a souming.

56,018. But you do not know of the existence of the Act of Parliament?—I don't know about the Act of Parliament.

56,019. If there is such an Act of Parliament, do you think it would be a sufficient guarantee that there would be no over-stocking?—It would be a guarantee.

56,020. There would be no difficulty as to new stock for you if you got a new holding?—The bit of land we have would require very little more stock than we have at present.

56,021. If you got an extension of holding such as you want, you would have no difficulty in stocking it?—No difficulty.

56,022. Is it land your township wants, and not stock?—Land first.

56,023. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—By keeping 42 sheep do you break any of the estate regulations, or any order of the Crofters Commission?—Very little souming is done on the estate at all, on our side.

56,024. But are you aware that 16 sheep is the number that you are entitled to keep?—I do not know, five sheep for each £1 of rent.

56,025. Then, according to that, you would be entitled on your old rent to keep 25 sheep?—Yes.

56,026. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Then according to the present stock of sheep you have now, you ought to be paying £8 of rent?—That is so.

56,027. Instead of £3, 10s., which you pay at present?—£3, 10s.

56,028. *The Chairman.*—Do you think it is right or wrong to keep the number of sheep you have at present?—I believe it is wrong.

56,029. *Mr Sutherland.*—Did any one ask you for rent for the extra stock of sheep you keep at the present time?—No.

56,030. *Mr Aitken, of Messrs Purves & Aitken, W.S., Edinburgh, Agents for the Proprietor.*—Is it not the case that before the rent was reduced the souming in Badcall was four sheep for each £1 of rent?—When I came to the township they told me that it was five sheep to each £1 of rent.

56,031. Is it not the case that before the Crofters Commission came to Badcall you and the other mem-

Ullapool. Kenneth Mackenzie.

bers of the township stated that the souming was four sheep for each £1 of rent?—That is correct.

56,032. Is it not also the case that you said to me at the rent collection on more than one occasion that now that the rent was reduced you were not aware whether the souming was changed or whether it was the old souming that was to be kept?—I have no recollection of that.

56,033. Is it not the case that I told you that the rent fixed by the Commissioners did not change the old souming at Badcall?—I do not remember.

Donald Mackenzie.

DONALD MACKENZIE, Crofter's son, Badcall (29). (Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

56,034. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—My mother is the crofter, widow Donald Mackenzie is her name.

56,035. The area of the croft is 2 acres 2 roods 7 poles arable; 1 acre and 1 pole outrun; and a share in 877 acres of common pasture; the old rent was £2, 0s. 6d., and the fair rent is £1, 16s. Are you here as a delegate, or as an individual?—I appear here with my neighbours asking more land.

56,036. Have your neighbours already stated fully enough what you wish to say?—My neighbour has said what I would say.

56,037. Have you anything additional to say?—No, I have nothing to add.

Duncan Campbell.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL, Crofter and Fisherman, Ardcharnich (57)—*examined.*

56,038. *The Chairman.*—Which estate are you upon?—The Coul estate.

56,039. That is Sir Arthur Mackenzie's?—Yes.

56,040. Are you a crofter?—Yes.

56,041. Your holding has 3 acres 1 rood 3 poles arable; 1 rood 6 poles outrun; and a share in 500 acres divided into ten shares; old rent £6, 11s. 9d.; new rent £3, 12s. Are you appearing for yourself, or were you appointed at a meeting?—There was a meeting at which I was appointed.

56,042. Along with Donald Ross?—Yes, and Alexander Munro.

56,043. What is it you wish to say?—I wish to let you know that there is land on the estate where I live now under sheep and deer, which was formerly occupied by our forefathers. In the place where we live, Ardcharnich, we have only about the half of Ardcharnich. We do not go to the march of Ardcharnich since a sort of eviction took place about 73 years ago. Then we were put to this grazing of Ardcharnich, and we want to get back to the old march.

56,044. What is the name of the forest?—Dauchary, Glenbeg Forest.

56,045. That is the forest of Inverlael and Glenbeg?—Yes.

56,046. The township you come from, you say, formerly had grazing which is now included in the forest?—Yes.

56,047. And you wish that grazing restored?—Not so much the grazing in the forest, as it is too high. The small portion we have is a small line going from the shore up some miles to the hill, and we do not get the use of it in winter time by reason of the snow. We want to get to the old march.

56,048. Which was a sheep farm?—Yes, adjoining the sheep farm, a good many years ago.

56,049. What sheep farm is that?—Inverlael.

56,050. That is Mr Walter Mundell's farm?—Yes.

56,051. Part of the grazing on his farm was formerly crofter land?—Yes.

56,052. If we could trace that march upon the map it would be an advantage?—It commenced at a place called Ardnalael, at the public road, and it goes up through the hill in a line to a loch called Loch-a'-Chreagain.

56,053. Is that the south march?—Yes, the south march: the north march is adjoining Mr Pirie's place. Ullapool. Duncan Campbell.

56,054. Is there a point there called Rudha-Aird-an-Tuirc?—Yes, but we go on further to Ardnalael, the next point.

56,055. The point you mean is the one nearest Inverlael farm?—Yes.

56,056. And running in a line up to Loch-a'-Chreagain?—Yes.

56,057. And back along the burn to Ardcharnich township?—Yes.

56,058. There is a square block of land there?—Yes.

56,059. What the meeting desired you to represent is that you need an extension of grazings by getting that land?—Yes.

56,060. Is that all you wish to say?—Yes.

56,061. If you had that extension of grazings, would you be satisfied?—We think that would help us a good bit, at any rate. It would not be too much, but it would help us on.

56,062. *Mr Shaw Stewart.*—Could you explain to us the present march of your outrun of 500 acres?—It is bounded by Mr Pirie on the one side, and Mr Mundell took another fence since the Crofters Commission passed, on the south side,—not on the old march. Probably the new fence is not shown on the map.

56,063. It is a fence on the south side, running up to a small burn?—Yes.

56,064. Do you know the remains of an old tower near Leckmelm?—No.

56,065. Do you graze up to the Leckmelm estate?—Yes.

56,066. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Inverlael is a sheep farm at present, is it?—Yes.

56,067. Were there crofters there before it was a sheep farm?—Yes.

56,068. Can you tell us what number of crofters were on the farm?—I can tell you one thing that an old neighbour of mine told me not long ago, who died less than a year ago. He often told me that from that bridge at Inverlael he could count 37 or 38 houses when he was a young boy; that is between Sir John Fowler's march to the west and the road on this side of Inverlael to the east.

56,069. Are there remains of old buildings there?—Yes, the remains are quite visible to any one on the road.

56,070. Can you give any idea as to when they were cleared out of Inverlael?—I believe it is about 73 years ago; not less than that,—perhaps between that and 80 years ago.

56,071. And is the old arable land which they have under cultivation now?—Yes, some of it is cultivated by Mr Mundell, but what the crofters had between that and Ardcharnich has been under sheep for 70 or 80 years and is not fit to cultivate in a day. We would look for that if we could get to this place, Ardnalaoigh; we could cultivate some of it because it was cultivated, but in a space of 70 years you may take it that it has turned out wild, and it would work better for us as pasture. We are scarce of cultivated lands; our crofts are poor and in a bad place, and perhaps we could use some of it that way.

56,072. But in the remainder of the farm, is there much land that was formerly under cultivation that is now uncultivated?—Yes, a good deal about Inverlael was cultivated by the crofters and is not cultivated now.

56,073. Do you think it is a place where new holdings might be formed? You have spoken of a part of it for extension, but would the remainder be suitable for the formation of new holdings?—I suppose it would be suitable for cultivating, but we do not want to go that length to spoil another man's place. We do not want to go that length, you understand.

56,074. I quite understand that you do not ask for it; but you appear here to give evidence with regard to land in your neighbourhood, and I wish to ask you whether you think the land is suitable?—I think it is quite suitable for arable land; plenty land about Inverlael is quite suitable for arable land, with a little work.

56,075. And do you think that these crofts, suppos-

ing they were formed out of Inverlael, would be readily taken up by crofters in this locality? Are there people who are desirous of taking new holdings, people in congested districts for instance?—It is my opinion that there are.

56,076. Have you been speaking to people who gave that view to you?—Yes, I have often spoken to people who would say that would be the place for them, but their opinion was that they would not get it.

56,077. But that would be the place for them if they could get it?—Yes.

56,078. *Mr Gordon.*—The land that you pointed out to us as being suitable for an extension of your township grazing is at present part of the farm of Inverlael?—Yes.

56,079. Does your township march at present with the estate of Leckmelm?—Yes.

56,080. How is the land on that estate occupied?—It is occupied by the proprietor.

56,081. Do you know a place on that property called Allt-'Raon-a-chroisg?—Yes.

56,082. Are there any crofts on that part of the estate now?—No.

56,083. How is the land on that former croft now occupied? Is it in the hands of the proprietor?—Some of it is under plantation, and some cultivated by the proprietor.

56,084. Are there a number of crofters who have been cleared from that property lately?—Yes, but I don't think I have anything to do with that. It is true enough, but I don't want to enlarge on that subject. I think it is not my place to answer questions about that estate.

56,085. But you came here to give us information?—Yes, about the Coul estate.

56,086. You would rather not speak about the Leckmelm estate?—No, I would rather not have anything to do with it.

56,087. Is there any one from that quarter present who could give us information about it?—No, I don't think so.

56,088. Do you know about the property?—Yes, I do.

56,089. Well, is it a fact that a number of crofters were turned out of that place?—Yes.

56,090. How is the land which these crofters had now occupied?—By the proprietor.

56,091. Does he cultivate that land?—Yes, and parts are now planted.

56,092. And what has become of the crofters?—They are just in cottages that were built for them; and some of them left and went away.

56,093. Do they get work on the property?—Yes, but there are not many of them that can work; they are getting old.

56,094. How do they live?—They do the best they can.

56,095. Have they been pensioned by the proprietor?—I don't think they are pensioned.

56,096. They had formerly grazings, had they not, along with their crofts?—Yes.

56,097. How is the hill pasture now occupied which they then held?—By sheep or deer forests, and the sheep are now put away; it is not to be under sheep any more, I understand.

56,098. Does that hill pasture join your township grazings?—Yes.

56,099. Would it be suitable as an extension of grazings for you?—Of course it would; likely it would be good grazing for anyone.

56,100. It is good grazing land?—Good grazing land.

56,101. *The Chairman.*—You remember, I suppose, that what were called the Leckmelm evictions excited a good deal of public attention at the time?—Yes.

56,102. That is about 11 years ago, is it not?—Yes.

56,103. And has Mr Pirie built houses for the crofters who were removed from their holdings?—Yes.

56,104. The whole of them?—Not the whole of them: there are a few of them yet in the old houses.

56,105. Those that had to leave their houses got new houses built for them?—Yes.

56,106. And they got a good deal of work from Mr Pirie, I daresay, when the changes were going on?—Yes, they were getting labour.

56,107. On the estate?—Well, he has a number of families,—I cannot call them crofters but old people.

56,108. Now, as to Inverlael, is there any desire among those you represent to see that farm broken up?—Well, we want to this march of Ardcharnich, and at the same time we are of opinion that the Inverlael farm would be a good nice farm, after the tenants got to their old march.

56,109. You think that although the crofters got to their old march there would be still left a very good farm of Inverlael?—Yes, that is my opinion.

56,110. Is there any desire to go further into that farm than to the old march?—No, we do not want to interfere with the man there,—as the old word stands, live and let live. We do not want to put down our neighbour altogether, but we see plainly that the Inverlael farm is a good farm even should the Ardcharnich tenants get to their old march.

56,111. You would let the rest of the Inverlael farm remain as it is?—Yes.

56,112. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—Do you think it is for the benefit of the district that the Inverlael farm should remain a large farm after you got what you want out of it; or do you think it would be better to have it formed into smaller holdings?—I cannot answer that question very well: the proprietor knows that. It is my opinion that the whole farm should and would pay the proprietor as well should it be under crofters from one end to the other. That is my opinion; but the proprietor may have another opinion.

56,113. What is your opinion regarding the need there is for the formation of small holdings in this district? Is there need for an opening for some of the crofters in the congested townships?—I think there is a need for it. There are plenty cottars, young strong men, that have no land at all, who would be willing to take new holdings which they could get at a reasonable rent and with fair play,—not with argument; we don't want any quarrelling or fighting.

56,114. So that looking to the interests of the districts generally, it is your view that the whole of the farm should be available for the formation of small holdings?—Yes, that is my view, and I know that if that had taken place 20 or 30 years ago Lochbroom would have been a different place to-day, because the young people have had to remove to other places, and do the best for themselves, leaving the old behind.

56,115. With regard to the crofters who lost their holdings at Leckmelm, some of them still remain on the estate in houses built for them by the proprietor. Have these got potato ground?—I suppose they have patches of potato ground, but I don't know how much, or what support it would give them. I know they have some.

56,116. Are they allowed to keep poultry?—I cannot say.

56,117. I suppose these people have not the same advantages that crofters have; they have not fixity of tenure, have they?—I am not sure: I cannot go into details on that question.

56,118. Are you aware whether the proprietor has given them fixity of tenure or not?—I cannot say.

56,119. And you do not know whether they have leases?—I know some of them are removed,—unless they be obedient servants they must be off. If they are disobedient they lose their place.

56,120. *The Chairman.*—Have you any occupation besides that of a crofter?—No, I just do what I can get to do.

56,121. You mean that you take labouring work when you can get it?—Yes.

56,122. You do not live entirely by your holding?—No, it would not keep me long alive.

56,123. You live partly by the holding, and partly by such labour as you can get?—Yes.

56,124. Do you get labour in the district?—Sometimes I do, and sometimes I labour a good deal on Mr Pirie's estate, and a good deal on Sir John Fowler's estate.

Ullapool. — Duncan Campbell.

56,125. And anywhere else in the locality?—Not to any extent.

56,126. When you do not get labour in the locality do you go further south?—Not now.

56,127. But you did?—Yes, I followed the fishing for a long time, but I gave that up, and I am not working at it now.

56,128. *Mr W. J. Duncan, Solicitor, Dingwall, Agent for Coul Estate.*—You also get work on the roads, do you not?—Yes.

56,129. You told us that you think the farm of Inverlael might be put all under crofters. Would these crofters be able to take the present sheep stock over at valuation?—I believe not.

56,130. There is a valuable sheep stock on the farm at present?—Yes.

56,131. And you think they could not take it over at valuation?—I believe not, on their own account.

56,132. There is also a large farmhouse and a large steading; what would become of these if the farm were given over to crofters?—I don't know what would become of them. I have given my own opinion.

56,133. Would not they be wasted?—I said if such a thing has taken place 30 or 40 years ago, my opinion is that Lochbroom would be in a better situation than it is: and I remain of that opinion. It is a pity that these holdings should stand in place of a human being, and prevent him from getting the use of the land.

56,134. But that is not an answer to my question; what is to become of the buildings? Would they not go to ruin?—Oh, very likely they would, unless a gentleman would keep them up for his house.

56,135. That is another matter. Are the lands at the Inverlael end of the farm not very subject to be flooded by the river, both the Lael and the Broom?—Yes, part of it.

56,136. And it costs a good deal of money to keep these banks in order?—Yes, but that could be done.

56,137. Now, with regard to this bit of Inverlael that you want yourself, would the township be prepared to take over the sheep stock on it at valuation?—Oh, no, they need not do that, in my opinion.

56,138. Could they do it?—I don't think they could; no, they could not do it.

56,139. And is that ground not the wintering ground for the sheep at that end of that farm?—Yes, it is.

56,140. The only wintering ground?—The only wintering ground, and that is the very reason I am wanting it for the wintering of the sheep, because I have no wintering place, and Inverlael has another good wintering place.

56,141. Then it would very seriously injure the farm if that bit of wintering ground was taken from it?—Yes, it would, but after all it would be a good farm.

56,142. Now you said that if you got this bit of additional ground it would satisfy you,—if you got the old march?—Yes, that is what I want.

56,143. Did not the township get a field of arable land added to it in 1890?—Yes.

56,144. And I think you then said, all of you, in writing, that you would be satisfied with that? [*The Chairman.*—Satisfied with that as in a question with the Crofters Commission; but not satisfied with that as in a question with the Royal Commission.]

56,145. There was a minute put in signed by you and all the other crofters to the following effect:—'Duncan for the landlord, Major W. G. Mundell the 'tenant of Inverlael farm, and the applicants for themselves, stated that the landlord had agreed that the 'applicants should have the ground known as the 'Ardcharnich farm lying to the west of the Ardcharnich 'burn, and extending to 10 acres or thereby, added to 'their holdings; that the applicants had unanimously 'agreed to and accepted of this as satisfying their 'applications, and that the application *quoad ultra* 'should be withdrawn and abandoned as the same is 'hereby withdrawn and abandoned.' That was then agreed to?—Yes, that was settled, but not for ever; just to look for more when we get a chance.

56,146. Then if you got the land up to the old march, it would only satisfy you for a few years?—Yes, for a few years, but it was just an acre each. That was not much of an addition.

Ullapool. — Duncan Campbell.

56,147. Now about the land at the Inverlael end of the farm, the low land there; I suppose that is the wintering land for that end of the farm?—Yes.

56,148. And without it that end of the farm would be useless, is not that your view?—Oh, yes, that is my view.

56,149. *Mr Sutherland.*—You stated in reply to a question by Mr Duncan that you worked on the road. What road do you work on?—I am working at days' wages.

56,150. Is it the public road?—On the public road.

56,151. You are in the employment of the County Council, in fact? It is not the estate that gives you that work?—The public.

56,152. You are the servant of the County Road Board, are you not?—No, I work there on days' wages with men whose employment is from the Road Trustees. They have too much to do, and they need a man to help them.

56,153. The ordinary public road?—Yes.

56,154. It is not a private road?—No.

56,155. You were asked the question what would become of the steadings if you got the land. Now, I think you said that all this land was in the occupation of small holders before it was made into a sheep farm?—Yes.

56,156. What became of their steadings when it was made into a sheep farm, do you know?—That is a plain question.

56,157. Can you give a plain answer to it? What became of them?—They came to ruin; the ruins show themselves there yet.

56,158. There was no word at that time about keeping up farm steadings, was there?—I do not know.

56,159. You never heard any solicitude on the point of factors to keep up steadings?—No.

56,160. You were asked about the extension you got previously, and the finality of that extension. A statement was read which showed distinctly that that satisfaction referred only to the application you were then making?—Yes.

56,161. And did not at all exclude you from making any other application if the opportunity arose?—That is what I was wanting to say.

56,162. But the paper itself bore that it referred to that Application for Enlargement to the Crofters Commission?—Yes.

56,163. How many families are in your township?—Nine.

56,164. Then you got an acre each of extension?—Yes.

56,165. It was also asked of you if it would not injure the farm of Inverlael if you got a portion of it. Would you not like to meet the factor or the landlord in that case by taking the whole farm?—I would not think of applying for the whole; it is too much for me.

56,166. But for others?—I know others would be glad to take it.

56,167. There would be no objection then if the whole farm were taken?—No; it would be no loss to the proprietor then.

56,168. *Rev. Mr Maccallum.*—I think you have distinctly stated that, in your opinion, there would be no loss to the proprietor supposing it were broken up?—Yes.

56,169. You are aware, no doubt, that there is a great difficulty in letting large farms?—In some cases.

56,170. Did you ever hear it given as a reason for turning land into forest, that they could not get a tenant for a sheep farm that had gone out of lease?—In some cases, and in some seasons; but in most cases they do get farmers.

56,171. Do you not hear of large farms being converted into forests, and the reason given being that they could not get a tenant for them as large farms?—Yes.

56,172. Did you hear of the same difficulty in letting small farms?—No, I never heard any difficulty in regard to that.

56,173. You said too that there is a very valuable

stock upon the ground. Is that not evidence that it is suitable for occupation by crofters?—I think so.

56,174. You said there was a valuable stock upon the farm?—Yes, I said that.

56,175. Is that a pretty sure sign that it is suitable for small holdings?—Yes, it is a sure sign that the land is good.

56,176. And such as you would like to see in small holdings?—Yes.

56,177. I think you said too that the crofters would have some difficulty in taking over the stock at valuation. Did you ever hear of proprietors having a difficulty in taking over stock at valuation?—Not often.

56,178. You never heard them making a great complaint about the valuations being too high?—No.

56,179. Did you not hear of their being robbed by high valuations of stock,—by valuations being put upon stock far above the actual value, and the proprietors being ruined?—No, I cannot say that I did.

56,180. Did you ever hear of the valuations being too high?—Yes, often.

56,181. And the proprietors have suffered from that, have they not?—Yes.

56,182. You would not like the crofters to suffer from unjust valuations?—No.

56,183. It would not be fair?—No, it would not be fair.

56,184. *The Chairman.*—It is right to mention that although we have only heard of one or two farms, there are a good many others which have not been mentioned: on Coigach estate there are Badintarbart, Achnahaird, Inverpolly, North Keanachulish, Glastullich, Corrie, Langwell, Kenachruinn or Moorfield; on Coul estate, there is Inverlael farm; on Sir John Fowler's estate Lochybhraoin and Caillich grazing, and Achindrean; on Dundonnell estate, the farm of Newton of Loggie, and the farm of Kildonan; and there is the farm of Leckmelm, and the glebe of Lochbroom. We have heard of only two of these,—Inverlael and Leckmelm.

56,185. *Mr Duncan.*—Are you aware that the rent of Inverlael sheep farm is only £188?—No, I am not aware of that.

DONALD ROSS, Crofter and Labourer, Ardcharnich (43).
(Examined in Gaelic through an Interpreter.)

56,186. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—Yes.

56,187. The blue-book gives your holding as containing 1 acre 1 rood 31 poles arable; and 1 rood outrun; with a share in the common of 500 acres; old rent £4, 17s. 9d.; fair rent £2, 15s.; arrears £38, 19s. 9d., of which £33, 9s. 9d. were cancelled, and £5, 10s. ordered to be paid. That area does not include the enlargement. Were you appointed as a delegate along with Duncan Campbell?—I was asked to go with him.

56,188. Have you heard the evidence he gave?—Yes.

56,189. Do you agree with it?—I do.

56,190. Have you anything further to say?—No.

ALEXANDER MUNRO, Road Contractor, Ardcharnich (35)—*examined.*

56,191. *The Chairman.*—Are you a crofter?—I am a crofter, but I am here on behalf of my mother, who is a widow.

56,192. What is her name?—Mrs Murdo Munro.

56,193. I see the holding has 2 acres 2 roods 25 poles arable; and 36 poles outrun; with a share of 500 acres grazing divided into ten shares; the old rent was £6, 7s. 6d.; and the new rent is £3, 10s. Do you agree with the evidence given by Duncan Campbell?—Yes.

56,194. And have you anything to add to it?—No.

WILLIAM GUNN, Strathpeffer, Factor, Cromartie estates (54)—*examined.*

56,195. *The Chairman.*—Do you wish to make a statement, Mr Gunn?—No, I have no desire to make a statement, as the properties I am interested in here have not been referred to: but I should like to say a few words in reference to the Garbat forest which was referred to at the Dingwall sitting. I thought after going home that I should like to look up the estate records to see whether or not I had made a return to the Crown Office regarding that forest. I could find no trace of any such, so I wrote to the Crown Office on the subject, and the reply I have received is to the effect that the return was made by the county assessor Mr Foster.

56,196. But it is not in the return?—Of course, I am not responsible for that.

56,197. Not at all; I am not suggesting that.—There was a more recent return made to Mr Malcolm, Invergarry, and I find I had returned it as a forest; but I certainly did omit to make the correction in the valuation roll.

56,198. That is, to alter the words 'deer forest 'grazings' into 'deer forest'?—Yes. In 1886 when the farm was cleared it was continued under sheep for the whole of that year: the sheep were sold off in the back-end of that year, and in making the return for that year we described the ground as a sheep grazing and shooting. In the following year it is the custom for the assessor to send the printed schedules of the previous year for us to revise. In making that revisal, we looked at the figures, which were of more importance to us, and we over-looked correcting the description, which was, of course, the description given in the preceding year's roll. That, unfortunately, has gone on from year to year until now it has been corrected. I am very sorry for the slip, but it was purely accidental. [*Mr Sutherland.*—But we cannot allow it to be said that the assessor is responsible for it, if the assessor gave the description he got; it is not his error?—I cannot hold myself responsible, seeing I made no return.]

56,199. As I understand it, you were not applied to by the Crown Office for a return?—No, we were not applied to.

56,200. There is, in the first place, Coulmore or Drumruinie; in the second place Rhidorroch; and in the third place, Tolmuick, all forests belonging to the late Lord Cromartie. Did you make no return with regard to these forests?—No, I am not aware that we did.

56,201. Who do you suppose did make the return?—My impression is that the Crown Office applied to the county assessor, and that he made the return from the valuation roll.

56,202. Then Garbat was not, in the knowledge of the assessor, a forest?—Probably not; and possibly he might have been misled by the entry in the valuation roll.

56,203. He would necessarily have returned it as a forest if you had entered it as a forest?—Yes. I merely show that that was entirely a slip, and that when making the return sometime later, we entered it as a forest.

56,204. When did you make the return to Mr Malcolm?—In April, 1893.

56,205. Because he impugned the accuracy of this Parliamentary Return of 1891 very seriously, and I suppose he may have been enabled to do so from a return he obtained himself by communicating with those who represent land-owners?—Yes, I understood he had said so, but I am very glad we are not responsible so far as Garbat is concerned.

56,206. *Mr Sutherland.*—That you are not responsible?—So far as Garbat is concerned.

56,207. But you understand perfectly well the way the valuation roll is made. The assessor sends to the owners of property, schedules to fill up?—Yes.

56,208. And out of these schedules when returned, the valuation roll is made by the assessor?—Yes.

56,209. So the assessor is entirely dependent upon the returns made in the schedules for his facts?—Yes,

Ullapool.

William Gunn.

I admit having made the slip so far as not correcting the description of Garbat in the valuation roll.

56,210. After it was changed into a deer forest?—Yes.

56,211. *The Chairman.*—Who gave the areas to the assessor?—That I cannot say.

56,212. We find the areas stated quite specifically in their turn: Coulmore or Drumruinie 20,000; Rhidorroch 37,000; Tolmuick 1,500. Who gave these figures to the assessor?—I am unable to say: I don't know how he got them. We have no record of having made any return to anybody. It is quite possible we may have made a return to the assessor, but we have no trace of it.

56,213. How far back did you go?—I went back as far as 1890.

56,214. That was the year immediately preceding this return?—Yes.

56,215. Would not the assessor fall, properly speaking, to get them from you as the custodier of the estate documents?—I should think so.

56,216. And the local authority upon the matter?—Yes, I should think so.

56,217. What I am struck with is that an endeavour was made to get information from an assessor who had really no responsibility in the matter except so far as making up the valuation roll is concerned, and no endeavour to get the information from you who are a responsible officer representing the estate?—If Mr Foster applied to us we have no record of the fact; we always keep a copy of records of that kind.

[Adjourned.]

Foyers Estate, Inverness.

Charles Innes.

Statement by Charles Innes, Solicitor, Inverness, Commissioner on the Foyers Estate, for the information of the Highlands and Islands Commission (1892).

I have been Commissioner for Mr Cuninghame of Foyers for 20 years. Prior to 1874 I acted for 11 years as law agent on the estate. In this way I have been personally acquainted with the various farms and holdings on the estate for over 30 years.

In the year 1882 the then tenant of the farm of Gorthlick gave up his tenancy, his lease having come to an end. There had been an outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in the byres and a large number of valuable cattle had to be killed with a view to stamping out the disease. This created a prejudice against the farm and though attempts were made to secure a tenant none was found. The proprietor then resolved to keep the farm in his own hands and to work it as a mixed farm of sheep and cattle with grain, grass and roots. The outrun extended to about 1200 acres, mostly heather land and the cultivated arable land to 120 acres or thereby. Mr Cuninghame founded ten years ago a pedigreed herd of Aberdeen Angus polled cattle, which have proved very suitable for the district. There are about 25 head of cattle usually on the farm. He has also about 440 breeding blackfaced ewes on the pasture and outrun. Greyfaced lambs are bred from them. The ewes which are the cast of the Compass stock—are sent to Meallagy (situated about 7 miles from Gorthlick) for two months in the summer. The cattle are confined to the arable land in summer and autumn and have the run of the pasture land on Gorthlick in winter when the weather is suitable. In bad winter weather they are kept in the byres. The farm could not be worked profitably without the outrun. Indeed, I doubt if it would pay the outlays if restricted to arable land alone. Gorthlick is about 700 feet above sea level. The seasons have been very precarious. The rain this year has greatly injured the hay, turnip and potato crops. It will not be possible to keep the stock without artificial feeding. In Stratherrick the farmers suffer mostly from rain. In late harvests the frosts and sometimes snow also injure the crops. During the past ten years in only two years have there been bumper crops—that is 1883 and 1891. Sometimes the spring weather is bad, at other times while springs have been good the weather in harvest has been bad and *vice versa*.

Charles Innes.

Wester Aberchalder contains 116 acres arable, 198 acres meadow land (often flooded) and 7 acres planted wood. The remaining portion of the farm extends to 1829 acres and consists of natural wood, pasture and moor land. Wester Aberchalder is let under lease to two brothers whose father occupied the farm before them for 19 years.

Lower Foyers includes the Lands of Glenlia, Dalbreck and the Home Farm of Foyers. They are all situated in the neighbourhood of the game coverts. The farms are of a limited extent. There are about 50 acres of cultivated land on Glenlia and Dalbreck and about 500 of heather, pasture, woods, &c. On the Home Farm about 30 acres are cultivated. There are also about 40 acres old grass. The soil is poor, thin stuff, which cannot be cultivated profitably. The low Ardarroch field is frequently flooded by the rising of Loch Ness. There is very little outrun attached to the farm, the ground in the neighbourhood being planted and enclosed and embracing the policies. There is at the west end of the estate near the loch a bit of rough rocky land suitable only for goats. No sheep are sent there. The old mansion-house is close to the arable land and the private approach road runs through the lands known as Ardarroch. The ground in the neighbourhood has been laid off in the expectancy of a new mansion being erected. On lower Foyers and Gorthlick I may mention that 2339 acres are under wood out of a total of 5579 acres. About 16 years ago 360 acres or thereby of Tyndrum were offered as pasturage to the crofters but they did not accept the proposal and the lands were then planted. The remainder of the estate consists to a great extent of pasture, moorlands, peat mosses, &c. The Home Farm and Glenlia are cultivated separately. Three horses are kept at Foyers: about eight head of cattle: and 50 ewes are wintered. Occasionally other stock are turned on from Gorthlick. On Glenlia and Dalbreck there are two horses and a colt, six cross cows and their calves, and about 250 ewes are wintered and additional stock also occasionally put on from Gorthlick. The Home Farm, Glenlia, and Dalbreck are cultivated under regular rotations. The corn crops are regularly reaped. In no year have the crops remained uncut to be eaten up by game. Hay is regularly cut, the average being from 80 to 100 stones to the acre. The turnips this year and generally are fairly good. Pheasants are yearly reared and there are numerous rabbits which eat to some extent the crops. They require to be fed like other animals but they do not eat up everything grown on those farms. The lands are decidedly not used merely for sporting purposes. The cultivated portions are wire-netted so as to protect them from rabbits. The pheasants are mainly maintained by imported food specially laid down for them, as is the practice on every estate possessing coverts on which pheasants are reared. Mr Cuninghame and his friends only shoot the Lower Foyers coverts during one week in the year. Turnips are carted every year from Glenlia and the Home Farm to Gorthlick, where the principal cattle stock is kept. In the time of the last proprietor, Mr Walker, the Home Farm was kept in his own hands. He reclaimed at considerable expense the lands of Dalbreck which he also kept in his own hands. Later on the latter were worked along with the previously existing farm of Glenlia. There are no buildings on Dalbreck. These several lands were let for some years by the present proprietor and possession afterwards taken by him, on the tenants' leases coming to an end. If the idea of cutting up the Ardarroch and Home Farm and dividing same into small farms — suggested by one of the witnesses examined before the Commissioners—was carried out the value of the estate would be complete'y

Charles Innes. destroyed and it might become unsaleable seeing that the private approach—not a very lengthy one—to the specially prepared Mansion House site runs through the lands.

The farm buildings already erected are suitable for the existing holdings but would be too large for smaller holdings.

From the explanations above given it is submitted that the farms on Lower Foyers do not come within the Remit to the Commission.

Upper Foyers consists of Compass, Meallagy, Garrogy and Glenmarkie. Meallagy has generally been worked along with the Farm of Gorthlick (even when the latter was let) of which it is the summering ground. It summers about 1000 ewes and wedders. Part of them come from other portions of the estate, some belonging to tenants to whom the right of summer pasture has been let. The proprietor has only a portion of Glenmarkie in his own hands. The other portion is let on lease to the tenants of Wester Aberchalder. The whole of these lands extend to about 12,500 acres, about 200 being old arable, and situated at Compass, the remainder being pasture, moorland, natural woods, roads, &c. In 1882 the tenant of the sheep farm of Compass and Garrogy retired, his lease being at an end. Attempts were made from time to time to let the farm, but without success. I suggested to the proprietor that as there was then a great cry in the Highlands about forming small farms, he might try the experiment. He agreed and instructed me to put on the market six moderately sized farms of from 22 to 24 acres arable with some improvable pasture extending to 58 acres divided over the six holdings and about 300 acres of pasture also so divided. The following is a note of the exact acreages of each proposed holding, viz. :—

	Arable.			Improvable Pasture.			Pasture.		
	ac.	rds.	po.	ac.	rds.	po.	ac.	rds.	po.
Lot I.	22	1	36	6	1	20	32	3	8
Lot II.	21	3	36	15	3	34	61	2	22
Lot III.	22	1	4	8	3	18	19	0	24
Lot IV. Near houses	21	3	12	10	3	24	101	2	0
Lot IV. Outlying	5	0	20						
Lot V.	22	3	15	11	3	28	32	3	0
Lot VI.	24	0	1	4	1	32	46	2	38
Total of low grounds,	140	2	4	58	1	36	294	2	92

There was also a suggestion that a portion of the hill ground might be given off as a common pasture. I had a considerable amount of correspondence with applicants for particulars but nothing came of the scheme, I failing to secure anyone who was prepared or able to assist in building houses, ploughing up the land, and fencing and draining, as also providing sufficient stock. The terms upon which the holdings were to be let were, subject to any alteration mutually agreed upon, as follows :—

1. Proprietor to provide without payment materials, wood, lime, slate, &c. for houses and steadings on condition that the tenant erected the buildings. If preferred, landlord to erect buildings on tenant agreeing to pay 5 per cent. on cost of erection.

2. Leases to be for 19 years.

3. Each offerer to satisfy proprietor that he had sufficient capital to stock his holding and fulfil other obligations.

4. If entry given at Whitsunday buildings probably to be finished by Martinmas from which term lease and payment of rent would run.

5. Tenants to bring land into cultivation and to make such drains as were necessary at their own expense.

6. Each holding to be fenced separately by tenants; expense of march fences to be paid jointly.

Each applicant was invited to lodge an offer on the above or such other terms as suggested themselves to him.

About the time at which the small holdings scheme was formed, offers were made to take in for pasturing purposes on Upper Foyers, sheep belonging to some of the smaller tenants on Lower Foyers, but not one of them thought it worth his while to send his sheep to summering so far from home. If the low lands of Compass, and especially the old arable now attached to the farm, were withdrawn the whole wintering on the farm would be taken away and hence no ewe stock could thereafter be wintered at home. At present about 1000 ewes out of a stock of 2400 are kept on the farm all the year round. In addition to these about 600 wedders are wintered at Garrogy; the remaining stock consisting of young ewes and hoggs are sent to the low country to winter. Charles Innes

During the period (1871–94) of Mr Cuninghame's proprietorship of what is known as the estate of Foyers he has expended in connection with new buildings and repairs, plantations, drains, fences, and other improvements the following amounts :—

Buildings and Piers,	£8546	18	11		
Plantations, . . .	6446	3	3		
Fences, Dykes, Drains, Roads and Bridges,	4107	14	9		
				19,100	16 11
In addition to the above the following allowances were made to tenants in bad years :					
Abatements from rents, .	634	5	2		
Seed, oats, and lime, .	318	7	7		
				952	12 9
				£20,053	9 8

A considerable portion of the money expended was paid to the small tenants and their families, the instructions to the estate officials having always been to employ tenants or their sons when they could be got. When Mr Cuninghame purchased the estate there were with one or two exceptions no slated houses on the small holdings. The number of thatched houses is now very limited.

The tenants of the shootings upon the estate as a rule employ estate crofters as ghillies with their ponies. The money earned in this way amounts to a considerable sum. The shooting season extends over between two and three months and that at a time of year when the crofters can undertake the work without interfering with the ordinary working of their farms.

There have during Mr Cuninghame's time and I think during Mr Walker's time been no evictions on the estate. Mr Walker gave off in 1861 all the lands along Lochgarthside at nominal rents on improving leases of 19 years.

As an evidence that Mr Cuninghame has not rack-rented his small tenants, I may state that the reductions sanctioned by the Crofters Commission only amounted to £7, 8s. 10d. more than the amounts at which Mr Cuninghame had offered to renew the tenancies.

The following is a list showing the number of workmen employed on the estate by the proprietor :—

I. In connection with Farms.

A. On Gorthlick Farm.

Three men engaged in cultivation of farm; one cattleman, one shepherd, two women.

B. Glenlia and Home Farm.

Three men engaged in cultivation of farms; one shepherd.

Note.—There are in addition at various times of the year a number of men and women all belonging to the estate employed on these farms.

C. Upper Foyers Sheep Farm.

Four shepherds. In addition there is a General Farm Manager who superintends all the farms.

Charles Innes.

II. Foresters' Department including Plantations, Roads, Fences, &c.

One forester; one assistant forester, one gardener and seven men in constant employment.

Note.—In addition a considerable number of residents on the estate are employed at various seasons of the year.

III. Gamekeepers Department.

A. Lower Foyers.

One head keeper at Foyers, one keeper at Wester Aberchalder, one keeper at Gorthlick, one keeper at Glenlia, one keeper engaged at Kennels, one keeper engaged about Pheasants.

In the shooting season a considerable number of ghillies and beaters resident on the estate are employed.

B. Upper Foyers.

Two keepers whose wages are paid by proprietor. In addition the shooting tenant has a kennel man and generally six ghillies.

Note.—The greater number of men employed in the several departments are married.

(Signed) CHARLES INNES.

INVERNESS, *4th September* 1894.

Donald Macphee

LOCHIEL ESTATES.—DECLARATION BY MR DONALD MACPHEE, SOLICITOR, FORT-WILLIAM.

At Fort-William the fourteenth day of September Eighteen hundred and ninety-four: In presence of Colin Young, Esquire, Provost of the Burgh of Fort-William, and one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Inverness.

Compeared Donald Macphee, Solicitor, Fort-William, who, being solemnly sworn and examined, Declares—I have seen a report of the examination of Donald Cameron, Esquire, of Lochiel, and a statement made by him before the Commissioners acting under Her Majesty's Royal Commission, Highlands and Islands, in the columns of the *Highland News* newspaper, in which, besides disputing the accuracy of specific statements made by me before the said Commissioners at Fort-William, he characterises it generally as of a misleading and random nature. I take this opportunity of declaring my adherence to my former statement as substantially accurate, and challenging Lochiel's characterisation of it as unwarranted by facts.

As to Lochiel's statement that he never evicted a tenant, I subjoin list of actions of removal at his instance against the tenants therein named taken from the Sheriff Court Records at Fort-William (Appendix A, page 1428). The eviction of Samuel Cameron, Drimarbin, Nos. 22 and 23 in list, was carried out under circumstances of exceptional severity, and excited general indignation in this district. This list, and the Sheriff Court Records, afford documentary evidence of the incorrectness of Lochiel's statement on this head.

He also stated that none of his crofter tenants had applied to him for more land or an enlargement of their holdings. I respectfully assert that this statement is not correct, and in support of my assertion beg to refer Her Majesty's Commissioners to the application by five crofters at Kinlochiel for such enlargement, and also to a dispute with Lochiel about their marches in their application for fair rent. This dispute was practically a claim for an enlargement of their holding, and though opposed by Lochiel's agent, was after a lengthened proof conceded to the crofters. On this account, and because one of the five crofters had, in the interval between the lodging of the application for enlargement and the sitting of the Crofters Commission, removed from his holding, I recommended the crofters to be satisfied with the enlargement obtained under the Fair Rent application, and to withdraw the other, which was done.

I produce herewith proceedings and correspondence relative to a claim by the crofters on Lochiel's estate at Ballachulish, to have restored to them part of their hill pasture improperly fenced off and appropriated by the then tenant of Ballachulish hotel, to whom Lochiel had given about 20 crofts to form a home farm (Appendix B, page 1429). These also prove an application by Lochiel's crofters for more land. Donald Macphee.

As to Lochiel's statement that the farm of Clunes is three miles from Achnacarry, while that may be true of the most distant part of the farm, it is the fact, as will be confirmed from a reference to the Ordnance Survey Maps, that the nearest part of that farm and the farm-house and offices are not farther off from Achnacarry than about one-half mile.

As to his statement that before the Crofter Commissioners I complained that he refused to feu, while before the Royal Commissioners I complained that he did feu, and that the feu-duties contributed nothing to local taxation, thereby committing myself to a contradictory position—I may explain that I spoke of two distinct things.

Before the Crofters Commission I complained that in feuing, Lochiel only gave out ground to those prepared to erect villas and other costly erections on the feus, which operated as a practical prohibition against the erection of workmen's houses, and so caused a house famine in Fort-William, and raised enormously the rents of workmen's houses there. This I submit does not in any way conflict with the statement I made before the Royal Commissioners.

In making the foregoing declaration I have assumed that the statements imputed to Lochiel in the columns of the *Highland News* newspaper are substantially correct.

Lochiel's other statements, in so far as they cannot be refuted by production of, or reference to, authentic documents, I challenge as incorrect in so far as they do not coincide with mine.

All which I declare to be truth as I shall answer to God. (Signed) DOND. MACPHEE.

(Signed) COLIN YOUNG,
J.P. for the County of Inverness.

APPENDIX A

Referred to in the foregoing Declaration.

List of Actions of Removal at the instance of Donald Cameron, Esquire, of Lochiel, in the Sheriff Court at Fort-William.

	Inverness-shire.	*Date of Decree.*
1.	Colquhoun, crofter, Achintore,	April 3, 1858.
2.	Duncan Macmaster, crofter, Drimarbin,	April 23, 1863.
3.	Ann Macmillan, Upper Achintore,	April 16, 1868.
4.	Alex. Cameron's Heirs, Drimarbin,	April 8, 1869.
5.	Archibald Cameron, Achintore,	,,
6.	Angus Rankin, Achintore,	,,
7.	Effie Macintyre, North Ballachulish,	April 14, 1870.
8.	Neil Cameron, Achintore,	,,
9.	John Mackenzie, Keppenach,	April 20, 1871.
10.	Archibald Cameron, Achintore,	,,
11.	Duncan Macpherson, Onich,	April 13, 1871.
12.	Allan Maclean, North Ballachulish,	May 22, 1873.
13.	Alexander Campbell, North Ballachulish,	,,
14.	Widow Mary Mackinnon, North Ballachulish,	,,
15.	James Cameron, Achintore,	May 3, 1877
16.	Eliza and Mary Maccoll, Achintore,	,,
17.	Widow Catherine Cameron, North Ballachulish,	,,
18.	Duncan Macintyre, Corpach,	May 1, 1879.
19.	Widow Margaret Cameron, North Ballachulish,	,,
20.	Widow Ann Cameron, Culchenna,	,,
21.	Widow Sarah Mackenzie, Onich,	March 30, 1882.
22.	Samuel Cameron, Drimarbin,	,,

Donald Macphee.

23. Samuel Cameron, Drimarbin, . Nov. 28, 1883.

N.B.—An Interdict was, on 4th Sept. 1884, and another on 7th May 1885, brought and extracted against this crofter; and on 4th August 1885, an action of Ejection was raised and extracted. On 28th May 1887, he was prosecuted for Breach of Interdict.

24. Donald Mackinnon, crofter, Achintore, ... May 3, 1883.

Argyllshire.

25. Paterson, . . . May 5, 1859.
26. Cameron, Corpach, . . April 12, 1860.
27. Philips, Muirsherlich, . April 11, 1861.
28. Campbell, Corpach, . . April 23, 1863.
29. Kennedy, Corrybeg, . April 12, 1866.
30. Maclachlan, Kinlochiel, . „
31. Campbell, Corpach, . . „
32. Duncan Kennedy, Corpach, . April 11, 1867.
33. Widow Maclachlan, Coal, . . May 5, 1770.
34. Donald Cameron, Muirsherlich, . „
35. D. Robertson, Corpach, . . May 22, 1873.
36. Alexander Gillies, Lochyside, . „
37. Duncan Cameron, Banavie, . „
38. Thomas Grieve, Corpach, . . May 3, 1877.
39. D. Cameron, Coal, . . . May 20, 1880.
40. Alexander Macphee, Camaghael, . „
41. Widow Mary Cameron, Banavie, „
42. Lachlan Cameron, Muirsherlich, . Dec. 6, 1883.
43. Hugh Cameron, Muirsherlich, . „
44. Mary Mackinnon, Banavie, . . „
45. Margaret Swan, Banavie, . . May 1, 1884.

(Signed) Dond. Macphee.
(„) Colin Young, J.P.

Appendix B.

(1.) *Copy Application to the Crofters Commission.*

Crofting Parish of Kilmallie,
County of Inverness.

Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886.—Application by Crofters for adjusting the Boundaries or Marches between Crofters holdings including grazings and adjoining lands.

Name of Estate.—Lochiel estate.

Name and Postal address of Landlord.—Donald Cameron, Esq. of Lochiel, Achnacarry.

Name and Postal address of Landlord's Factor.—Mr Nigel B. Mackenzie, Fort-William.

To the Crofters Commission,
Care of the Sheriff Clerk of the County of Inverness at Fort-William.

We, being crofters on the Lochiel estate, the property of Donald Cameron, Esquire, of Lochiel, in the crofting parish of Kilmallie, and county of Inverness, hereby apply to the Commission under reference to the statement of facts and schedules annexed hereto, to make an order upon the said Donald Cameron of the said Lochiel estate for readjusting the boundaries or marches between the Applicants' holdings and grazings in the township of North Ballachulish, part of the said estate of Lochiel and the portion of said township, now let along with hotel and ferry at North Ballachulish.

(Signed) Henry Mackenzie,
Solicitor, Oban, *Prop.* for

1. Alexander Campbell
2. Duncan Roy Macinnes
3. David Colquhoun
4. Donald Cameron
5. James Anderson
6. Alexander Cameron
7. Donald Macinnes
8. Isabella Macintyre
9. John Mackenzie
10. Colin Mackinnon
11. Duncan Cameron
12. Isabella Cameron
13. Elizabeth Rankin.

Statement of Facts.

Donald Macphee.

1. The Applicants are crofters in the township of North Ballachulish on the Lochiel estate, the property of the said Donald Cameron, in the crofting parish of Kilmallie in the county of Inverness.

2. The land attached to the hotel and ferry at North Ballachulish are also the property of the said Donald Cameron, and are situated in the said crofting parish of Kilmallie.

3. The grazing of the lands so attached to the hotel

SCHEDULE REFERRED TO.

Name of Applicants in full.	Nos. of Crofts (if any) on Estate Roll.	Crofts, Township or Township where Applicants reside.	Post Office from which Applicants receive Letters.	Estimated Area of Arable Land and Outrun presently held by Applicants. Arable. ac.	ro.	po.	Outrun. ac.	ro.	po.	Common Pasture (if any). Estimated Area of Pasture presently held in common by all the Applicants.	Boundaries or Marches of the Common Pasture.	Stock which each Applicant is presently entitled to hold. Cows.	All other cattle above one year old	Annual Rent payable by each Applicant. £ s. d.	Services presently rendered or payments other than Rent made by each Applicant.
1. Alexander Campbell,		No. Ballachulish.	Onich.	0	3	29	0	1	2			1	1	2 10 0	
2. Duncan Roy Macinnes,		do.	do.	1	2	24	1	1	22			1	1	2 15 0	
3. David Colquhoun,		do.	do.	1	3	0	1	1	4			1	1	2 15 0	
4. Donald Cameron,		do.	do.	2	3	27	0	0	0			1	1	3 10 0	
5. James Anderson,		do.	do.	1	0	26	0	1	0			1	1	2 15 0	
6. Alexander Cameron,		do.	do.	0	2	21	1	0	37			1	1	2 15 0	
7. Donald Macinnes,		do.	do.	1	1	2	0	0	0			1	1	3 10 0	
8. Isabella Macintyre,		do.	do.	1	0	4	0	0	0			2	4	6 0 0	
9. John Mackenzie,		do.	do.	2	3	8	0	0	0			2	2	13 0 0	
10. Colin Mackinnon,		do.	do.	3	2	29	0	0	0			2	2	5 5 0	
11. Duncan Cameron,		do.	do.	1	3	6	0	0	3			3	4	4 0 0	
12. Isabella Cameron,		do.	do.	3	1	13	1	0	37					6 0 0	
13. Elizabeth Rankin.		do.	do.	4	1	9	0	0	0						

Donald Macphee.

are now let to the Trustees of the late John Cameron, hotelkeeper, North Ballachulish, from year to year.

4. Upwards of twenty years ago, one-third of the land of the township was given to John Cameron, the late tenant of the said hotel; and permission was given him to fence off an equivalent proportion of the hill grazings of the township. The said John Cameron taking advantage of the permission, fenced off considerably more than the one-third. The applicants protested to the said landlord, but without effect.

5. The Applicants have lately applied to the said landlord to re-adjust the proportions of the hill grazings, but he has refused, or at least, delays to do so.

(2.) *Copy Letter: Henry Mackenzie, Solicitor, Oban, to Donald Cameron, Esquire, of Lochiel.*

OBAN, 14*th February* 1888.

SIR,—I am instructed by the Crofters on your estate at North Ballachulish to ascertain whether you are prepared to appoint a neutral person, whose duty it shall be on an early day to re-adjust the division of the hill pasture as between my clients and the tenant of the hotel lands at Lochleven.

I make this application in terms of the provisions of the Crofters Holdings Act, 1886, and in these circumstances. Upwards of 20 years ago, there was added to the said hotel lands one-third of the North Ballachulish Crofts, and the tenant of the hotel, the now deceased John Cameron, was allowed by you, or those representing you, to fence off a corresponding portion of the hill. In doing so, however, Mr Cameron did not enclose his proper proportion, but took considerably more than a third share. Against this action the crofters protested strenuously, and, as I am informed, went in a body to you with their remonstrance; but, notwithstanding, Mr Cameron was allowed to construct his fence on his own line.

Now that the lease has expired and the hotel is advertised to be let, my clients rightly think that the present is a suitable time for rectifying the division of the hill, and they respectfully submit that their request for a re-adjustment of the shares thereof effeiring to their and the hotelkeeper's holdings, at the sight of a neutral person to be named by yourself, is a reasonable and proper one; and I shall be glad to hear from you within ten days from this date, saying whether or not you are to accede to the proposal.

By the provisions of the Act referred to, this matter can, and, if need be, will be brought under the notice of the Crofter Commissioners for adjustment, but my clients are hopeful that the reasonableness of their request will readily commend itself to you, and that you will accede without difficulty thereto and so obviate the necessity as well as trouble and expense of applying for the Commissioners' intervention.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Donald Macphee.

(Signed) HENRY MACKENZIE.

(3.) *Copy Reply, Lochiel to Henry Mackenzie.*

ACHNACARRY, FORT-WILLIAM,
17*th February* 1888.

SIR,—The matter referred to in your letter of the 14th, which has just reached me on my return here, is of some importance.

No deputation of crofters has ever approached me on the subject. My factor I think mentioned it to me in conversation just before I went south a month ago, but before that the grievance was unknown or at least unheard of.

I must therefore make inquiry before replying to your letter.

I am disposed to agree with you that arbitration is better than an appeal to the Commissioners; but there may be a little difficulty in avoiding the latter, even though the question of the fence should be adjusted in the manner suggested by you. Of course, if the Commissioners came at all to Ballachulish it would be better that they should deal with *every* matter which may be brought under their notice according to the Act, and it might be rather difficult to obtain the assurance that their presence will not be required. Please think over this while I am making inquiry about the fence Yours faithfully,

(Signed) DONALD CAMERON.

(4.) *Copy Letter, D. Mackinnon to Mr Fraser.*

NORTH BALLACHULISH.
February, 29 1888.

SIR,—There was a meeting on Saturday night and the papers was read and there was then six present who was at Achnacarry and saw Lochiel personally and wonder how he can say that it is an unheard of thing.

They are all for the hill pasture, and are very sorry because I had such trouble that my name is not in. Could you not have it in for the hill.—Yours truly,

(Signed) DUNCAN MACKINNON

Mr FRASER,

Writer and Sheriff Clerk Depute, Fort-William.

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